# NORTHEAST IOWA LOCAL PLAN

NORTHEAST IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
PY24-PY27 LOCAL PLAN Last Updated 3/16/2026

*Equal Opportunity Programs/Employer*
*Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request for individuals with disabilities*

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# NORTHEAST IOWA LOCAL PLAN

## SECTION 1 – INFRASTRUCTURE

Local Plan Question:

1. Describe the local workforce delivery system in the local workforce development area (LWDA), including the following:
    a. Name of the LWDA
    b. Identification of the counties included in the LWDA
    c. A roster of all LWDB members, including the organization representing and title/role and the city/county each is from, and identification of the LWDB Chairperson
    d. Identification of Subcommittees of the LWDB and the chair of each
    e. Identification of the Fiscal Agent (entity responsible for disbursal of Title I grant funds)
    f. Identification of all LWDB Staff and brief description of their role(s)
    g. Identification of the competitively selected WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth service providers
    h. Identification of the One-Stop Operator for the local area
    i. Identification of the office locations in the local area, including:
        i. Comprehensive One-Stop locations
        ii. Affiliated sites
        iii. Specialized Centers
    j. A description of the process used to draft the local plan

## NORTHEAST IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

COUNTIES: Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hancock, Howard, Mitchell, Winnebago, Winneshiek, and Worth

## NORTHEAST IOWA LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

Chief Lead Elected Official (CLEO) – Heidi Nederhoff (Grundy County)

Co-CLEO – Gary McVicker (Franklin County)

Co-CLEO – Sis Greiman (Hancock County)

NEIWDB Chair – Jennifer Breister

NEIWDB Vice Chair – Amber Youngblut

## NORTHEAST IOWA BOARD MEMBERS

The Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB) is comprised of representatives from business, workforce, education, government, and economic development organizations throughout the 20-county region. In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the majority of board members represent business and industry to ensure that workforce strategies remain aligned with the needs of regional employers.

Board members provide leadership and strategic oversight for workforce development initiatives and work collaboratively to strengthen the regional workforce system.

### Business Representatives

- Jennifer Breister (Chair), Vice President – Project Manager, Crown Point Builders, Inc., Garner (Hancock County)
- Amber Youngblut (Vice Chair), Executive Director of Human Resources, Cedar Falls Schools, Cedar Falls (Black Hawk County)
- Jamie Benson, Personnel Director, East Penn Manufacturing, Oelwein (Fayette County)
- Ashley Stanley, Director of HR & Process Improvement, Buchanan County Health Center, Independence (Buchanan County)
- Nick Anderson, Training Manager, Stellar Industries, Inc., Garner (Hancock County)
- Jennifer Meneguin, Director of Human Resources, Engineering Services & Products Company, Dyersville (Dubuque County)
- Jayme Kluesner, Controller, Portzen Construction Company, Dubuque (Dubuque County)
- Katrina Moore, Human Resource Director, Henkel Construction, Mason City (Cerro Gordo County)
- Hortencia Saldivar, Director of Human Resources, Dean Snyder Construction, Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo County)
- Dennis Schilling, President & CEO, Power Engineering & Manufacturing Ltd., Waterloo (Black Hawk County)
- Jennalee Pedretti, Vice President of Operations, Regional Health Services of Howard County, Cresco (Howard County)

### Small Business Representatives

- Baili Maurer, Co-Owner, Edgewood Locker, Edgewood (Clayton County)
- Brandon Schoborg, President & CEO, Cardinal Construction, Waterloo (Black Hawk County)

## Workforce Representatives

### Labor Organization Representatives

- Chuck Kacher, Business Manager, IBEW Local 288, Waterloo (Black Hawk County)
- Rhea Pierce, Business Representative, North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters, Dubuque (Dubuque County)
- Joey Purpura, Labor Organization Representative

### Community-Based Organization Representative

- Jeri Bell, Employment Specialist / Job Developer, One Vision, Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo County)

### Youth Workforce Representative

- Tim Felderman, Superintendent, Hampton-Dumont Community School District, Hampton (Franklin County)

## Employment and Training Representatives

### Adult Education and Literacy

- Laura Hidlebaugh, Director of Adult Education and Literacy, Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo (Black Hawk County)

### Institution of Higher Education

- Karla Organist, Program Manager, Institute for Decision Making, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls (Black Hawk County)

## Government Representatives

### Economic and Community Development Representatives

- Nicolas Hockenberry, Director of Workforce Solutions, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, Dubuque (Dubuque County)
- Ed Raber, Planning and Development Director, Dubuque County, Dubuque (Dubuque County)

Vocational Rehabilitation Representative

- Jenny Nuss, Supervisor, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Waterloo (Black Hawk County)

State Wagner-Peyser Representative

- Marla Loecke, Operations Manager, Iowa Workforce Development (Wagner-Peyser), Dubuque (Dubuque County)

## NORTHEAST IOWA SUBCOMMITTEES

Executive Committee- Jennifer Breister (Chair)

Business Engagement & Strategy Committee – Nicolas Hockenberry (Chair)

Finance Committee – Nick Anderson (Chair)

Disability Access Committee – Jenny Nussl (Chair)

Youth Committee – Ashley Stanley (Chair)

Performance & Monitoring Committee – Amber Youngblut (Chair)

## NORTHEAST IOWA SUBCOMMITTEES ROSTERS

Executive Committee Roster

The Executive Committee of the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB) provides leadership and guidance on behalf of the full board. The committee supports the implementation of board priorities, assists with governance and oversight responsibilities, and addresses time-sensitive matters between regularly scheduled board meetings.

The following individuals serve on the Executive Committee:

- Jennifer Breister (Chair), Vice President / Project Manager, Crown Point Builders, Inc.
- Amber Youngblut (Vice Chair), Executive Director of Human Resources, Cedar Falls Schools
- Nicolas Hockenberry, Director of Workforce Solutions, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
- Nick Anderson, Training Manager, Stellar Industries, Inc.
- Ashley Stanley, Director of HR & Process Improvement, Buchanan County Health Center
- Jenny Nuss, Supervisor, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Executive Committee works in coordination with the full board to ensure that workforce development strategies, policies, and initiatives remain aligned with regional employer needs and workforce priorities.

## Business Engagement & Strategy Committee Roster

The Business Engagement & Strategy Committee provides leadership and guidance for employer engagement activities and strategic workforce initiatives across Northeast Iowa. The committee works closely with economic development organizations, educational institutions, and workforce partners to ensure workforce programs align with regional employer needs.

Members include:

- Nicolas Hockenberry (Chair), Greater Dubuque Development Corporation – Director of Workforce Solutions
- Karla Organist, University of Northern Iowa – Program Manager
- Donna Boss, Delaware County Economic Development – Executive Director
- Kelsie Kunkle, Grow Cedar Valley – Talent & Workforce Development Manager
- Brian Schoon, Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) – Executive Director
- Jenna Heier, North Iowa Corridor Economic Development Corporation – Business Relations Manager
- Amy Lasack, Northeast Iowa Community College – Vice President, Business and Community Solutions
- Heather Wright, North Iowa Area Community College – Business Resource Consultant
- Connie Tolan, Waverly Economic Development – Planning & Development Specialist
- Celia Even, Hawkeye Community College – Associate Director of Business and Community Outreach
- Corinne Rothblum, City of Dubuque – Economic Mobility Special Assistant
- Jenny Backer, Mitchell County Economic Development Commission – Executive Director

## Finance Committee Roster

The Finance Committee provides fiscal oversight and monitoring of workforce development funds and ensures that financial activities align with federal, state, and local requirements.

Members include:

- Nick Anderson (Chair), Stellar Industries, Inc. – Training Manager
- Ed Raber, Dubuque County – Project Coordinator
- Corey Eberling, Apex Clean Energy – Public Engagement Organizer
- Jennifer Breister, Crown Point Builders, Inc. – Vice President / Project Manager
- Jamie Benson, East Penn Manufacturing – Personnel Director
- Carly Carper, MBT Bank – Senior Workflow Specialist
- Michelle Weidner, Black Hawk County – Finance Director
- Doug Reimer, Clayton County – County Supervisor / CEO
- Gary McVicker, Franklin County – County Supervisor / CEO
- Heidi Nederhoff, Grundy County – County Supervisor / CLEO
- Gloria Carr, Floyd County – County Supervisor / CEO

Disability Access Committee Roster

The Disability Access Committee focuses on improving accessibility and workforce opportunities for individuals with disabilities within the Northeast Iowa workforce system.

Members include:

- Jennifer Nuss (Chair), Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Supervisor
- Brian Warner, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Supervisor
- Caitlyn Fields, Iowa Workforce Development – Disability Career Planner
- DiSha Johnson, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Rehabilitation Counselor
- Kris Dunn, Iowa Workforce Development – Career Planner
- Amy Markham, Iowa Workforce Development – Disability Workforce Manager
- Joe Weigel, Iowa Department for the Blind – VR Counselor
- Stephanie Weidemann, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Rehabilitation Assistant
- Dana Scott, One Vision – Employment Specialist
- Jill Krall, Waverly-Shell Rock Area United Way – Director

- Anna Miller, Care Connections of Northern Iowa – Regional Service Coordinator
- Jeri Bell, One Vision – Employment Specialist / Job Developer
- Kara Anderson, REM Community Services – Program Director
- Dawn McCleish, Central Rivers AEA – Work Experience Coordinator
- Nicole Regan, Mosaic – At Home Manager

Youth Committee Roster

The Youth Committee provides oversight and guidance for youth workforce initiatives and programs serving young people throughout Northeast Iowa.

Members include:

- Ashley Stanley (Chair), Buchanan County Health Center – Director of HR & Process Improvement
- Katrina Moore, Henkel Construction – HR Director
- Casey Studer, Mason City Schools – Director of Special Education and Student Services
- Farrah Olson, Forest City Schools – Work Experience Coordinator
- Dawn McCleish, Central Rivers AEA – Work Experience Coordinator
- Shyla Bagge, Jesup Schools – Work Experience Coordinator
- Emma Hall, Iowa Primary Care Association – Director of System Navigation
- Juan Hernandez, Hawkeye Community College / Independence CSD – College & Career Transition Counselor
- Carrie Pontzius, Junior Achievement – Workforce & Evaluations Director
- Tim Felderman, Hampton-Dumont Community School District – Superintendent
- Dennis Schilling, Power Engineering & Manufacturing, LTD – President & CEO
- Keith Wieland, Buchanan County – Board of Supervisor / CEO
- Jen Faust, 43 North Iowa – Chief Service Director
- Ashley Ross, iJAG – Program Manager

Performance & Monitoring Committee Roster

The Performance & Monitoring Committee supports the board's oversight responsibilities by reviewing program performance, monitoring results, and compliance activities across workforce programs.

Members include:

- Amber Youngblut (Chair), Cedar Falls Schools – Executive Director of Human Resources
- Ashley Stanley, Buchanan County Health Center – Human Resources & Process Improvement Director
- James Bronner, City of Waverly – City Administrator
- Nicolas Hockenberry, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation – Director of Workforce Solutions
- Heidi Nederhoff, Grundy County – County Supervisor / CLEO

## NORTHEAST IOWA FISCAL AGENT

**Central Iowa Juvenile Detention Center (CIJDC)**

Kassie Ruth, Executive Director
Central Iowa Juvenile Detention Center
2317 Rick Collins Way
Eldora, Iowa 50627
641-858-3852
kassie@cijdc.com

## NORTHEAST IOWA BOARD SUPPORT

**Taylor Williams-** Executive Director
600 S. Pierce Ave.
Mason City, Iowa 50401
515-291-3693
taylor@northeastiawdb.org

***Executive Director Role Description:***
The Executive Director provides leadership and executive management for the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB). The Executive Director is responsible for fiscal and program oversight, leadership, and strategic vision for the Board. The Executive Director works with the Board to

establish a strategic vision and acts as an advocate for the organization throughout the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Area. The Executive Director must develop and maintain strong relationships and partnerships. The Executive Director must carry out the day-to-day operations of the Board and maintain compliance with local, state, and federal policies, laws, regulations, and bylaws adopted by the NEIWDB. Other responsibilities include managing staff, supporting communications throughout the workforce system, fiscal management, and coordination and integration of the workforce development system within the State of Iowa.

Erika Lippmann- Associate Director/EO Officer
600 S. Pierce Ave.
Mason City, Iowa 50401
319-222-1239
erika@northeastiawdb.org

*Associate Director/EO Office Role Description:*
The Associate Director collaborates with Title I Director on program planning, development, and implementation. The Associate Director has a primary focus on outreach efforts and youth program and development activities and oversight throughout the Northeast Iowa LWDA. Supports the Title I Youth Service Provider and provides guidance and direction as it relates to the Youth program. Other primary duties include business services and programming, cultivating partnerships, oversight of the Incumbent Worker Training Program, development of sector strategies, and analysis of Labor Market Information. The Local Equal Opportunity (EO) Officers are responsible to the State EO Officer on matters of equal opportunity provisions and nondiscrimination requirements prescribed in 29 CFR Part 38, and equal opportunity and nondiscrimination matters related to Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) programs. As the Equal Opportunity Officer responsibilities include serving as the primary contact for EO activities within the local area, resolve discrimination complaints, promoting the elimination of discriminatory practices through programs, and review and evaluate local offices in implementing EO regulations, policies, and procedures.

Caraline Eggena- Compliance Specialist
600 S. Pierce Ave.
Mason City, Iowa 50401
641-903-9563
caraline@northeastiawdb.org

*Compliance Specialist Role Description:*
The Compliance Specialist supports the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program through compliance management, assisting in the growth of efficient and effective service delivery to WIOA customers. The Compliance Specialist ensures that our local area is compliant with all regulations, laws, and policies at the local, state, and federal levels. Primary responsibilities include workforce compliance and monitoring activities.

## NORTHEAST IOWA TITLE I SERVICE PROVIDER

**The Kaiser Group (DE), LLC dba Dynamic Workforce Solutions (DWFS)**
Terri Leisten, President
237 South, Suite 101
Waukesha, WI 53186
Terri.leisten@dwfs.us

**Services Provided:** WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth career and training services under contract with the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board.

## NORTHEAST IOWA – ONE-STOP OPERATOR

**Lifeskills Connection, Inc.**
Steve Reitan, Owner
1500 W. 3rd Street
Manning, Iowa 51455
reitan@lifeskillsconnection.com

**Services Provided:** One-Stop Operator services under contract with the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board, including coordination of the One-Stop delivery system, facilitation of required partner collaboration, oversight of One-Stop operations, and support for continuous improvement of the integrated service delivery system.

## NORTHEAST IOWA OFFICE LOCATIONS

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Area operates multiple IowaWORKS American Job Centers to provide workforce services to job seekers, employers, and partner programs throughout the region. Comprehensive centers are located in Mason City, Waterloo, and Dubuque, with an affiliate site located in Decorah. These locations provide access to workforce development services, employment assistance, training resources, and partner program services. These centers operate as part of the American Job Center network and provide integrated workforce services in collaboration with workforce system partners.

Mason City IowaWORKS – Comprehensive Center

**Center Manager:**
Greg Pappas, Operations Manager

**Address:**
600 South Pierce Avenue
Mason City, Iowa 50401

**Operating Hours:**
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday – 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday – Closed

**Phone:**
641-422-1543

**Email:**
MasonCityIowaWorks@iwd.iowa.gov

**Website:**
https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/mason-city

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**Waterloo IowaWORKS – Comprehensive Center**

**Center Manager:**
Karen Siler, Operations Manager

**Address:**
3420 University Avenue
Waterloo, Iowa 50701

**Operating Hours:**
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday – 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday – Closed

**Phone:**
319-235-2123

**Email:**
WaterlooIowaWorks@iwd.iowa.gov

**Website:**
https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/waterloo

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**Dubuque IowaWORKS – Comprehensive Center**

**Center Manager:**
Marla Loecke, Operations Manager

**Address:**
680 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

**Operating Hours:**
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday – 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday – Closed

**Phone:**
563-556-5800

**Email:**
DubuqueIowaWorks@iwd.iowa.gov

**Website:**
https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/dubuque

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**Decorah IowaWORKS – Affiliate Site**

**Center Manager:**
Marla Loecke, Operations Manager

**Address:**
312 Winnebago Street
Decorah, Iowa 52101

**Operating Hours:**
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday – 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday – Closed

**Phone:**
563-382-0457

**Email:**
DubuqueIowaWorks@iwd.iowa.gov

**Website:**
https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/decorah

## LOCAL PLAN DRAFT PROCESS

At the direction of the NEIWDB the Executive Director worked collaboratively with the following:

- Chief Elected Officials (CEOs)
- Members of the NEIWDB
- Core and Required Partners
- Local Businesses
- Local Community Organizations
- Interested Members of the Public

Partners provided input on their respective areas of expertise. Input was gathered through meetings and email communications. A local plan recurring agenda item was included on all board, committee, and core/required partner meetings throughout the development of the plan. This provided an

opportunity for board staff to offer updates and review input and suggestions from stakeholders. A draft of the local plan document was shared electronically with stakeholders being given editing privileges to provide input throughout the writing process. The board selected a group of designated reviewers, which was a combination of the Executive and Planning and Operations Committees, and the process was discussed publicly during board meetings.

As mandated by federal law and state policy, all WIOA local plan requirements were fulfilled throughout the drafting of this document. The local area followed the Public Comment Process defined by Iowa's ePolicy.

# SECTION 2 – STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS

Questions in this section are designed to address the aspects of the local area's labor force, such as its composition and the determination of skills gaps between the talent needed by employers in the local area and the knowledge and skills held by workers and job seekers. It is recommended that these plans include data samples and streamlined graphics and tables that support the narrative provided. The local board must cite the source(s) used to collect all or part of the local area labor market.

## ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Local Plan Question:

1. **Economic Analysis:** Include a local area analysis of the:
   a. Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
   b. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

### INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Area (LWDA) utilizes labor market information from Lightcast, Iowa Workforce Development, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics to assess regional economic conditions, identify in-demand industries, and evaluate emerging workforce trends.

Priority industries were determined through analysis of current employment levels, projected five-year growth, annual openings, median wages, and industry concentration using location quotient methodology. Quantitative labor market data was supplemented with employer input, sector partnership engagement, and regional economic development priorities to ensure that workforce investments align with documented business demand.

Based on this comprehensive analysis, the following industries have been identified as priority sectors within Northeast Iowa:

- Health Care and Social Assistance

- Manufacturing
- Educational Services
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Finance and Insurance
- Construction

Designation as a priority industry signals strategic focus for the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board. These sectors guide sector partnership activities, inform Individual Training Account (ITA) investments, support expansion of work-based learning opportunities, and shape the development of career pathways aligned with employer needs. Priority industries also serve as the foundation for coordinated business engagement and alignment of workforce system resources.

Manufacturing continues to serve as a cornerstone of the regional economy, representing a significant share of employment across the 20-county area. The sector demonstrates ongoing demand for skilled production workers, maintenance technicians, machinists, and technical occupations that offer opportunities for wage progression through credential attainment and apprenticeship or on-the-job training models. Health Care and Social Assistance remains a critical and growing sector, driven by demographic trends, an aging population, and sustained demand for healthcare services.

Construction and Transportation and Warehousing reflect steady growth associated with infrastructure investment, logistics expansion, and supply chain activity. Educational Services and Finance and Insurance provide employment stability and competitive wage potential, contributing to the region's long-term economic resilience.

As a largely rural workforce area spanning 20 counties, Northeast Iowa faces unique labor market dynamics. Employers are geographically dispersed, public transportation options are limited in many communities, and labor pools are smaller in certain rural areas. These regional characteristics require coordinated workforce system alignment, sector-based strategies, and flexible training delivery models to ensure businesses can access skilled talent throughout the region.

Employment across the region is projected to grow from approximately 247,000 jobs in 2022 to more than 260,000 jobs by 2025, representing overall growth of approximately six percent. While this growth trajectory is positive, average earnings per job in Northeast Iowa remain below the national average. This wage gap underscores the importance of prioritizing training investments that lead to higher-wage, high-demand occupations within identified priority sectors.

Employment growth is not evenly distributed across the workforce area. The largest projected job gains are concentrated in the Waterloo and Dubuque labor markets, which account for a substantial share of total regional employment. However, smaller rural communities are also expected to experience moderate growth. This geographic distribution highlights the need for regionally coordinated strategies

that expand access to training, work-based learning, and supportive services across both urban centers and rural communities.

Industry-level projections indicate strong growth within advanced manufacturing subsectors, including machinery manufacturing and biological product manufacturing, many of which offer wages above the regional average. Healthcare-related industries, including hospitals, physician offices, and nursing care facilities, are also projected to expand steadily. These trends present opportunities for career advancement through attainment of industry-recognized credentials aligned with high-demand occupations.

At the same time, workforce challenges persist. A significant share of workers in manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and skilled trades occupations are approaching retirement age, increasing succession planning pressures and competition for experienced talent. Strengthening youth engagement, career awareness initiatives, incumbent worker training, and credential attainment pathways will be critical to sustaining industry growth and mitigating retirement-related workforce gaps.

Expanding labor force participation among underrepresented populations—including individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, English language learners, individuals with barriers to employment, and those without postsecondary credentials—remains essential to addressing employer demand. Targeted outreach, coordinated partner engagement, and supportive service strategies will be aligned with priority industry needs to broaden access to employment opportunities and strengthen the regional talent pipeline.

Although regional wages remain below national averages, several priority industries provide clear career ladder opportunities with strong wage progression potential. The Board will prioritize workforce investments that support attainment of industry-recognized credentials linked to occupations offering family-sustaining wages and long-term career mobility.

The industry and workforce trends outlined in this section provide the analytical foundation for the Board's strategic priorities, including sector partnership expansion, employer-driven training investments, growth of work-based learning models, and alignment of workforce programming with in-demand occupations. By aligning workforce system resources with documented labor market demand, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board supports sustainable economic growth while expanding equitable access to employment opportunities throughout the region.

Detailed industry data tables, employment projections, wage comparisons, concentration analysis, and regional breakdowns are provided in **Appendix A – Industry Snapshot**.

## INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

In addition to identifying priority industries, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board utilizes industry cluster analysis to better understand the regional economy and inform workforce development strategy. Industry cluster mapping provides a broader view of how related industries interact within supply chains, share workforce needs, and contribute collectively to regional economic strength.

Cluster analysis for Northeast Iowa was conducted using U.S. Cluster Mapping data and incorporates weighted measures including industry earnings, projected growth, location quotient (LQ), shift-share analysis, and gross regional product (GRP). Clusters are scored on a 100-point scale to reflect their overall competitive strength and economic significance within the region. The average cluster score for Northeast Iowa is 23. Clusters scoring above 23 are considered stronger than the regional average, while those below 23 demonstrate lower relative concentration or competitive advantage. Clusters scoring 27 or higher are identified as top-performing clusters based on application of the average deviation to the regional mean.

The highest-ranked cluster in Northeast Iowa is Production Technology and Heavy Machinery, with a score of 59, significantly exceeding the regional average. This cluster includes multiple advanced manufacturing industries such as Construction Machinery Manufacturing, Industrial Valve Manufacturing, Air-Conditioning and Commercial Equipment Manufacturing, and Conveyor Equipment Manufacturing. The strength of this cluster reflects Northeast Iowa's long-standing competitive advantage in advanced manufacturing and machinery production, reinforcing Manufacturing as a priority industry for workforce investment.

Other prominent clusters include:

- Livestock Processing (Score: 42)
- Agricultural Inputs and Services (Score: 34)
- Food Processing and Manufacturing (Score: 28)

The Livestock Processing and Food Processing clusters highlight the continued importance of value-added agriculture within the regional economy. These clusters demonstrate strong employment concentration and reinforce the interconnection between agricultural production, food manufacturing, and supply chain distribution. Agricultural Inputs and Services further supports this ecosystem through crop production, animal production, fertilizer manufacturing, and support activities for agricultural operations.

Together, these clusters illustrate a highly integrated regional economy centered on advanced manufacturing, agricultural production, food processing, and machinery development. The concentration of industries within these clusters reflects both historical strengths and continued growth potential.

Cluster analysis provides several strategic benefits for workforce planning:

- Identifies industry groupings with competitive advantage and strong regional concentration
- Highlights supply chain linkages that influence workforce demand
- Supports alignment of sector partnerships with broader economic ecosystems

- Guides training investments toward clusters with high earnings and growth potential
- Strengthens coordination between workforce development, education, and economic development partners

In addition to evaluating job growth projections between 2023 and 2027, cluster analysis compares earnings per worker and industry concentration to better understand relative economic impact. Manufacturing-related clusters demonstrate particularly strong projected growth and wage potential, further supporting continued investment in technical skills training, apprenticeship expansion, and career pathway development aligned with advanced manufacturing and production occupations.

Cluster mapping also enables the Board to evaluate industry concentration relative to national benchmarks. Industries with higher location quotients indicate competitive specialization within Northeast Iowa, signaling opportunities to sustain and expand these economic advantages through strategic workforce initiatives.

By examining both job growth trends and industry concentration within clusters, the Board is better positioned to target high-impact industries that support long-term economic sustainability. This analysis informs sector partnership priorities, work-based learning expansion, incumbent worker training, and alignment of education and training programs with high-demand industry clusters.

Detailed cluster composition, scoring methodology, and industry breakdowns are provided in **Appendix B – Industry Clusters**

## INDUSTRY UNEMPLOYMENT OVERVIEW

An analysis of unemployment by industry sector provides insight into workforce availability, sector-specific labor market dynamics, and potential alignment opportunities between job seekers and in-demand industries within Northeast Iowa. Industry-level unemployment data was derived from Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics, the Department of Labor's Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed, and Iowa Workforce Development labor market data.

As of September 2023, the Manufacturing sector accounted for the largest share of unemployed individuals among priority industries within the region. Approximately 2,900 individuals with prior employment in manufacturing were reported as unemployed, representing a significant portion of total regional unemployment. This concentration reflects both the size of the manufacturing sector within the regional economy and the ongoing volatility associated with production cycles, supply chain fluctuations, and economic shifts.

Within the Health Care and Social Assistance sector, approximately 770 individuals were reported as unemployed during the same period. While healthcare remains a high-demand industry with projected

growth, unemployment levels within this sector suggest opportunities for improved alignment between job seekers and available positions, particularly in occupations requiring specific credentials or licensure.

Reviewing unemployment by industry allows the Board to better understand where dislocated workers are concentrated and how workforce services can be strategically targeted. By comparing regional patterns with national benchmarks, the Board gains additional context regarding sector-specific trends and competitive positioning.

A more detailed occupational analysis was conducted within the Manufacturing sector due to its status as a primary driver of the regional economy. Staffing pattern analysis across more than 300 occupations within manufacturing indicates projected growth between 2023 and 2027 in several key occupational categories. Assemblers and Fabricators and Production and Operating Workers are projected to experience measurable employment increases, with both occupations typically requiring a high school diploma combined with on-the-job training. Growth is also projected in skilled technical occupations such as Welders, Mechanical Engineers, Industrial Engineers, and Packaging and Machine Operators.

These occupational trends reinforce the importance of career pathway development, credential attainment, and work-based learning models that prepare individuals for entry-level and advanced roles within manufacturing. Aligning dislocated workers and unemployed individuals with training programs tied to these projected growth occupations remains a strategic priority.

Quarterly employment and wage data further illustrate the prominence of manufacturing within the regional economy. Manufacturing consistently maintains the highest sustained employment levels among major sectors and reports some of the highest average weekly wages within the region. Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Educational Services also represent significant sources of employment across the 20-county workforce area.

The combination of industry-level unemployment data, occupational staffing projections, and wage analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of labor market conditions in Northeast Iowa. This analysis supports targeted workforce strategies, including rapid reemployment services, sector-based training investments, incumbent worker training, and alignment of education and workforce programming with high-demand occupations.

Detailed unemployment data, staffing patterns, and supporting labor market analysis are provided in **Appendix C – Industry Unemployment Overview.**

## INDUSTRY DIVERSITY SNAPSHOT

To better understand the economic composition of the region, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board reviewed industry diversity data for the counties in which the comprehensive One-Stop Centers are located: Cerro Gordo, Black Hawk, Winneshiek, and Dubuque Counties. Industry diversity analysis examines how evenly employment is distributed across major industry clusters within a

county. Regions with higher industry diversity typically demonstrate greater economic stability and resilience, as employment is not overly concentrated in a single sector.

The analysis indicates that all four counties exhibit relatively high levels of industry diversity compared to typical counties. In each location, employment is distributed across multiple industry clusters rather than concentrated in a narrow set of sectors. This diversified economic base supports long-term stability and reduces vulnerability to sector-specific downturns.

Cerro Gordo County demonstrates strong distribution of employment across manufacturing, healthcare, retail trade, and service-based industries, reflecting a balanced local economy that supports both goods-producing and service-providing sectors.

Black Hawk County, home to one of the region's largest labor markets, also reflects high industry diversity, with employment spread across manufacturing, education, healthcare, logistics, and professional services. This diversity strengthens the county's role as a regional employment hub.

Winneshiek County exhibits a similarly diversified structure, with employment distributed across manufacturing, agriculture-related industries, healthcare, and tourism-related sectors. The balanced distribution supports economic resilience within this more rural labor market.

Dubuque County maintains a broad mix of advanced manufacturing, finance and insurance, healthcare, education, and professional services industries. The county's industry composition supports higher-wage employment opportunities and contributes significantly to regional economic output.

High industry diversity across these counties signals overall regional economic resilience. A diversified economy is better positioned to withstand fluctuations in individual industries while sustaining employment levels across multiple sectors.

For workforce development planning purposes, industry diversity analysis helps inform service delivery strategies at each One-Stop Center. Understanding the varied economic structures within these counties enables the Board and partners to:

- Align business engagement strategies with dominant and emerging industry clusters
- Tailor career pathway development to reflect local labor market composition
- Support dislocated workers transitioning between sectors
- Coordinate training investments based on localized industry demand

The industry diversity snapshot reinforces that while Northeast Iowa maintains strong manufacturing and agriculture-based clusters, its One-Stop Center counties benefit from broad-based economic participation

across multiple sectors. This diversified foundation strengthens regional workforce stability and supports strategic alignment of workforce services with localized economic conditions.

Detailed industry diversity data and county-level breakdowns are provided in **Appendix D – Industry Diversity Snapshot**.

## OCCUPATION SNAPSHOT

The Occupation Snapshot provides an in-depth review of high-demand occupations within Northeast Iowa and offers insight into workforce supply, wage competitiveness, educational alignment, and projected growth trends. Particular focus was placed on Registered Nurses (RNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) due to their critical role in the healthcare system and the region's continued need to expand access to primary care services.

### Registered Nurses

Registered Nurses remain one of the most essential and consistently in-demand occupations within Northeast Iowa. As the population ages and healthcare utilization increases, demand for nursing services continues to grow across hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, and outpatient settings.

Regional employment levels for Registered Nurses are slightly above the expected national average when adjusted for region size, indicating that Northeast Iowa maintains a relatively strong supply of RNs compared to similarly sized labor markets. However, projected demand over the next five years suggests continued hiring needs driven by retirements, replacement demand, and industry expansion.

The majority of Registered Nurses in the region are employed in general medical and surgical hospitals, with strong geographic concentration in Dubuque, Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Mason City, and Decorah. In 2022, the regional median wage for Registered Nurses was approximately $64,585, which is below the national median wage. Although cost of living in the region is slightly lower than the national average, wage differentials may impact long-term talent attraction and retention, particularly for experienced nurses.

Educational alignment analysis indicates that multiple nursing programs are available within or near the region; however, the number of annual completers does not fully offset projected annual openings. This gap reinforces the importance of continued investment in nursing career pathways, clinical partnerships, and healthcare workforce retention strategies.

### Nurse Practitioners

Nurse Practitioners represent an advanced practice occupation critical to expanding access to primary care, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Northeast Iowa maintains a higher-than-

expected supply of Nurse Practitioners relative to similarly sized regions, which strengthens the area's healthcare delivery capacity.

Most Nurse Practitioners are employed in physicians' offices and outpatient settings, supporting preventive care, chronic disease management, and primary care access. The regional median wage for Nurse Practitioners is closely aligned with the national median wage, and when adjusted for cost of living, purchasing power is competitive. This relative wage competitiveness enhances the region's ability to attract and retain advanced practice providers.

While educational programs exist to support NP credential attainment, continued alignment between higher education institutions, clinical training sites, and employer demand will be necessary to sustain workforce levels in this occupation.

### Broader Occupational Trends

Beyond healthcare, occupational projections across Northeast Iowa indicate continued demand in advanced manufacturing, skilled trades, logistics, and education-related occupations. Manufacturing-related roles such as production workers, welders, industrial maintenance technicians, and engineers continue to show stable or increasing demand. Many of these occupations require postsecondary certificates, associate degrees, or apprenticeship-based training, reinforcing the need for work-based learning expansion.

Replacement demand due to retirements remains a significant driver of openings across multiple sectors. Even in occupations with modest employment growth, turnover and retirements are projected to generate consistent hiring needs over the next five years. This trend is particularly evident in healthcare, skilled trades, and education-related occupations.

### Educational Program Completions

An analysis of regional educational completions provides additional insight into workforce pipeline alignment. In 2022, the largest number of program completers were in Liberal Arts and Sciences, Registered Nursing, and Elementary Education and Teaching. The 523 Registered Nursing completers reflect a strong regional emphasis on healthcare workforce preparation. Similarly, 520 completers in Elementary Education and Teaching highlight continued investment in preparing educators for regional school systems.

While healthcare and education program completions remain strong, ongoing alignment between training capacity and projected occupational demand will be necessary to ensure sufficient workforce supply in high-demand occupations.

### Legacy Occupational Trends

Reviewing historical occupational data provides valuable context for long-term workforce planning. Legacy occupation analysis highlights sustained demand in healthcare, manufacturing, and education occupations over time. Understanding historical employment patterns allows the Board to anticipate future workforce needs, monitor shifts in industry demand, and adjust training investments accordingly.

Long-term occupational trend analysis supports informed decision-making related to sector partnerships, credential investments, youth career awareness initiatives, and incumbent worker training programs.

The Occupation Snapshot analysis provides critical insight into workforce supply, wage competitiveness, educational alignment, and projected demand across Northeast Iowa. These findings inform targeted workforce strategies, including healthcare career pathway expansion, work-based learning development, credential attainment initiatives, and alignment of training investments with high-demand occupations.

Detailed occupational data tables, projections, wage comparisons, and program completion data are provided in **Appendix E – Occupation Snapshot.**

## OCCUPATIONS PROJECTIONS

Occupational projections provide insight into anticipated workforce demand across Northeast Iowa and help guide training investments, career pathway development, and business engagement strategies. By examining projected growth rates, total employment levels, wage data, and replacement demand, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board can align workforce system resources with occupations expected to experience sustained demand over the next five years.

Analysis of projected occupational growth indicates that Production Occupations are anticipated to experience the highest overall percentage growth at approximately 9 percent. Business and Financial Operations Occupations are projected to grow by approximately 8 percent, reflecting expanding demand for administrative, financial, and operational expertise across multiple industry sectors.

Office and Administrative Support Occupations and Production Occupations continue to represent the largest occupational groups in the region based on total employment levels. These are followed by Transportation and Material Moving Occupations and Sales and Related Occupations. The concentration of employment within these occupational groups reflects the region's strong manufacturing base, logistics activity, and diversified service economy.

Projected growth is not limited to entry-level or production roles. Management Occupations, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, and Business and Financial Operations Occupations are all expected to experience continued expansion. This trend signals increasing demand for both frontline workers and supervisory, technical, and administrative leadership roles across industries.

Wage analysis further highlights opportunities within high-skill occupations. Architecture and Engineering Occupations, Management Occupations, and Computer and Mathematical Occupations represent some

of the highest-paying career fields within Northeast Iowa. Architecture and Engineering Occupations report a median hourly wage exceeding $41, underscoring the strong earning potential associated with technical and advanced manufacturing-related roles.

In addition to growth percentages, replacement demand due to retirements and workforce turnover will generate consistent annual openings across many occupational groups. Even occupations with modest growth rates are expected to produce significant hiring needs as experienced workers exit the labor force. This is particularly relevant in production, transportation, skilled trades, healthcare support, and administrative occupations.

These occupational projections reinforce the importance of:

- Expanding work-based learning opportunities in production and logistics roles
- Strengthening business services aligned with financial and operational occupations
- Supporting credential attainment pathways for engineering, technical, and management roles
- Preparing job seekers for both entry-level and advancement opportunities within high-demand sectors

Understanding occupational demand trends enables individuals to make informed career decisions, supports education and training providers in aligning programs with labor market needs, and allows policymakers to target workforce investments that promote sustainable regional economic growth.

Detailed occupational projection tables, wage comparisons, and employment breakdowns are provided in **Appendix F – Occupation Projections.**

## OCCUPATION UNEMPLOYMENT OVERVIEW

An analysis of unemployment by occupational group provides additional insight into workforce availability and labor market dynamics across Northeast Iowa. As of September 2023, approximately 8,117 individuals were reported as unemployed within the 20-county workforce area.

Reviewing unemployment by occupation reveals that 11 percent of unemployed individuals were previously employed in Management Occupations, while approximately 5 percent were associated with Business and Financial Operations Occupations. This distribution reflects the broader composition of the regional economy, where management and administrative roles represent a meaningful share of total employment across industries.

Examining occupational unemployment patterns helps identify where dislocated workers may require targeted reemployment services, upskilling, or credential enhancement to transition into in-demand roles. While management and business-related occupations show measurable unemployment levels,

many individuals in these roles possess transferable skills that align with growth occupations in production, logistics, healthcare administration, and financial operations.

In addition to occupational distribution, regional unemployment rates throughout 2023 remained historically low. Northeast Iowa's unemployment rate peaked at approximately 3.3 percent in March 2023 and remained below or comparable to statewide averages during the year. These persistently low unemployment rates indicate a tight labor market environment in which employer demand continues to exceed available labor supply.

A tight labor market presents both opportunities and challenges. While low unemployment signals economic strength, it also limits the available pool of job seekers and increases competition among employers for skilled workers. As a result, workforce strategies must emphasize labor force participation expansion, incumbent worker training, career advancement pathways, and reengagement of underrepresented populations to meet employer demand.

Understanding occupational unemployment trends allows the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board to:

- Align rapid reemployment services with occupations experiencing displacement
- Support reskilling initiatives that connect unemployed individuals to projected growth occupations
- Identify transferable skill pathways between occupational groups
- Strengthen sector partnerships to address talent shortages in priority industries

The occupation-level unemployment analysis reinforces the importance of proactive workforce strategies in a low-unemployment environment. Continued coordination among workforce partners, education providers, and employers will be critical to sustaining economic growth and addressing emerging workforce gaps.

Detailed occupational unemployment data and supporting analysis are provided in **Appendix G – Occupation Unemployment Overview.**

## OCCUPATION TALENT POOL

The Occupation Talent Pool analysis provides a broad assessment of workforce supply, projected occupational growth, job concentration, and wage competitiveness across 798 occupations within Northeast Iowa.

Between 2017 and 2022, employment across these occupations declined by approximately 5,184 jobs (-2.0 percent), reflecting broader economic impacts during that period. This decline was below the national

growth rate of 4.3 percent over the same timeframe. However, projections from 2022 to 2027 indicate a positive outlook, with employment across these occupations expected to increase by approximately 18,193 jobs (7.3 percent), slightly outpacing the national projected growth rate of 7.1 percent. These projections signal renewed regional growth and stabilization following recent workforce contractions.

Regional job concentration for these occupations aligns closely with national averages. The region's concentration factor of 1.00 indicates that employment distribution across these occupations mirrors what would be expected in a similarly sized labor market. This suggests that Northeast Iowa maintains a balanced occupational structure without significant over- or under-specialization across the broader labor market.

Wage analysis indicates that the median hourly earnings across these occupations is approximately $20.08 per hour, which is modestly below the national median of $21.98 per hour. While lower labor costs may provide a competitive advantage for employers, wage differentials may also influence long-term talent attraction and retention, particularly for high-skill occupations.

Taken together, the talent pool data highlights several important workforce dynamics:

- Recent employment declines have transitioned to projected growth over the next five years.
- Occupational distribution remains consistent with national norms.
- Wage levels, while competitive for employers, may present recruitment challenges in certain high-demand occupations.

These findings reinforce the importance of strategies focused on:

- Strengthening career pathway alignment with projected growth occupations
- Expanding credential attainment and work-based learning opportunities
- Supporting wage progression through upskilling and advancement initiatives
- Increasing labor force participation among underrepresented populations

The Occupation Talent Pool analysis provides a comprehensive overview of workforce supply conditions and future demand trends. This information supports data-driven workforce planning and ensures that training investments, sector partnerships, and business engagement strategies align with projected occupational growth across Northeast Iowa.

Detailed occupational talent pool data, earnings distribution metrics, and supporting analysis are provided in **Appendix H – Occupation Talent Pool.**

## EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS IN IN-DEMAND INDUSTRIES

Employer engagement and survey data consistently indicate that businesses across Northeast Iowa continue to experience significant hiring challenges, particularly within identified priority industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, construction, transportation, and logistics.

Employers report persistent difficulty filling open positions due to both a general lack of applicants and a shortage of qualified candidates. The most frequently cited barrier is an insufficient number of applicants, followed closely by a lack of candidates possessing the technical skills, industry-recognized credentials, and relevant work experience necessary for effective job performance.

In addition to technical qualifications, employers emphasize the importance of foundational employability skills. Communication, teamwork, problem-solving, reliability, adaptability, and work ethic are consistently identified as critical competencies. As workplaces continue to evolve, employers increasingly seek individuals who demonstrate both occupational proficiency and strong interpersonal skills.

Technology integration across industries has further intensified workforce requirements. Employers indicate growing demand for workers who are proficient in industry-specific software, digital platforms, automation systems, and advanced equipment. Rapid technological change requires businesses to continually upskill incumbent workers while also recruiting new talent capable of adapting to evolving operational demands.

Survey results also reveal that employers are actively adjusting compensation strategies in response to labor market tightness. The most frequently reported workforce challenge response was revising pay scales, with more than half of surveyed employers indicating wage adjustments to remain competitive. Despite these efforts, businesses continue to report difficulty attracting and retaining qualified workers.

The sustained tight labor market environment, characterized by low unemployment rates and limited available labor supply, compounds these challenges. As a result, employers increasingly rely on partnerships with workforce development, education providers, and community organizations to strengthen talent pipelines.

Key employer needs identified through engagement efforts include:

- Increased availability of work-ready applicants
- Expanded access to industry-recognized credential programs
- Enhanced career awareness among youth and career changers
- Stronger alignment between education and industry skill requirements
- Expanded work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities
- Support for incumbent worker training to address technological advancements

In response, the Northeast Iowa LWDA will continue to collaborate with employers, educational institutions, economic development partners, and community agencies to align workforce initiatives with documented business needs. Particular emphasis will remain on supporting career pathways leading to high-demand occupations within manufacturing, healthcare, construction, transportation, and related sectors.

Workforce strategies will prioritize:

- Sector partnership expansion to address industry-specific skill gaps
- Employer-driven training investments
- Work-based learning and apprenticeship growth
- Incumbent worker training to support technology adoption
- Outreach to underrepresented populations to expand labor force participation

By maintaining strong employer engagement and responding to evolving workforce demands, the Northeast Iowa LWDA strengthens the connection between labor market supply and industry need. This alignment ensures that workforce development initiatives remain responsive, data-driven, and focused on supporting sustainable regional economic growth.

Detailed employer survey findings and supporting data are provided in **Appendix I – Employment Needs of Employers in In-Demand Industries.**

## BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

In the local area of Northeast Iowa, numerous prevalent obstacles impede individuals from securing employment. These barriers often intertwine with each other, creating complex challenges for job seekers. Common barriers include a history of criminal offenses, struggles with addiction, mental health issues, and physical disabilities. Moreover, these challenges are frequently intertwined with issues of poverty and a lack of educational opportunities.

Many individuals in the Northeast Iowa local area grapple with multiple barriers simultaneously, compounding the difficulties they face. Additionally, concerns related to transportation, access to shelter, and food insecurities further exacerbate the challenges individuals encounter on their employment journey.

Addressing the root causes of each barrier is a priority, and the Northeast Iowa local area is committed to fostering solutions. One key approach involves promoting the development of fundamental employability skills, such as critical thinking, time management, organization, and self-motivation. These skills play a crucial role in enhancing an individual's capacity to secure and maintain employment successfully.

Furthermore, the Northeast Iowa local area recognizes the significance of interpersonal skills in navigating the employment landscape. Effective communication, teamwork, and interpersonal competence are essential elements in overcoming barriers and thriving in various workplace environments.

In alignment with these efforts, the Northeast Iowa local area actively encourages individuals facing barriers to employment to attain industry-recognized credentials. These credentials not only enhance the individual's qualifications but also provide tangible evidence of their skills and competencies to potential employers.

By addressing the multifaceted nature of barriers and emphasizing skill development, the Northeast Iowa local area aims to empower individuals in the area to overcome obstacles to employment. This comprehensive approach underscores the importance of equipping individuals with the tools and qualifications necessary to enhance their employability and achieve sustainable success in the workforce.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation (IVRS), and the Department for the Blind (IDB) share a dedication to assisting individuals in overcoming disabilities to attain their employment objectives. The Northeast Iowa local area is actively engaged in broadening the accessibility of services and employment opportunities through the collaborative efforts of the NEIWDB Disability Access Committee (DAC).

The primary focus of the DAC is to facilitate and enhance access to services provided at Iowa*WORKS* centers, both in terms of physical accessibility and programmatic inclusivity. This committee is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that individuals with disabilities have seamless access to the array of services offered by Iowa*WORKS* centers, fostering an inclusive environment for all.

In addition to physical access, the DAC oversees the continuous evaluation and utilization of assistive resources available within the centers. This includes maintaining a comprehensive inventory of assistive technology solutions and accommodations. The purpose of this inventory is to ensure that staff members are well-informed about the available resources, thereby enabling them to effectively assist individuals with disabilities.

By proactively managing the inventory and promoting awareness of assistive technology solutions, the DAC plays a pivotal role in creating a supportive and accessible infrastructure within Iowa*WORKS* centers. This commitment ensures that individuals with disabilities receive the necessary assistance and accommodations to overcome barriers, ultimately facilitating their successful integration into the workforce.

Aligned with the One Stop Operator's initiatives, the Disability Access Committee (DAC) will take charge of coordinating cross-training initiatives involving core and mandated partners. This cross-training effort is designed to foster a collaborative environment where staff members from different organizations are well-versed in the array of available assistive resources. It also ensures that personnel across various agencies maintain proficiency in utilizing these resources effectively.

The DAC's responsibilities extend to overseeing activities geared towards serving businesses within the community. These initiatives aim to provide educational support to businesses, enlightening them on strategies to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. By fostering awareness and understanding among businesses, the DAC endeavors to create an inclusive and supportive employment landscape that accommodates the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities. This dual approach, combining cross-training for organizational partners and outreach to businesses, is instrumental in advancing the DAC's mission to facilitate employment opportunities and inclusivity within the workforce.

In summary, the collaboration between IVRS, IDB, and the NEIWDB, particularly through the DAC, underscores a commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment for individuals with disabilities. Through these efforts, the goal is to empower individuals to achieve their employment goals and contribute meaningfully to the workforce.

Northeast Iowa is committed to enhancing collaboration among partners with the aim of minimizing service duplication and fostering seamless integration of all program services offered at Iowa*WORKS*

centers. Title IV, in particular, will uphold its role as a repository of subject matter expertise, specializing in aiding individuals facing disability-related barriers. Additionally, Title IV will maintain a deep understanding of services geared towards helping businesses overcome employment obstacles associated with disabilities.

Title IV, in collaboration with the One-Stop Operator and other partners, will actively contribute to the development of business service strategies. These strategies are strategically designed to address and resolve challenges posed by disability barriers in the employment sector. By leveraging its expertise, Title IV aims to play a pivotal role in shaping and implementing solutions that facilitate inclusive practices for businesses.

The dissemination of this specialized knowledge to other collaborative partners is a key component of Title IV's strategy. By sharing insights and expertise, Title IV seeks to broaden the reach of its services to a larger network of employers. This knowledge-sharing initiative is essential for creating a collective impact, empowering a greater number of businesses to effectively address and mitigate disability-related employment barriers. Through this collaborative effort, Northeast Iowa endeavors to create a more cohesive and supportive environment within Iowa***WORKS*** centers, ensuring that individuals with disabilities and businesses alike benefit from informed and effective solutions.

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The regional economic analysis for the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) provides a comprehensive overview of industry composition, employer demand, and economic drivers across the 20-county region. Data from Lightcast, Iowa Workforce Development, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis were analyzed to identify key industries, economic clusters, and workforce demand trends shaping the regional economy.

Manufacturing continues to serve as a cornerstone of the Northeast Iowa economy, representing one of the largest sources of employment across the region. Advanced manufacturing activities, particularly within the Production Technology and Heavy Machinery cluster, demonstrate strong employment concentration and continued growth potential. Other key industry clusters identified through cluster mapping analysis include livestock processing, agricultural inputs and services, and food processing and manufacturing, reflecting the region’s strong connection to agriculture and value-added production.

Healthcare and social assistance also represent a major driver of employment growth within the region. Increasing healthcare demand driven by demographic trends, including an aging population, continues to expand employment opportunities across healthcare occupations and support services.

Industry diversity analysis indicates that several counties within Northeast Iowa maintain relatively balanced employment distribution across multiple industry sectors. This diversity contributes to regional economic stability and helps buffer the local economy from industry-specific downturns.

Employer engagement and survey data indicate that businesses across the region continue to experience significant workforce challenges. Employers consistently report difficulty filling open positions due to a lack of applicants and shortages of candidates possessing the necessary technical and occupational skills. Employers also emphasize the importance of foundational employability skills, including communication, teamwork, dependability, and problem-solving abilities.

Additionally, employers report that rapid technological advancements across industries require workers to possess increasingly sophisticated technical competencies, including familiarity with digital systems, automation, and specialized equipment.

Overall, the regional economic analysis highlights a strong and diverse economic base supported by manufacturing, healthcare, logistics, and agriculture-related industries. However, continued economic growth will depend on strengthening the regional workforce pipeline and aligning workforce development strategies with employer skill requirements.

These findings directly inform the Northeast Iowa LWDA's strategic priorities, including strengthening sector partnerships, expanding employer-driven training initiatives, and supporting career pathway development aligned with in-demand industries.

## WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

Local Plan Question:

2. **Workforce Analysis:** Include a current analysis of:
   a. The knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in the local area, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
   b. An analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and education and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

### POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Population trends provide important context for understanding the size, composition, and future availability of the regional workforce. An analysis of population data for the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) shows modest population growth over the past several years, while also highlighting demographic patterns that influence labor supply, workforce participation, and long-term economic sustainability.

Between 2023 and 2026, the total population across the 20-county Northeast Iowa region increased from 519,272 to 522,160 residents. This represents an increase of 2,888 individuals, or approximately 1 percent growth during the three-year period. While this growth indicates stability in the regional population base, it remains below the growth rate observed statewide and nationally during the same timeframe.

During this period, Iowa's population increased from 3,226,686 in 2023 to 3,289,536 in 2026, representing a 2 percent increase. Similarly, the national population also experienced approximately 2 percent growth. Compared to these broader trends, Northeast Iowa's slower population growth reflects ongoing demographic challenges common to many rural regions, including aging populations and slower rates of in-migration.

Despite modest overall population growth, several age groups within the region are experiencing increases. Individuals aged 45–49 showed an 11 percent increase between 2023 and 2026, while the 35–39 age group increased by approximately 577 individuals, representing a 2 percent increase. These trends suggest continued growth within mid-career age groups that represent a substantial portion of the current workforce.

### Age Distribution of the Workforce

Workforce age distribution data provides additional insight into the composition of employment across industries. Across the regional labor market, workers aged 35–44 represent the largest share of employment, accounting for approximately 20.6 percent of total jobs in Northeast Iowa. The 25–34 age group closely follows, representing approximately 20.4 percent of regional employment.

Industry-specific age patterns vary across sectors. For example:

- In Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting, the highest concentration of workers falls within the 25–34 age group (24 percent).
- Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction shows a higher concentration of workers aged 55–64, reflecting a more experienced workforce profile.
- Construction and Transportation and Warehousing have strong representation among workers aged 25–44, indicating continued participation of early and mid-career workers.
- Manufacturing employment is relatively balanced across the 25–54 age range, suggesting a stable and experienced workforce base.

These patterns demonstrate that many industries rely heavily on workers within the early and mid-career age ranges, while also highlighting the importance of preparing younger workers to replace retiring employees in sectors with aging workforce segments.

### Race and Ethnicity

Analysis of workforce race and ethnicity data indicates that the Northeast Iowa labor market remains relatively homogeneous compared to many other regions. Across industries, a large majority of workers are classified as Not Hispanic or Latino. Hispanic or Latino workers represent a smaller share of

employment across most sectors, with the highest representation found in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting, where Hispanic or Latino workers account for approximately 19 percent of employees.

Overall racial composition across industries reflects a predominately White workforce. White workers account for approximately 88.2 percent of total employment within Northeast Iowa. Black or African American workers represent approximately 3.8 percent of the workforce, equating to roughly 9,417 jobs across the region. Representation of Asian workers and other racial groups remains relatively small across most industries.

While this demographic composition reflects the current population base of the region, increasing workforce diversity may play an important role in addressing future labor shortages and expanding labor force participation.

### Gender Distribution

The gender distribution of employment across Northeast Iowa is relatively balanced overall, with males accounting for approximately 50.6 percent of jobs and females representing approximately 49.4 percent of employment.

However, significant differences exist across industries. Some sectors demonstrate strong gender concentration patterns:

- Health Care and Social Assistance is predominantly female, with approximately 84 percent of employees identifying as female.
- Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction is overwhelmingly male-dominated, with approximately 88 percent of workers identifying as male.
- Construction and Utilities also exhibit high male workforce participation.
- Retail Trade and Management of Companies and Enterprises show more balanced gender representation, with females representing 51 percent and 56 percent of workers respectively.

These patterns reflect long-standing occupational trends and highlight opportunities to expand workforce participation through broader career awareness initiatives and workforce training programs that encourage entry into nontraditional occupations.

### Implications for Workforce Development

Understanding regional population and workforce demographics is critical for workforce planning and policy development. Northeast Iowa's modest population growth, combined with an aging workforce and limited demographic diversity, reinforces the importance of strategies focused on expanding labor force participation and strengthening workforce pipelines.

Workforce development strategies will prioritize:

- Expanding career awareness initiatives for youth and emerging workers
- Increasing workforce participation among underrepresented populations
- Supporting reskilling and upskilling opportunities for mid-career workers
- Strengthening regional talent attraction and retention efforts

These demographic trends will continue to influence workforce availability, industry growth, and long-term economic sustainability within Northeast Iowa.

Detailed demographic tables and workforce composition data are provided in **Appendix J – Population Demographics.**

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment is a critical factor in understanding the preparedness of the regional workforce and the alignment between education levels and industry workforce needs. Analysis of educational attainment within Northeast Iowa provides insight into the qualifications of the existing workforce and highlights opportunities for workforce development strategies that support skill development and career advancement.

Educational attainment data used in this analysis is based on Lightcast demographic data and the American Community Survey and reflects the highest level of education achieved among individuals aged 25 years and older.

Across Northeast Iowa, educational attainment varies significantly by industry sector. Certain industries rely more heavily on workers with high school diplomas or equivalent credentials, while others require postsecondary education or advanced degrees.

For example, within the Manufacturing sector, approximately 32 percent of workers possess a high school diploma or equivalent as their highest level of education, while 30 percent have completed some college or an associate degree. This distribution reflects the sector's reliance on technical skills that are often acquired through vocational training, apprenticeship programs, and short-term credential programs.

The Health Care and Social Assistance sector demonstrates a higher concentration of workers with postsecondary education. Approximately 33 percent of workers in this sector hold some college education or an associate degree, reflecting the training requirements associated with many healthcare support and clinical occupations.

Utilities also demonstrates a strong concentration of workers with postsecondary training, with approximately 40 percent of employees holding some college education or an associate degree. These roles often require specialized technical knowledge and certification-based training.

Industries such as Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Finance and Insurance, and Educational Services show the highest concentration of workers holding bachelor's degrees or advanced degrees. For example, Educational Services reports approximately 37 percent of workers holding a bachelor's degree or higher, while Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services reports approximately 33 percent of workers with advanced education credentials.

Overall educational attainment levels across Northeast Iowa demonstrate that a significant portion of the workforce possesses some form of postsecondary education. In 2023, approximately 63,986 individuals in the region held a bachelor's degree, while 47,503 individuals held an associate degree. Additionally, approximately 68,995 individuals reported having completed some college coursework without obtaining a degree.

Educational attainment data also highlights demographic disparities in access to higher education. In 2023, the majority of individuals holding college degrees were White, non-Hispanic residents. Approximately 3,309 Black or African American residents held a college degree during the same period. While this reflects the overall demographic composition of the region, it also underscores the importance of expanding access to education and workforce training opportunities for underrepresented populations.

Population projections also indicate modest changes in the gender composition of the workforce. In 2023, the male population in Northeast Iowa totaled approximately 173,791 individuals, while females accounted for approximately 177,015 individuals. By 2027, the male population is projected to increase to approximately 177,524 individuals, while the female population is projected to reach approximately 175,755 individuals. These projections suggest continued balance in gender representation across the regional population.

Educational attainment and workforce outcomes are also closely connected to economic conditions within the region. Poverty rates across Northeast Iowa counties remain relatively low compared to many other regions of the country. More than half of the counties within the workforce area report poverty rates below 10 percent. Black Hawk County reports the highest poverty rate within the region, falling within the 15.0 to 19.9 percent range, with approximately 15 percent of residents experiencing poverty.

Understanding the relationship between education levels, workforce participation, and economic outcomes is critical for workforce planning. Educational attainment data helps inform workforce development initiatives by identifying opportunities to expand training programs, strengthen career pathways, and align educational programs with industry workforce needs.

Workforce strategies in Northeast Iowa will continue to focus on strengthening partnerships between employers, education providers, and workforce development partners to ensure that individuals have access to the training and credentials necessary to enter high-demand occupations.

Detailed educational attainment data and industry-level breakdowns are provided in **Appendix K – Educational Attainment.**

## SKILLS OF THE WORKFORCE

Understanding the skills needed by employers across Northeast Iowa is essential for aligning workforce development programs with current and future labor market demands. Employer feedback and labor market data provide insight into both the technical competencies and foundational employability skills required for success in today's workforce.

Employer surveys conducted across the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) indicate that many businesses continue to experience challenges related to workforce skills. Approximately 95.1 percent of employers reported concerns regarding a lack of soft skills among job applicants, while 64 percent indicated a shortage of hard skills required for effective job performance.

Soft skills refer to personal attributes and workplace behaviors that influence how individuals interact with others and perform their work. These skills are often associated with work habits, professionalism, and communication. Examples of soft skills include dependability, communication, teamwork, time management, adaptability, problem-solving, honesty, and self-motivation. Employers consistently report that these skills are essential for maintaining productivity, collaboration, and workplace culture.

Hard skills, in contrast, refer to specific technical abilities or knowledge required to perform particular job tasks. These skills are typically measurable and can be developed through formal education, training programs, certifications, or work experience. Examples include machine operation, computer literacy, data analysis, software proficiency, critical thinking, and industry-specific technical knowledge.

Labor market data further identifies the most frequently requested skills across job postings within the region. Analysis of job postings across multiple quarters highlights several skills that consistently appear among the most in-demand competencies.

Among the top skills identified across all job types, three skills appear consistently throughout the data:

- Merchandising
- Nursing
- Warehousing

The consistent demand for merchandising skills reflects the importance of retail operations, inventory management, and product presentation across a wide range of businesses. Nursing skills remain highly sought after due to ongoing demand within the healthcare sector and the growing need for healthcare services associated with an aging population. Warehousing skills continue to rank among the most requested competencies, highlighting the region's strong logistics, manufacturing, and supply chain activity.

In addition to these consistently high-demand skills, the broader list of top skills varies slightly by quarter, demonstrating the evolving nature of workforce skill requirements. This variation reflects changes in

industry demand, technological advancements, and shifting economic conditions that influence employer hiring needs.

The skills analysis provides valuable insight for multiple stakeholders. Employers can use this information to better define workforce requirements and develop training strategies for both new and incumbent workers. Job seekers can identify the skills most valued in the labor market and pursue training or education that enhances their employability. Educational institutions and workforce partners can use this data to ensure that training programs align with current industry needs.

For workforce development planning, the identified skill gaps highlight the need for continued investment in both technical training and employability skill development. Workforce initiatives in Northeast Iowa will prioritize strategies that strengthen career readiness, support industry-recognized credential attainment, and expand opportunities for work-based learning.

Key workforce strategies related to skill development include:

- Expanding work-based learning opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training
- Strengthening partnerships between employers and education providers to align training with industry needs
- Promoting career readiness and soft skill development through workforce and education programs
- Supporting incumbent worker training to address evolving technology and skill requirements

By strengthening both technical and foundational skills within the workforce, Northeast Iowa can better position job seekers to meet employer needs while supporting long-term regional economic growth.

Detailed skill demand data and quarterly skill rankings are provided in **Appendix L – Skills of the Workforce.**

## REGIONAL WORKFORCE ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The workforce analysis for the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Area examines workforce supply, occupational demand, demographic trends, educational attainment, and workforce skills across the 20-county region. Together, these data points provide a comprehensive understanding of the current workforce and future labor market challenges facing the region.

Population analysis indicates modest population growth within Northeast Iowa, although growth rates remain lower than statewide and national trends. Demographic data also highlights an aging workforce, with significant portions of the population approaching retirement age. This trend is expected to increase

replacement demand across several key industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and transportation.

Occupational projections indicate continued growth across several major occupational groups, particularly production occupations, business and financial operations occupations, transportation and material moving occupations, and healthcare professions. Even in occupations with moderate growth rates, retirements and workforce turnover are expected to generate substantial employment opportunities over the next several years.

Labor market conditions in Northeast Iowa remain tight, with historically low unemployment rates throughout recent years. While low unemployment indicates economic strength, it also creates challenges for employers by limiting the available pool of job seekers.

Educational attainment analysis indicates that a large portion of the regional workforce possesses some level of postsecondary education or training, including bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, or some college coursework. However, gaps remain between the skills employers require and the qualifications of available workers.

Employer feedback further reinforces this challenge. Workforce skill analysis indicates that employers frequently report shortages of both technical skills and foundational employability skills. Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, dependability, and time management were identified by employers as one of the most significant workforce gaps.

Workforce diversity analysis also indicates that the regional workforce remains relatively homogeneous compared to national averages. Expanding workforce participation among underrepresented populations will be critical to addressing workforce shortages and strengthening long-term labor force sustainability.

Together, these workforce trends highlight several key workforce priorities for Northeast Iowa, including strengthening career awareness efforts, expanding work-based learning opportunities, increasing access to training and credential attainment programs, and improving alignment between education providers and employer skill needs.

The Northeast Iowa LWDA will continue to work collaboratively with employers, educational institutions, economic development partners, and community organizations to address workforce challenges and support the development of a skilled and competitive workforce.

## ALIGNMENT WITH AMERICA'S TALENT STRATEGY

The Northeast Iowa workforce development system aligns with the national workforce priorities outlined in *America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age*, released by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce following Executive Order 14278, *Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future*. The strategy establishes five pillars designed to

strengthen the public workforce system and support the development of a highly skilled workforce aligned with industry demand.

Workforce system partners in Northeast Iowa—including the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board, Iowa*WORKS* centers, WIOA core program partners, educational institutions, economic development organizations, employers, and community-based organizations—work collaboratively to advance strategies that support these pillars while addressing the unique workforce needs of the region.

### PILLAR I: Industry-Driven Strategies

Workforce system partners in Northeast Iowa prioritize strong employer engagement to ensure workforce investments are aligned with regional industry demand. Labor market data, employer input, and sector partnerships guide workforce development activities across the region. Priority industries—including manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, construction, transportation, accommodation and food services, finance and insurance, and educational services—serve as the foundation for career pathway development, training investments, and work-based learning opportunities. Workforce partners collaborate with employers, community colleges, and economic development organizations to expand industry-recognized credential programs, apprenticeship opportunities, and employer-led training initiatives that strengthen regional talent pipelines.

### PILLAR II: Worker Mobility

Partners within the Northeast Iowa workforce system work collectively to increase access to employment, education, and training opportunities that support upward mobility for workers. Through coordinated services delivered through Iowa*WORKS* centers and partner programs, individuals receive career navigation assistance, labor market information, training opportunities, and supportive services that help them enter, re-enter, or advance within the workforce. Special emphasis is placed on serving individuals with barriers to employment, supporting dislocated workers, and expanding opportunities for youth and emerging workers to access career pathways that lead to family-sustaining wages.

### PILLAR III: Integrated Systems

The Northeast Iowa workforce development system operates through a coordinated One-Stop delivery model that integrates services across WIOA core programs and required partners. Iowa*WORKS* centers serve as centralized access points where job seekers and employers can connect to workforce services, training programs, and supportive resources. Core partners—including WIOA Title I, Title II Adult Education and Literacy, Title III Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation—work collaboratively to streamline service delivery, support co-enrollment opportunities, and coordinate resources to provide comprehensive and efficient workforce services throughout the region.

### PILLAR IV: Accountability

Workforce system partners share responsibility for achieving strong outcomes and ensuring accountability across workforce programs. Performance outcomes are monitored using federally required WIOA performance indicators, including employment outcomes, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. Data-driven decision-making, program monitoring, and performance review processes help ensure workforce investments produce meaningful outcomes for job seekers, employers, and the regional economy.

### PILLAR V: Flexibility and Innovation

Workforce partners across Northeast Iowa remain committed to adapting strategies to meet evolving labor market needs. Collaboration among workforce agencies, education providers, employers, and economic development organizations supports the development of innovative workforce solutions such as work-based learning opportunities, incumbent worker training, sector partnerships, and youth career exploration initiatives. These collaborative efforts allow the workforce system to respond to emerging workforce challenges, technological changes, and regional economic priorities.

Through these coordinated efforts, the Northeast Iowa workforce development system aligns local workforce strategies with the broader national workforce vision while addressing the specific workforce needs of employers and job seekers throughout the Northeast Iowa region.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ANALYSIS

Local Plan Question:

3. **Workforce Development, Education and Training Analysis:** Include an analysis of:

    a. The strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities.
    b. Capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.
    c. The employment needs of employers.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE ACTIVITIES

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development area boasts numerous strengths, along with a few weaknesses, presenting a considerable scope for potential growth. Ongoing collaboration among partners within this expansive local area, one of the largest in the state of Iowa, is crucial for delivering effective services to both businesses and job seekers. This concerted effort aims to capitalize on the local area's strengths, address its weaknesses, and unlock the abundant opportunities that lie ahead for sustained development and success.

Northeast Iowa board members and CEOs contribute a wealth of innovative ideas and valuable feedback during collaborative discussions. The CEOs have actively collaborated to ensure an equitable representation of the counties, not only in the leadership of CEOs but also in the selection of local board

members. Within the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA), there exists a nuanced landscape of strengths and weaknesses. Rather than viewing weaknesses as setbacks, the Northeast Iowa LWDA perceives them as areas ripe for opportunity. These opportunities span the realms of growth, improvement, and heightened collaboration among partners and programs. Embracing these challenges as prospects for enhancement, the local area aims to foster increased synergy and efficacy across its initiatives.

*Strengths*

- Comprehensive Geographic Coverage of Adult Education and Literacy Programs: The Title II Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) program has a wide reach, spanning the entire Northeast Iowa LWDA. This expansive coverage ensures accessibility for all individuals within the served area. The program involves the following educational institutions Northeast Iowa Community College, North Iowa Area Community College, and Hawkeye Community College, facilitating learning opportunities across the local area.
- Diverse Training Offerings: The community colleges within the Northeast Iowa LWDA play a pivotal role in offering a diverse array of training opportunities. These encompass short-term certificate programs as well as career pathways for individuals to complete their degrees. This variety caters to a broad spectrum of learners with differing needs and ambitions.
- Business Engagement: Establishing and maintaining a strong local presence within the business communities. This commitment ensures that the workforce development initiatives are aligned with the specific needs and demands of the local industries and businesses, fostering relevance and responsiveness.
- Collaboration and Collective Expertise: Each partner involved brings a distinct realm of expertise and knowledge to the table. This collaboration and shared culture is spread across the entire Northeast Iowa LWDA, enriching the collaborative efforts and initiatives undertaken.
- Active and Engaged Governance: The local board and CEO group demonstrate a high level of engagement and collaboration, contributing significantly to the coherence and effectiveness of the workforce development strategies and implementation in Northeast Iowa.
- Resilient Partnerships: Strong partnerships have thrived. The commitment of partners to the shared objectives and goals of the Northeast Iowa local area.
- Responsiveness to Community Needs: The Northeast Iowa local area remains agile and responsive, addressing the evolving needs of the community, businesses, and partner organizations. This adaptability ensures that the initiatives remain relevant and effective in meeting the dynamic demands of the Northeast Iowa local area.
- Expertise in Disability-Related Employment Issues: Title IV brings specialized knowledge in dealing with disabilities in the context of employment. This encompasses a range of services such as counseling, guidance on overcoming barriers posed by disabilities,

utilization of assistive technology to eliminate employment obstacles, specialized job search and placement, and benefits counseling.

- IVRS in collaboration with the Dept. of Education contracts with various entities to build capacity for specific populations. The following are the contracts utilized in the Northeast Iowa local area-
    - TAP- TAP is a contract with a school district to provide extensive services with job candidates and potentially eligible students in the areas of job exploration counseling, work readiness training, self-advocacy, counseling on opportunities, and work-based learning.
    - Intermediary Network- The Intermediary Network contract is held by a local community college. They team with IVRS staff in the high schools have been specifically contracted to work with. The IN assists in filling in any Gaps of services that may arise due to capacity restraints (i.e., setting up job shadows, completing assessments, etc.)
    - OWEP- OWEP provides services to the older worker population aged 55 and older. They specialize in job placement with this population.
    - Waterloo has a Project Search Program. The CRP Project Search program is to assist adult job candidates in obtaining competitive, integrated employment by developing specific work skills using the evidence-based curriculum designed by CRP Project Search. Training occurs in partnership with IVRS funding for job development and job coaching; other funding entities whenever appropriate; a business providing the worksite and job training; and a CRP providing the job development and employment support services in both classroom and competitive, integrated employment settings. The Waterloo Project Search has internship sites set up at the local hospital.
- Established Relationships with Secondary Schools: Title IV actively cultivates strong partnerships with secondary schools, focusing on the needs of students with disabilities. This engagement provides valuable insights into the specific barriers faced by these students, as reported by teachers who work closely with them daily. Additionally, Title IV can facilitate connections between other WIOA partners and school personnel as needed.
- Individualized Services: Title I and IV is characterized by a highly individualized approach to services, tailoring its support to the unique needs of job candidates and the potentially eligible population. This flexibility allows Title IV to meet individuals at their current level of readiness, whether they are new to the workforce or have extensive work experience.
- Job Retention Assistance: Partners extend support beyond job placement by actively assisting individuals in retaining their jobs. Through collaboration with the job candidate and their employer (with the candidate's consent), partners work to identify and resolve any issues that may threaten continued employment.
- Collaborative Service Approach: Partners in Northeast Iowa adopts a collaborative approach to service delivery, leveraging the strengths of the other partners involved. This

collaborative effort ensures that job candidates receive a comprehensive range of services tailored to their specific needs, enhancing their chances of successful employment.

- Consultation Services for Businesses: Title IV staff are available to provide consultation to businesses regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities. This includes guidance on accommodations, information on the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), the "save a job" program, accessibility studies, and disability awareness/sensitivity training.
- Dedicated Business Service Specialist: Iowa Department for the Blind provides their own business service specialist specifically focused on working with businesses to implement necessary accommodations for individuals who are blind or have low vision.

These strengths collectively reflect a robust framework that integrates diverse educational opportunities, business engagement, collaborative governance, and adaptive strategies to effectively address the workforce development needs across the Northeast Iowa LWDA.

*Weaknesses*

- Limited Program Visibility: There is a need for greater visibility of workforce development programs and services within the Northeast Iowa local area, among city officials, local employers, and communities. The challenge lies in effectively communicating the available resources to the target audience.
- Data Sharing Challenges: Ongoing difficulties in data sharing across systems hinder the provision of valid and reliable data. This poses challenges to obtaining comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of workforce development initiatives.
- Skills Gap Challenges: Employers in the Northeast Iowa local area have continued to express challenges in finding skilled workers or workers in general. This highlights a need for targeted efforts to bridge the skills gap within the local workforce.
- Gaps in Workforce Development Coordination: Persistent gaps in alignment, coordination, and communication within the workforce development system pose challenges to delivering cohesive and effective services. Addressing these gaps is crucial for streamlined operations.
- Childcare Accessibility Barriers: The availability and affordability of childcare remain significant barriers within the Northeast Iowa local area. This challenge affects individuals seeking employment and hinders their participation in workforce development programs.
- Public Transportation Limitations: The lack of accessible and affordable public transportation in Northeast Iowa's rural areas impacts service delivery to these areas. It is crucial to address transportation challenges to ensure equal access to services.
- Rural Service Delivery Challenges: The rural nature of many counties in the Northeast Iowa local area presents challenges in providing services where travel is necessary. This issue is compounded by the scarcity or non-existence of many necessary services in some counties.

- Technology Access and Training: Despite efforts to use technology to overcome barriers, training on how to use this technology is lacking for customers. Affordability and access issues persist for individuals who cannot afford a cell phone or internet or lack high-speed internet access.

*Opportunities*

- Enhanced Outreach and Awareness: Opportunities exist for the NEIWDB to expand outreach efforts especially to rural areas and increase awareness about available workforce development programs and services within the community. This may involve targeted marketing campaigns, community events, and partnerships with local organizations to reach a broader audience.
- Specialized Training for High-Demand Occupations: Identifying high-demand occupations within the Northeast Iowa local area and developing specialized training programs can provide a strategic advantage. This involves collaborating with local businesses to understand their workforce needs and tailoring training initiatives to match those requirements.
- Expanding Apprenticeship Programs: Opportunities exist to expand apprenticeship programs, fostering partnerships with employers to create hands-on learning experiences. This can be particularly effective in industries with skills shortages and can contribute to a more skilled and adaptable workforce.
- Support for Special Populations: Focusing on specialized support for populations facing unique challenges, such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, or those re-entering the workforce, can be a valuable area of opportunity. Tailoring programs to address specific needs and collaborating with relevant agencies can enhance inclusivity.
- Focus on Entrepreneurship: Supporting entrepreneurship and small business development can stimulate economic growth. The NEIWDB can explore opportunities to provide resources, training, and support for individuals interested in starting their own businesses, contributing to local economic vitality.
- Youth Programming and Service Development: Northeast Iowa can emphasize the opportunity to develop and expand youth-focused programs and services. This includes creating initiatives such as internships, mentorship programs, and skills development workshops specifically tailored to the needs of young individuals entering the workforce. With a priority focusing on out-of-school youth programming.
- Social Media Engagement: Emphasizing the need to increase Northeast Iowa's social media presence is an opportunity for reaching a wider audience. Leveraging platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook can enhance communication, share success stories, and disseminate information about available programs and services.
- Website Development: Develop an interactive website that caters to the entire local area is a significant opportunity. The website will serve as a centralized hub for information on available programs, resources, job opportunities, and educational pathways, enhancing accessibility for the community.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ADDRESS NEEDS

Capacity to address the education and skills needs of the workforce, especially for individuals facing barriers to employment, is a key focus within the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development area. The local plan highlights several strategies and initiatives in this regard.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board functions as a facilitator, bringing together committed partners with a collective aim to address the workforce needs and demands of employers. Each collaborating partner contributes distinct strengths that, when combined, enhance the overall delivery of services. These strategic partnerships actively involve core agencies and programs dedicated to fortifying services, expanding capacity, minimizing redundancy, and promoting the seamless integration of education and workforce initiatives.

Through this collaborative effort, the NEIWDB aims to create a synergy that maximizes the impact of each partner's unique strengths, fostering a more comprehensive and effective approach to workforce development. The engaged core agencies and programs work cohesively to not only meet the immediate demands of the workforce but also to build a foundation for sustained growth and development. This collaborative framework emphasizes efficiency, avoids duplication of efforts, and promotes the seamless integration of education into the workforce landscape, ultimately benefiting both job seekers and employers in the Northeast Iowa local area.

The Northeast Iowa local area is committed to implementing a demand-driven system geared towards cultivating a workforce equipped for high-skilled, high-wage jobs. This strategic approach aims to bolster the competitiveness of employers in the area. At the heart of this initiative is the One-Stop System, a seamlessly integrated service delivery system designed to be comprehensive and responsive to the diverse employment and training needs of customers. This includes individuals facing barriers to employment.

The strength of the One-Stop System lies in its ability to bring together a spectrum of products and services offered by workforce system partners. This collaborative effort ensures that the unique needs of customers are addressed without redundancy or inefficiency. The system is finely tuned to deliver services in a manner that is both efficient and effective, creating a unified approach that maximizes the impact of resources and support for individuals seeking employment opportunities. By prioritizing responsiveness and avoiding duplication, the Northeast Iowa local area aims to create a workforce that not only meets current demands but is also well-prepared for the evolving landscape of high-skilled, high-wage jobs.

The diverse educational levels among workers in Northeast Iowa offer distinct advantages for employers. This variability in educational attainment is a vital element in fulfilling employment needs across all levels. Iowa***WORKS*** staff plays a crucial role in assisting employers by helping them target suitable audiences and specific age groups to attract job candidates with the requisite skills, ensuring job satisfaction with the offered pay.

To retain a vibrant local workforce, employers are encouraged to cultivate an environment that fosters employee growth. Establishing a successful pipeline of workers involves collaborative efforts with stakeholders to create a ladder of employment opportunities. Given the changing nature of careers, providing opportunities for upward mobility allows workers to meet evolving workforce needs, transitioning into more complex roles throughout their careers.

While the ladder approach is often applied within individual organizations, collaborative efforts between different employers can create varied levels of opportunities to keep workers engaged in the local area. For instance, partnerships between secondary schools and organizations can facilitate experiential learning opportunities in entry-level positions related to child development. As students gain skills and experience, additional education and training can prepare them for the next level of employment, such as becoming teachers or daycare owners.

Iowa***WORKS*** staff actively assist businesses in developing partnerships, recognizing the concurrent efforts of customers seeking additional education and skills to advance to their next employment level.

The Northeast Iowa LWDA places paramount importance on collaboration with core partners to assist customers effectively. The focus remains on finding highly skilled workers to address gaps in the community and improve workforce issues. The dedicated partners, board members, and chief elected officials within the Northeast Iowa LWDB are committed to collaborative efforts to meet workforce demands.

All services are conveniently accessible through the Iowa***WORKS*** centers, utilizing a One-Stop System that swiftly responds to employment and training needs. The coordinated efforts of partners eliminate duplication of services and ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

The One-Stop Centers in Northeast Iowa serve as the centralized access point for all workforce partner services. Whether delivered in-person on-site, facilitated by cross-trained partners, or directly linked through technology, these services are seamlessly provided in a timely manner.

The consolidation of all workforce services within one center offers a highly effective and efficient service delivery model, significantly enhancing outcomes for job seekers. In adherence to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the One-Stop Center acts as the pivotal hub for referrals. The staff at the center employs a structured referral process, coupled with a diligent follow-up procedure, to ensure that participants receive the necessary information and services essential for their success. This comprehensive approach not only streamlines access to a myriad of services but also emphasizes a coordinated and supportive environment for individuals seeking employment opportunities.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Area comprises three comprehensive centers (Mason City, Waterloo, and Dubuque) and one affiliate center (Decorah). Additional presence in Postville, West Union, Guttenberg, Oelwein, Elkader, and Fayette provides Title I services. While Titles I, III, and IV are co-located in specific locations, Title II has a presence in all four centers, and Titles I and III are co-located in Dubuque. Title III has a presence in Postville as well.

An institutional analysis of American Job Centers in 2016 identified transportation challenges in rural areas, affecting customer reach and access to training providers. The strategic spread of Iowa*WORKS* centers across Northeast Iowa addresses the lack of reliable transportation, with ongoing monitoring to ensure service accessibility to the rural areas farthest from these centers. To overcome transportation barriers, the local area subsidizes transportation costs, promotes virtual access, and utilizes additional access points. Supportive services payments and virtual access are integral to helping customers access training providers.

The Iowa*WORKS* staff is increasingly providing virtual services, complemented by efforts from other organizations offering hotspots and internet access. The NEIWDB explores ways to make tools available for remote connectivity, including potential recycling of old computer equipment for a lending program.

Various locations beyond Iowa*WORKS* centers, including those of Title I service providers and Title II providers through community college campuses, are leveraged to connect with customers unable to travel. Title IV meetings are strategically located for customer convenience. This comprehensive approach reflects the commitment to accessibility and inclusivity within the Northeast Iowa local area.

## EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS

Employers throughout the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) continue to report significant challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified workers. Businesses across multiple sectors, particularly manufacturing, healthcare, transportation and logistics, construction, and agriculture-related industries, indicate that workforce shortages are one of the most significant barriers to continued economic growth.

Employers frequently report difficulty filling open positions due to a limited number of applicants and a shortage of candidates possessing the necessary skills, education, and training required for available jobs. These challenges have resulted in operational concerns for many businesses, including reduced operating hours, delayed production schedules, and supply chain disruptions.

Demographic trends further contribute to workforce shortages. The region's modest population growth and aging workforce reduce the number of individuals available to enter the labor force. As experienced workers retire, employers face increasing pressure to recruit and train new workers while maintaining productivity and service levels.

In response to workforce shortages, many businesses have adopted new recruitment and retention strategies. These strategies include increasing wages, offering hiring bonuses, expanding employee benefits, and implementing flexible work arrangements. Despite these efforts, employers continue to report difficulty attracting and retaining workers, particularly for positions requiring specialized technical skills or industry-recognized credentials.

Employer engagement activities conducted by the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB) further highlight the need for both technical skills and foundational workplace competencies.

Employers consistently report that job candidates often lack critical employability skills necessary for workplace success. Foundational skills such as communication, time management, problem-solving, teamwork, and dependability are frequently cited as essential for employee effectiveness across industries.

In addition to foundational skills, employers emphasize the importance of social and interpersonal skills. Skills such as conflict resolution, active listening, collaboration, and empathy contribute to positive workplace environments and improved team performance. Employers indicate that individuals who demonstrate strong interpersonal skills alongside technical competence are more likely to succeed in the workplace.

Technical skill requirements are also evolving as industries adopt new technologies and automation. Many employers report increasing demand for workers with digital literacy, machine operation expertise, data analysis capabilities, and familiarity with specialized software or industry-specific technologies. Continuous workforce training and upskilling are therefore essential to ensure that workers remain competitive in the modern labor market.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board actively collaborates with employers, education providers, economic development organizations, and workforce partners to address these workforce challenges. Business Engagement Consultants maintain ongoing relationships with local businesses to better understand employer needs and identify opportunities for workforce development initiatives.

Workforce system partners regularly coordinate to address employer workforce challenges through targeted strategies such as job fairs, recruitment events, workforce training workshops, and employer engagement initiatives. These efforts are designed to strengthen connections between employers and job seekers while expanding awareness of career opportunities within the region.

Additionally, the workforce system supports individuals who lack basic skills through coordinated services between Title I and Title II programs. Assessment tools such as TABE and CASAS are used to identify gaps in reading, writing, and math skills, allowing workforce partners to develop individualized training plans. Participants may receive adult education services, workforce training, or co-enrollment opportunities that support skill development and career advancement.

For individuals who already possess foundational skills, workforce partners help identify advanced training opportunities aligned with in-demand occupations. This approach allows job seekers to pursue industry-recognized credentials and specialized training programs that prepare them for high-demand careers within Northeast Iowa.

Occupational projections and labor market data further inform workforce strategies by identifying occupations expected to experience significant demand over the next decade. These projections help guide workforce investments and ensure that training programs align with projected industry needs.

By analyzing employer feedback, workforce data, and occupational projections, the Northeast Iowa LWDA is able to develop targeted workforce strategies that support both job seekers and employers.

Strengthening the regional talent pipeline, expanding work-based learning opportunities, and aligning education and training programs with industry needs remain central priorities for the workforce system.

Detailed employer workforce demand data and supporting analysis are provided in **Appendix M – Employment Needs of Employers.**

## VISION

Local Plan Question:

4. **Vision** - Include a description of:
    a. The LWDB's strategic vision to support the economic growth and economic self-sufficiency of the local area, including:
        i. Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment.
        ii. Goals relating to performance accountability measures based on the performance indicators.
    b. The LWDB's strategic vision to align local resources, required partners, and entities that carry out core programs to achieve the strategic vision and goals.

## 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 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.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board is dedicated to fostering economic growth and enhancing the economic self-sufficiency of our local area. Our strategic vision revolves around innovative

initiatives, collaborative partnerships, and targeted investments to empower individuals and businesses. Through comprehensive workforce development programs, we aim to create a dynamic, adaptable workforce that meets the evolving needs of the local economy. By aligning our efforts with industry demands and leveraging community resources, we strive to cultivate an environment where every individual can achieve economic self-sufficiency, and our local area thrives with sustained prosperity.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board's strategic vision is centered on aligning local resources, essential partners, and entities responsible for implementing core programs. By fostering collaboration and coordination among these key stakeholders, we aim to optimize the impact of our collective efforts. This alignment ensures a cohesive approach towards achieving our strategic vision and goals. Through effective utilization of resources, enhanced partnerships, and seamless integration of core programs, we are committed to building a robust workforce ecosystem that propels local economic growth and empowers individuals towards sustained success.

The One-Stop system in Northeast Iowa is a comprehensive and integrated service delivery system designed to be responsive to the employment and training needs of our customers. The system seamlessly incorporates the services of various partners to ensure that customer needs are met efficiently and cost-effectively, eliminating any unnecessary duplication of services.

To enhance effectiveness, we are committed to minimizing duplication of services, fostering continued collaboration among partners, and working collectively to better serve the customers in Northeast Iowa. The local area will actively promote partner services through an ongoing marketing and outreach campaign. Partners will persist in their collaborative efforts to achieve the common goal of assisting individuals in Northeast Iowa to secure successful employment and connect with local employers.

To optimize resources, we will engage in co-enrollment activities with partner programs, streamlining processes to maximize the benefits for our customers. Through these concerted efforts, we aim to create a more streamlined, efficient, and effective service delivery system that ultimately contributes to the success of individuals in the Northeast Iowa local area.

The following are goals for preparing an education and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment:

- Expand access to high-quality education and training programs for individuals of all ages, with a specific focus on youth and those facing barriers to employment.
- Develop and strengthen career pathways that align with Northeast Iowa in-demand industries and labor market trends.
- Expand opportunities for youth to gain education, skills, and work experience.
- Identify and address barriers that prevent certain individuals from entering or advancing in the workforce.
- Improve job placement rates and long-term employment retention for program participants.
- Create an inclusive workforce that reflects the diversity of the community.

- Establish a robust system for measuring the effectiveness of workforce development programs and continuously improve services.
- Foster collaboration among local agencies, educational institutions, employers, and community organizations to maximize resources and streamline services.
- Nurture partnerships with organizations and businesses to target workforce shortages around the area and develop strategies to ensure needs are being met.
- Expand outreach services to entire 20 county Northeast Iowa Local Area. Outreach efforts should focus on rural areas.
- Establish partnerships with local businesses to continue to meet their needs.
- Provide equal access and opportunity to employment and training resources.
- Preparing our workforce with the skills necessary to maintain quality meaningful employment.
- Ensure that every student on an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 plan, or eligible for such plans, as well as those with a medical diagnosis of a disability, receives at least one Pre-ETS service per month.
- Initiate Pre-ETS services for students during their freshman year in high school to commence career exploration early in their academic journey.
- Establish a clear communication and planning process at the beginning of each academic year involving a meeting with staff assigned to every high school in the state.
- Develop and sign a local plan with each high school annually, involving stakeholders from the Area Education Agency (AEA), high school principal, and Title IV Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) supervisor.
- Partner and collaborate more with iJAG to increase Youth enrollments.
- Foster a seamless collaboration between Title IV and the Title I Youth Program to ensure effective support for students.
- Facilitate and enhance the referral process between Title IV and Title I Youth Program for comprehensive assistance to students in need.

The following are goals relating to performance accountability measures based on the performance indicators:

- Increase the percentage of participants who gain employment after completing workforce development programs.
- Improve the average earnings of program participants post-employment to enhance their economic self-sufficiency.
- Increase the percentage of participants who attain recognized industry credentials or certifications.
- Enhance the rate at which participants maintain employment for a specified period after program completion.
- Increase satisfaction among employers who hire program participants, measured through surveys or feedback mechanisms.

- Improve the efficiency of service delivery by reducing the time between program entry and employment placement.
- Increase the number of participants entering and succeeding in high-demand industries or occupations.
- Encourage and support participants in pursuing further education or training to advance their skills and career prospects.
- Boost overall program participation rates, ensuring that a greater number of eligible individuals are aware and engaged in workforce development services.
- Continuously monitor performance to ensure positive performance outcomes.
- Review policies and procedures and adjust as needed for continuous improvement and to meet the needs of the local area.
- Review and negotiate levels of performance annually.

## STRATEGIES

Local Plan Question:

5. **Strategies** – Taking into account the analyses described in sections 1-3 above:
    a. Describe the strategy to work with the entities that carryout the core programs and required partners to align resources available in the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in section 4 above.

In pursuit of our strategic vision and goals outlined in section 4, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will actively assume the role of a strategic leader and facilitator within the local workforce development system. Through collaborative efforts with entities responsible for core programs and essential partners, the NEIWDB will implement a comprehensive strategy to align available resources in the local area. This alignment aims to effectively achieve the following strategies to work towards our vision and goals:

- Establish the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board as a central hub for strategic leadership, ensuring active collaboration among local workforce development stakeholders within the local area.
- Actively engage with employers and the local workforce development system to inform policies and investments.
- Enhance workforce development outcomes through co-enrollment to increase participant and program success and efficiency.
- Create a participant-focused, integrated workforce system that removes barriers, enhances efficiency, and improves the outcomes of individuals seeking employment and career services.
- Align efforts with partners, stakeholders, educational institutions, community organizations, and businesses to achieve specific goals within the local area.
- Broaden the availability of work-based learning opportunities and resources to secure self-sustaining employment, so every worker can achieve their maximum potential.

- Continue to partner and work with Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to enhance the availability and accessibility of programs.
- Cultivate an environment of ongoing improvement to boost the efficiency and responsiveness of each partner operating within the one-stop center.
- Leverage partnerships and programs to contribute to local economic growth.
- Actively support the development of effective approaches, such as local sector partnerships and career pathways.
- Collaborate to streamline and integrate services within the One-Stop delivery system.
- Establish a robust oversight and monitoring system to track progress and performance outcomes.
- Ensure inclusivity in outreach efforts to engage all segments of the Northeast Iowa community.
- Implement a data-driven approach to inform decision-making processes.
- Foster a culture of adaptability to respond to the changing economic conditions.
- Strengthen collaboration between public and private sectors.
- Focus on engaging youth and creating clear education to employment pathways.
- Implement quality assurance measures and industry recognized certifications.
- Utilize digital platforms for marketing and outreach efforts.
- Enhance the skill set of job seekers through cross-training initiatives.
- Invest in training and capacity building for staff and partners.
- The NEIWDB will actively facilitate collaborations between public and private sectors, champion sector strategies, and promote career pathways to advance opportunities for all workers and job seekers.

We employ strategies to align core and essential partners, ensuring that resources actively bolster the strategic vision and goals of the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Area. The LWDA remains committed to enhancing service accessibility in rural areas across Northeast Iowa. Collaboratively, the One-Stop centers in Northeast Iowa, alongside our partners, focus on addressing customer needs and collaboratively minimizing obstacles to employment.

The Title I Adult Program provide services that focus on the following outcomes:

- Assist adults in securing and retaining employment through comprehensive services, including job search assistance, career counseling, and training opportunities.
- Focus on improving the skills and employability of adults, with an emphasis on providing training and education that aligns with local labor market demands.
- Help adults increase their earnings by supporting them in obtaining higher-skilled employment or advancing in their current careers.
- Support adults in obtaining recognized industry certifications, licenses, or other credentials that enhance their competitiveness in the job market.
- Promote job retention and career advancement by providing ongoing support, mentoring, and access to additional training as needed.

The Title I Dislocated Worker Program provide services that focus on the following outcomes:

- Facilitate the rapid reemployment of dislocated workers by offering immediate assistance, including job search support, career counseling, and access to relevant training.
- Conduct skills assessments to identify training needs and provide dislocated workers with access to skill development opportunities that align with current labor market demands.
- Assist dislocated workers in finding suitable employment opportunities that match their skills, experience, and career goals.
- Support dislocated workers in obtaining industry-recognized certifications or credentials that enhance their employability.
- Provide comprehensive services to support dislocated workers in transitioning to new careers, including assistance with resume writing, interviewing skills, and exploration of alternative career paths.

The Title I Youth Program provide services that focus on the following outcomes:

- Assist youth in completing their education by providing support for high school diploma or equivalent attainment and promoting access to postsecondary education and training.
- Enhance the employability of youth by offering work readiness training, soft skills development, and exposure to workplace expectations.
- Facilitate job placements for youth, including internships, apprenticeships, and summer employment opportunities.
- Support youth in obtaining relevant certifications and credentials that prepare them for entry into specific industries or occupations.
- Provide career exploration opportunities, career counseling, and guidance to help youth make informed decisions about their future career paths.
- Address the unique needs of special populations, such as youth with disabilities or those facing other barriers to employment, by providing tailored services and accommodations.
- Foster leadership skills and civic engagement among youth, encouraging their active participation in community service and advocacy activities.
- Support the successful transition of youth to further education, training programs, or employment opportunities after completing the WIOA Youth Program.

Title II Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Programs at Hawkeye Community College (HCC), North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) provide services that focus on the following outcomes:

- Improve basic skills to enhance participants fundamental skills in areas such as reading, writing, mathematics, and language proficiency.
- Assist participants with targeting the attainment of a high school equivalency credential.
- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and essential workforce skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency.

- Help prepare adults for success in postsecondary education and training programs or entry into the workforce.
- Improving participants ability to speak, understand, read, and write in English, thereby enhancing their integration into English-speaking communities and workplaces.
- Aim to foster civic engagement by providing participants with the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in their communities. Including understanding civic responsibilities, participating in community activities, and exercising informed citizenship.
- Assist participants to use technology, navigate online resources, and develop digital communication skills.
- Work with participants to set educational and career goals, creating individualized education plans, and developing career pathways for continued learning and advancement.
- Focus on enhancing participants' life skills including financial literacy, health literacy, and other skills for successful daily living.

Title III Wagner-Peyser in Northeast Iowa provides services that focus on the following outcomes:

- Conduct and disseminate labor market analysis to inform workforce development strategies, training program development, and economic planning at the local, regional, and state levels.
- Provide information about various occupations, including job duties, educational requirements, wage levels, and future employment projections, to assist job seekers, students, and career counselors in making informed decisions.
- Monitor and report on economic trends and forecasts, including industry growth or decline, to guide workforce development professionals, businesses, and policymakers in making informed decisions.
- Contribute to workforce development planning by providing data and analysis that support the development of effective training programs, industry partnerships, and strategies to address local labor market needs.
- Align workforce information with training programs to ensure that education and training offerings are responsive to the demands of the local labor market, thereby increasing the employability of participants.
- Enhance job matching by aligning the skills of job seekers with the skill requirements of available job openings. This includes facilitating the connection between job seekers and employers seeking specific skill sets.
- Highlight and promote in-demand occupations to job seekers, educators, and training providers, encouraging alignment between workforce skills and employer needs.
- Provide demographic and economic data to support community and economic development planning, helping communities understand their workforce composition and potential growth areas.

Title IV Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) in Northeast Iowa provides services that focus on the following outcomes:

- Deploying IVRS staff to every high school to deliver services to all students with disabilities. This includes providing career counseling on employment and training opportunities, delivering training on work readiness and employer expectations, and offering guidance on self-advocacy. The encouragement of job shadows and part-time work opportunities is an integral part of this effort.
- Collaborating with partner agencies, IVRS staff offers counseling to individuals with disabilities to facilitate informed career decisions. This involves utilizing information on in-demand careers and career pathways and providing assistance with training programs that lead to successful employment.
- Providing consultation to partner agencies to ensure that their programs and areas are accessible. Additionally, IVRS offers consultation to employers on disability-related needs to assist with recruitment and hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities, as well as retaining valued employees.
- Actively engage with local employers to develop collaborative partnerships. This involves working closely with businesses to understand their workforce needs, providing tailored solutions for hiring individuals with disabilities, and fostering ongoing relationships.
- Expand transition services for youth with disabilities, providing comprehensive support to ease the transition from school to post-school activities. This may include work experience opportunities, vocational training, and career exploration.
- Conduct outreach campaigns to raise awareness about IVRS services among individuals with disabilities, their families, and the broader community. This may involve community events, partnerships with local organizations, and targeted marketing efforts.
- Provide cultural competency training for IVRS staff to ensure they are well-equipped to serve individuals from diverse backgrounds. This includes understanding and addressing the unique needs of individuals with disabilities from different cultural and linguistic communities.
- Collaborate with local community resources and support services to create a comprehensive network of support for individuals with disabilities. This may include housing assistance, transportation services, and other resources that contribute to overall well-being and employability.
- Ensure that communication channels, including websites, materials, and information, are accessible to individuals with diverse abilities. This includes providing information in multiple formats and languages, as well as accommodating various communication preferences.
- Prioritize continuous professional development for IVRS staff, keeping them informed about the latest advancements in vocational rehabilitation, disability rights, and inclusive employment practices.

The One-Stop Operator plays a major role in implementing strategies that assist partners within the workforce system in aligning resources. The One-Stop Operator in Northeast Iowa oversees the following key strategies:

- Regularly convene meetings with core and required partners. This facilitates ongoing communication, coordination, and strategizing to ensure a cohesive approach to workforce development in Northeast Iowa.
- Implement accessibility initiatives and lead efforts to provide training to improve increasing access to individuals with disabilities.
- Strengthen the Northeast Iowa referral process. Active participation in the referral process within the local area is essential for a seamless experience for job seekers.
- Prioritize continuous training and professional development for staff involved in the One-Stop system to ensure job seekers and employers are provided with high quality services.
- Establish mechanisms for collecting feedback from job seekers, employers, and partner organizations to identify areas of improvement, and ensure continuous responsiveness to the needs of the community.
- Provide training for staff to enhance language and cultural competency to effectively serve diverse populations, including those with limited English proficiency or from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Facilitate coordination and collaboration among various workforce programs to ensure seamless and integrated approach to service delivery.
- Explore and implement technology solutions to enhance the accessibility and efficiency of services. This includes developing online resources, virtual job fairs, and leveraging digital platforms to provide remote services to job seekers and employers.

Some additional strategies that are used within the Northeast Iowa local area to align resources among programs are:

- Foster regular communication and coordination among key partners to maintain a shared understanding of strategic priorities within the Northeast Iowa local area.
- Facilitating cross-training opportunities for staff across programs to enhance their understanding of the full range of services offered within the local area. This cross-training promotes a more cohesive and knowledgeable workforce that can effectively leverage resources across programs.
- Exploring opportunities for joint program development where applicable. Identifying common goals and areas of overlap among programs and work together to design initiatives that leverage shared resources and expertise. Such as collaborative training programs, outreach efforts, or support services.
- Promoting integrated service delivery by breaking down silos between programs. Encouraging partners to cross-program collaboration to provide seamless and coordinated services to individuals seeking employment, training, and education. This ensures a unified approach to addressing the diverse needs of job seekers and employers.
- Establishing clear and efficient cross-referral mechanisms among partner programs. This enables staff to seamlessly refer individuals to complementary services within the local area, ensuring that customers receive the full spectrum of support available.

- Developing a unified intake and assessment process that is shared among partners. This ensures that individuals receive comprehensive assessments, and their needs are accurately identified and addressed across various programs.
- Implementing shared technology platforms and information systems that enable seamless data exchange and collaboration among programs. This promotes efficiency in service delivery and ensures that stakeholders have access to the information they need to support clients effectively especially covering such a large local area.
- Holding regular coordination meetings among partner programs to discuss shared goals, challenges, and successes. These meetings provide a forum for ongoing communication, problem-solving, and strategic planning.
- Collaborating on outreach and marketing efforts to raise awareness of the array of services offered by partner programs. This ensures that individuals in need are aware of the full spectrum of resources available to them within the local area.
- Establishing mechanisms for sharing data among programs to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the workforce landscape. Analyze data collaboratively to identify trends, gaps, and opportunities for resource optimization. This data-driven approach helps in making informed decisions and resource allocations.
- Fostering sector partnerships that bring together multiple employers within a specific industry. These partnerships lead to collective efforts in addressing shared workforce challenges, such as developing industry-recognized credentials or addressing common skill gaps.
- Providing recruitment assistance to employers by connecting them with qualified job seekers. Utilizing the LWDA's resources to match employers with individuals who possess the skills and qualifications needed for available positions.
- Organizing employer engagement events, such as job fairs, industry forums, and roundtable discussions. These events provide opportunities for direct communication with employers, allowing workforce development stakeholders to better understand their needs and priorities.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board is committed to fostering strong partnerships within the one-stop center to enhance the delivery of programs and services aimed at expanding access to employment, training, and education. Collaborative efforts will focus on providing integrated services that streamline the customer experience and ensure a holistic approach to workforce development. The NEIWDB will actively work with partners to create a supportive environment that caters to individuals from diverse backgrounds, acknowledging and addressing unique needs and challenges. Special attention will be given to individuals facing barriers to employment, and customized strategies will be developed to facilitate their seamless integration into the workforce. By prioritizing collaboration, inclusivity, and tailored support the NEIWDB aims to create one-stop centers in our local area that effectively meet the varied needs of the community, promoting equal access and opportunities to all.

# SECTION 3 – IOWA*WORKS* SYSTEM COORDINATION

Questions in this section are designed to address collaboration and coordination across workforce system partners to ensure the LWDB is administering an effective and efficient local workforce system.

## NORTHEAST IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Local Plan Question:

1. The workforce development system in the local area, including the identification of:
    a. The programs that are included in the system
    b. Describe the steps the LWDB will take to locally implement and support the state strategies identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, to support service alignment.

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development System is comprised of a network of workforce development, education, and community partners that collaborate to deliver comprehensive services to job seekers, workers, and businesses throughout the 20-county region. Through the American Job Centers located in Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, and Decorah, partners coordinate service delivery to ensure individuals and employers have access to the programs and resources necessary to support workforce development and economic growth.

The workforce development system includes the core programs authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including:

- Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs
- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs
- Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Services
- Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Services

In addition to the core programs, the Northeast Iowa workforce system includes several required partner programs that support employment, training, and supportive services for various populations. These programs include Career and Technical Education programs offered through regional community colleges, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), the National Farmworker Jobs Program, Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and several other federal and state workforce initiatives.

Additional partner programs also collaborate with the workforce system to enhance service delivery and improve access to employment opportunities. These partnerships support services for veterans, individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, and other populations facing barriers to employment.

Workforce system partners work collaboratively to align services, coordinate resources, and improve access to workforce programs across the region. Through regular partner meetings, shared service strategies, and

coordinated business engagement efforts, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board and its partners strive to create an integrated workforce system that effectively responds to the needs of employers and job seekers.

A detailed list of workforce development programs, partners, service locations, and partner classifications within the Northeast Iowa workforce system is provided in **Appendix N – Workforce Development Programs.**

## IMPLEMENT AND SUPPORT STATE STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED IN THE STATE PLAN

All career services offered at Iowa***WORKS*** centers are strategically aligned with the State Plan and the LWDB's vision and goals. Regular reviews by Iowa***WORKS*** management and the LWDB ensure that these services remain consistent with the board's vision, goals, and strategies outlined in the State Plan.

The coordination of workforce development programs, including those authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, is outlined in the local area Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU outlines the roles, responsibilities, and collaboration mechanisms among involved parties. The one-stop operator, along with core and required partners, collaborates with the LWDB to ensure the delivery of services is seamless, accessible, and integrated. This collaboration aims to provide a cohesive experience for individuals accessing workforce development services.

To locally implement and support the state strategies identified in the State Plan, the LWDB takes specific steps and collaborates with entities overseeing core programs and other workforce development initiatives, including those under the Carl D. Perkins Act. Northeast Iowa's core partners strive for service integration, making Iowa***WORKS*** materials available to all partners and emphasizing a seamless approach for employers. Training is consistently provided to staff on available consumer services, with multiple entry points based on a shared referral form. The One-Stop Operator for Northeast Iowa continues to support partners in the referral process and addresses any necessary training needs.

Streamlining of the referral process by establishing multiple entry points into the system based on a shared referral form. This simplifies the process for individuals seeking services and enhances coordination among partners. Coordinating efforts with core and required partners to avoid duplication of services. This ensures efficient use of resources and a focused approach to meeting the diverse needs of the local workforce.

Title IV brings specialized disability knowledge to core partners, ensuring that customers with disabilities in local centers receive necessary services. Title IV extends services to all counties, collaborating with partners when travel to the center is not feasible for consumers. It provides essential services to individuals with disabilities, including training, supported employment, job supports, assessments, rehabilitation technology, physical and mental treatment, job placement assistance, and other employment-related services. These services are coordinated with core and required partners to avoid duplicating efforts and meet customer needs effectively. Title IV assists eligible job candidates with obtaining, maintaining, and/or advancing in employment opportunities.

The Iowa SWDB identified two broad goals, each with corresponding strategies designed to achieve the goals, for the PY24-PY27 planning cycle. Goal 1 outlines serving individuals/job seekers while Goal 2 is focused on serving employers. Each objective and its associated strategies, along with e locally devised strategies by partners in Northeast Iowa, will serve as the guiding framework for the next four years. During this period, collaborative efforts will be directed towards designing and implementing policies and procedures. The ultimate focus is to realize the overarching vision and goals outlined in both the state and Northeast Iowa local plans.

Goals and Strategies:

Goal I: Increase the engagement and awareness of Iowa's current, potential, and future workforce to the continuum of high-quality education, training, and career opportunities in Iowa.

*State Strategy 1.1:* Align and implement an accessible, integrated service delivery model incorporating all workforce system partners.

*Local Strategies:*

- Promote Governors realignment vision by ensuring all services are accessible to all Iowans.
- Provide cross training and professional development opportunities for staff across all partner programs.
- Identify and address accessibility barriers within each one stop center within the local area.
- Collaboratively promote integrated services through outreach campaigns.
- Develop a comprehensive service integration plan that outlines how all partners will collaborate to provide accessible and integrated services.
- Data management sharing across all partner programs to understand local workforce needs and track outcomes more effectively.
- Pool resources to create a more comprehensive and coordinated workforce system.
- Establish mechanisms for ongoing feedback and continuous improvement. Regularly assess the effectiveness of the integrated service delivery model.

*State Strategy 1.2:* Ensure all Iowa students have opportunities for meaningful work-based learning experiences.

*Local Strategies:*

- Establish a Local Work-Based Learning taskforce to include local education institutions, employers, community organizations and representatives from our core and required partners to drive the strategy forward.
- Engage local employers in the development and expansion of work-based learning opportunities.

- Implement career exploration programs that expose students to a variety of industries and occupations, to assist them with their career decisions.
- Develop a mentorship program to pair students with mentors or industry professionals who can provide guidance and support throughout their work-based learning experiences.
- Ensure that work-based learning opportunities are accessible and inclusive for students of all backgrounds, including those with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds.
- Develop an outreach campaign to promote work-based learning opportunities to students, parents, and educators.
- Utilize WIOA funds and resources to support and expand work-based learning opportunities throughout the local area.
- Develop apprenticeship programs throughout the local area.

***State Strategy 1.3:*** Target services to Iowans with barriers to employment.

***Local Strategies:***

- Develop a targeted outreach campaign to actively engage underserved populations within the local area.
- Develop training strategies for all partner staff to provide culturally competent services that respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of all underserved populations.
- Collaborate with local community organizations, nonprofits, and advocacy groups that serve underserved populations to expand service delivery networks.
- Develop specialized programs and initiatives that address the unique needs of different underserved populations.
- Ensure that services are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities, including offering assistive technology, interpreters, and other accommodations as needed.
- Establish veteran focused services to address unique challenges and barriers faced by veterans.
- Promote awareness of available services and programs through culturally sensitive marketing and outreach materials.
- Conduct a thorough needs assessment to identify the specific barriers, challenges, and employment related needs of underserved populations in the local area.
- Increase access to core programs and services in rural areas through strategic partnerships and collaboration efforts.

**Goal II:** Increase employer engagement and awareness of the Iowa***WORKS*** system as the premier provider of business services for a skilled and diverse workforce.

***State Strategy 2.1:*** Support local workforce boards in the development and enhancement of sector partnerships.

***Local Strategies:***

- Collaborate with industry leaders, local employers, labor unions, educational institutions, community organizations, and other stakeholders in the development of sector partnerships.
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of each priority sector, including skills gaps, labor trends, and industry specific challenges.
- Develop goals, objectives, and action plans that address the specific needs of the industry.
- Determine the skills and training requirements for the identified sectors, including the development of apprenticeships, on-the-job training programs, and other workforce development initiatives.
- Align local training programs with the skill needs of the priority sectors within the local area to ensure that job seekers are well-prepared for employment in those industries.
- Develop clear career pathways that guide individuals toward in-demand jobs in the priority sectors.
- Implement data collection and performance measurements to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of sector partnership programs.
- Promote sector partnership programs to local businesses and job seekers to encourage participation and awareness.

***State Strategy 2.2:*** Create and implement a unified and collaborative business engagement model.

***Local Strategies:***

- Streamline communication and assistance for local businesses as they seek out workforce solutions.
- Regularly engage with businesses to better understand their workforce needs and requirements.
- Collaborate with businesses to develop customized workforce solutions that address their specific needs.
- Work with businesses to develop talent pipelines that connect job seekers with job openings within the local area.
- Promote and facilitate work-based learning programs amongst local businesses.
- Implement performance metrics to evaluate the effectiveness and success of business engagement efforts.

***State Strategy 2.3:*** Increase the awareness and engagement by employers in work-based learning opportunities.

***Local Strategies:***

- Establish an employer engagement taskforce to actively reach out to local businesses and engage them in discussions about work-based learning opportunities.

- Collaborate with employers to identify specific industry needs and skills gaps, ensuring that work-based learning programs align with demands of the local area.
- Develop a marketing campaign that highlights the benefits of work-based learning for employers and highlight success stories and testimonials as part of that campaign.
- Create an online resource hub with guides, case studies, and templates to assist businesses in designing and implementing work-based learning programs.
- Develop an continuous improvement survey, seeking employer feedback to improve on work-based learning programs.

Each goal has identified outcomes and measures that will be tracked statewide in order to gauge progress and to better understand our system's success in working towards this shared vision and shared goals. These goals and strategies should help all Iowa workforce delivery system partners consider how services are delivered, whether the services are reaching in need populations, and where improvements are needed to help address gaps in the system.

Title IV has physical locations where staff have a permanent presence to provide support and expertise in collaboration with the Disability Access Committee. Expertise and support are provided on a wide range of topics including but not limited to work accommodations, assistive technology, and any training needs that partners and the entities they work with (i.e. employers) on topics such as disability sensitivity, accommodations, and ADA assessment. Services can also be individualized if the issue at hand involves a specific person for whom assistance is needed.

Title IV encourages all job candidates who are ready to actively seek employment to register with Iowa***WORKS***. Appropriate referrals to each partner will be made. Title IV uses a team model to eliminate duplication or supplanting services of any other entities. Examples of this include employer development, training needs, work-based learning, and benefits counseling for those that receive benefits.

Title IV and the employment needs of the Northeast Iowa LWDA are as follows:

- Title IV views employers as a second client of the agency. Staff are available to assist all businesses. At the request of a business services such as, but not limited to, disability sensitivity training, ADA assessments, and assistance with developing reasonable accommodations.

- Title IV does offer expedited services to those job candidates that may be at risk of losing their job. Title IV works with the employer to understand the issues that are causing their job to be in peril and then work with them to try to resolve the issues at hand.
- Title IV can also aid employees who qualify for services in the area of training and possibly offset any costs to the employer.
- Title IV can provide ADA assessments to local businesses upon request at no charge to them.

As one of the primary contributors to the development of these strategies, Northeast Iowa LWDB has determined the following local strategies to support Iowa's growth.

America's Talent Strategy

From TEGL 07-25, Executive Order 14278 was issued on April 23, 2025, titled "Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future" that directed the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce to articulate a comprehensive worker investment and development strategy. Subsequently, the Departments published, "America's Talent Strategy; Building the Workforce for the Golden Age" that articulates a shared vision for America's workforce development efforts, including the public workforce system, with five strategic pillars. Local areas are encouraged to review their currently approved Local Plans and align their strategies and investments to these pillars.

## CORE PROGRAMS

Local Plan Question:

2. Describe how the LWDB will work with the entities carrying out the core programs to:
    a. Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.
    b. Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs.
    c. Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable.

### EXPAND ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, EDUCATION AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board outlines its approach to collaborating with entities responsible for core programs to enhance access to employment, training, education, and supportive services, with a particular focus on individuals facing barriers to employment. The following strategies will be employed:

- Assessing Barriers- The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will work closely with core program entities to conduct a comprehensive assessment of barriers to employment faced by individuals in the local area. This assessment will inform targeted strategies to address specific challenges.
- Strategic Resource Allocation- Collaborative efforts will be made to allocate resources strategically, ensuring that funding, facilities, and support services are directed towards initiatives that effectively expand access for eligible individuals, especially those with barriers to employment.
- Program Integration- Foster integration and alignment of core programs to create a seamless service delivery system. This ensures that individuals seeking employment, training, education, or support services can easily navigate and access the array of available programs.
- Outreach Campaign- Develop and implement outreach campaigns to raise awareness about available services and programs. Special emphasis will be placed on reaching individuals facing barriers to employment, ensuring they are informed about the support available to them.
- Accessibility Improvements- Work collaboratively with partners to identify and eliminate barriers to accessing services. This includes addressing physical, technological, or informational obstacles

to ensure that all eligible individuals can easily avail themselves of employment, training, education, and supportive services.

- Training and Skill Development Programming- Collaborate on the development and implementation of training and skill development programs that specifically target individuals with barriers to employment. These programs will focus on equipping participants with the necessary skills for sustainable and meaningful employment.
- Monitoring and Continuous Improvement- Establish a robust monitoring system in collaboration with core program entities to track the effectiveness of expanded access initiatives. Regular assessments and feedback loops will drive continuous improvement in service delivery.

Building collaborative relationships among all partners is instrumental in providing support to those already enrolled and expanding the outreach to a larger population within the local area. Maintaining connectivity among partners, particularly within groups dedicated to planning and coordinating services, plays a pivotal role in establishing and nurturing these relationships. The key to success lies in fostering cooperation among entities, ensuring a cohesive approach that enhances the overall effectiveness of services and ultimately benefits a greater number of individuals in the community.

Ongoing cross-training initiatives are implemented to ensure that each partner possesses the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively address customer needs, navigate challenges, and share success stories. This commitment to continuous professional development creates a well-rounded and versatile team of partners, fostering a collaborative environment where insights and experiences are shared. This not only enhances the overall competence of the workforce but also promotes a culture of mutual support and learning, ultimately leading to improved service delivery and customer satisfaction.

The utilization of the referral process serves as a communication facilitator among partners, offering a streamlined means of sharing information. Staff utilize an online referral form to ensure easy access for partners. This process not only details the array of programs and services offered by each partner but also plays a crucial role in minimizing service duplication and identifying potential collaborative opportunities. To further enhance collaboration, professional development opportunities and cross-training initiatives are implemented between agencies. These initiatives are designed to deepen agencies' understanding of the diverse services and resources available, equipping them to effectively address barriers to employment and fostering a more integrated and comprehensive approach to service delivery.

The referral process undergoes thorough examination during monthly meetings attended by core and required partners, ensuring its functionality, and identifying any potential need for additional training among partners to enhance the accuracy and appropriateness of referrals. Establishing an effective and cohesive program relies on open communication and a commitment to consistently share pertinent information. The foundation of a successful program is laid through the cultivation of relationships, ultimately leading to the creation of a universal referral network. This network is fortified by strong connections and collaborative efforts among partners, reinforcing the seamless and efficient flow of referrals within the broader framework of workforce development initiatives. Referrals that are made follow a “warm hand-off” approach to ensure a seamless process for the customer.

Sector partnerships will focus on actively engaging with employers to understand and address the

challenges they face. This includes identifying skill gaps, recruitment difficulties, and other industry-specific obstacles. By doing so, these partnerships facilitate a more responsive and adaptive workforce development system that meets the evolving needs of employers. Sector partnerships will play an instrumental role in crafting and enhancing career pathways within targeted industries. This includes collaborating with educational institutions and training providers to design curriculums that meet the specific skill requirements of employers within the targeted sector.

Organizing regular meetings with partners to discuss and coordinate the delivery of supportive services. Ensuring that these meetings address the unique challenges faced by individuals with barriers to employment.

Wednesday morning meetings are utilized for cross-training and are held for an hour. The statewide cross-training team organizes statewide virtual trainings for two of the Wednesdays each month. All core partners are invited to attend this training and topics are selected based on current needs of the team. Statewide training topics include Unconscious Bias, ADA Forms, PowerPoint, Diversity Awareness, De-escalation/Trauma Informed Care, Equal Opportunity/Complaint Process, Language Access, Eligibility for all programs, Performance Measures/Case Notes, Assistive Tech, Disability Etiquette, Registered Apprenticeship, and OWDS/Justice Involved Citizens.

The rest of the Wednesday trainings are organized locally and may include presentations from local community partners. In Mason City leadership from Beje Clark Residential Center attended one cross-training to talk about the needs and expectations of their residents when they use our services. They explain how their residents are required to obtain employment and rely heavily on the help of our center and staff to provide career counseling and connect them with local employment opportunities. Sign-in and sign-out logs and the processes they require their residents to follow are reviewed. New staff are able to get a better understanding of processes and best practices when working with residents of Beje Clark Residential Center.

In-Service training is provided twice a year on Columbus Day and President’s Day. Team members attend full day trainings covering topics more in-depth such as PII, business visits, team-building activities, ADA, and any other topics that are identified by local partners, board staff and the Northeast Iowa local board. Continuous cross-training activities ensures that partners are kept up-to-date with partner programs to better serve customer needs.

During some of the locally organized meetings, partners will hold career planning discussions across Title I, II, III, and IV teams. During these meetings, the managers will facilitate open conversations about the advice and recommendations that are given to job seekers. The goal is to help build our collective career planning and advising knowledge while also crowdsourcing challenges in assisting job seekers. Team members will come to these meetings with situations they've encountered with job seekers and discuss ways to assist them or recommendations to give.

To ensure that the advice we're giving job seekers is in line with what hiring managers are looking for, we've invited employers to attend these discussions as well. Employers are given a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting to talk about specific hiring needs and explain their recruitment process. After that, we dedicate the rest of the meeting to the career planning discussion and engage the employer representatives for their input from a hiring manager's perspective.

Collaborating with partners is a cornerstone of our approach to providing comprehensive services to individuals in need within our community. By pooling resources –both financial and non-financial we can significantly expand the range of employment, training, education, and supportive services available to those seeking assistance. Ultimately, our collaborative efforts aim to create a cohesive ecosystem of support where individuals can access a continuum of services that empower them to achieve their employment and educational goals, leading to greater economic self-sufficiency and community prosperity. This commitment to partnership and resource-sharing underscores our dedication to maximizing the impact of our efforts.

Business Engagement Consultants (BECs) equip themselves with a comprehensive Business Toolkit before going out to business visits. This toolkit is regularly updated to ensure it contains the latest flyers and vital partner information. BEC's serve as crucial liaisons for all partners during their interactions with businesses, offering essential support and guidance throughout the process. Their role is instrumental in fostering effective communication and collaboration between partners and businesses, thereby facilitating successful engagements.

Title IV has dedicated staff available at all office locations during regular business hours to provide assistance and address inquiries or concerns from partners and customers pertaining to employment for individuals with disabilities. IVRS extends invitations to all partners, whenever feasible, to attend fall meetings in secondary schools, fostering awareness among school staff about the services offered by our partners. Enrollment or co-enrollment of students in programs is initiated at the earliest possible stage.

Utilizing the Iowa*WORKS* framework and active community engagement, referrals are made to address challenges that may extend beyond the immediate scope of Title I, such as substance abuse or individuals facing a mental health crisis. Each individual undergoes the development of an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) or Individualized Supportive Services Plan (ISS) in collaboration with their career planner. This process includes identifying barriers before commencing services to ensure the implementation of appropriate supports, ultimately enhancing the likelihood of successful outcomes.

Within the IEP/ISS framework, any barriers within the purview of Title I are systematically addressed in a step-by-step manner. Barriers that fall outside the scope of IVRS services are duly referred to other partner agencies for comprehensive assistance.

Strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations, social service agencies, and other entities that offer supportive services. Establishing clear communication channels to streamline service coordination.

Strengthen partnerships with local employers, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and social service agencies to create a network that supports and enhances access to employment, training, and education. A great example of what we are currently doing in Waterloo is that Title I staff in Waterloo travel to meet individuals that are currently incarcerated or in a transition center who may not yet have the ability or resources to meet at Iowa*WORKS* but need employment or assistance determining a career pathway. Staff will travel to meet Youth participants at locations and times that fit the participants' education and employment schedules.

Expanding Title I services to encompass more rural locations is currently under active consideration and implementation without our local plan. Recognizing the importance of equitable access to workforce development resources, we are committed to extending the reach of Title I services to individuals residing in rural communities within our local area.

In parallel, our efforts to enhance outreach and accessibility have led to the establishment of additional service locations at key community hubs. Specifically, through Title III initiatives, we have established outreach locations at the Dubuque Carnegie Stout Library and Multicultural Family Center to provide in-person services. These locations serve as accessible and familiar spaces for community members, providing convenient access to in-person services and support. The inclusion of these outreach locations underscores our commitment to meeting individuals where they are and ensuring that our services are accessible to all. By establishing a presence in community-centric spaces like libraries and family centers, we aim to break down barriers to access and engage individuals who may face challenges in accessing workforce development services at one of our one-stop centers.

Title II providers work with all core partners in the Northeast Iowa LWDA to provide access to employment and training opportunities through, for example, the use of referral forms which facilitate communication between partners in partner meetings. They also provide information on different programs and services each partner provides to reduce the duplication of services offered by the providers and to find fruitful opportunities for collaboration. Professional development opportunities and cross training between agencies are provided to help agencies understand services and resources to address barriers to employment. Title II is currently located in the Dubuque One-Stop Center on Monday and Thursday and in Decorah One-Stop one afternoon a week at the minimum. In Mason City, Title II is in-person on Wednesday's and in Waterloo on Monday's.

Facilitating career counseling and guidance services in collaboration with community college partners and other partners that might be involved. This helps individuals make informed decisions about their educational and career pathways. An example of providing services in another location is that Title I services are provided in-person throughout the local area even to those communities without an Iowa***WORKS*** Center. Iowa***WORKS*** staff members also serve the Expansion office in Postville as an alternative for job seekers and customers who cannot travel to the Decorah Iowa***WORKS*** center. Collaborating with employers to establish apprenticeship and internship programs that provide hands-on training and practical experience, especially for those who may face barriers to employment.

In Northeast Iowa, Title I is directing its efforts towards two highly successful programs, namely the Reentry Program and the Swiss Valley Work Experience Program. In both these programs, Title I is actively involved in creating pathways to success for individuals facing unique challenges. By investing energy and resources into these initiatives, Title I aims to make a meaningful impact on the lives of participants and contribute to the overall workforce development goals in Northeast Iowa.

<u>Swiss Valley Work Experience Program</u>

1. Purpose: Helping youth/young adults with barriers to employment access work experience and career readiness training while cultivating their love of the outdoors.

2. Who is impacted (age, location, etc.) Stats from 2021:
    a. 8 Youth ages 16-18
    b. 4 from Dubuque Senior High School/ 4 from Stephen Hempstead High School
    c. 3 recent H.S. Grads/ 5 underclassmen
    d. All participants have received special education services in school and have a diagnosed vulnerability or are basic skills deficient.
    e. All participants have significant barriers to furthering their education and/or to obtaining meaningful employment.
3. What do they do:
    a. 6 Week Program in June/July
        b. Monday- Friday from 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
        c. Work Projects to be completed: tree trimming, cleaning trails, spreading woodchips, painting items, storm clean-up.
        d. In addition, students are able to participate in Education Days.
        e. Topics: Geese Banding, Patrol Boat, Safety Training, Hiking and Plant Safety, Resume writing and interview skills, River Museum, Kayaking, Archery, Fish Stocking
        f. e. Minimum two job coaches on site. Coaches are provided through the schools. Supervision and program oversight provided by Swiss Valley.

An agreement has been established where schools will continue to furnish paraprofessionals for job coaching, while Title I will extend supportive services. Representatives from TAP (Transition Alliance Program) and IVRS (Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services) serving area schools are actively involved in this collaborative initiative. All stakeholders have expressed a collective commitment to explore avenues for further enhancing and expanding this valuable partnership.

Title I is committed to actively encouraging the engagement of recently graduated students, with a particular focus on targeting out-of-school youth. Recognizing the heightened need for ongoing career pathway assistance among this demographic, Title I aims to provide tailored support to facilitate their successful transition into the workforce. The initiative prioritizes reaching out to out-of-school youth to ensure they receive the necessary resources and guidance as they embark on their career journeys. The intent is to foster an environment that empowers these individuals with the tools and assistance needed to navigate and succeed in their chosen career pathways.

The Title I Youth program paid for participants wages, steel toed boots, and work uniforms. Through this program the hope is that these individuals find meaningful employment. Title I continues to promote similar programs across Northeast Iowa.

## ReEntry Program

Reentry Program, operating under Title I, is specifically designed to address the unique challenges faced by individuals who have encountered barriers to sustainable employment due to recent incarceration and/or a criminal history. Recognizing the crucial connection between employment opportunities and the likelihood of criminal offenses, the primary goal of the program is to provide comprehensive support for reentering individuals. There are nearly 41,000 people in Iowa's correctional system today, only a fifth of

who are in a state prison. The rest are under supervision in a community setting such as a work release program or a halfway house.

The program places a strong emphasis on assisting participants in preparing for and securing sustainable employment. By doing so, it aims to mitigate the risk of recidivism, which is the tendency of individuals to reoffend and return to the criminal justice system. The correlation between stable employment and reduced recidivism is well-established, as gainful employment not only provides financial stability but also fosters a sense of purpose and belonging within society. On average, only 11.3% of individuals were employed during the quarter they were admitted to prison in a national study completed in 2018. In the same study, it demonstrated that an individual's income is at its lowest point for both men and women at the time of their arrest. This was especially true in the case of women, as the study evidenced their income decreased 33% from the 3 months prior to their arrest, as opposed 8% in men. The study also demonstrated women are more likely to be employed after their release; however, their pay is 20% lower than their male counterparts. One other notable statistic from the study stated the average time spent unemployed post-release was 7 months for both men and women. The study went on to demonstrate both men and women tend to move from job to job averaging 3.4 jobs in the 4 years post-release. It is our belief that training, and education not only increases employability, but also enables ex-offenders to gain employment with pay that is much closer to the national average, as they make 18% less than the US median pay following release.

In an attempt to reach individuals in our area experiencing barriers to employment due to recent incarceration and/or criminal history, Title I has partnered with the Black Hawk County Sheriff's Department Jail Diversion program. Staff meet with inmates in the jail on a weekly basis to educate inmates of services. Once released, individuals can connect with staff to start the application process. Since many are released to the work release facilities, weekly visits are made to both the men's and women's facilities to meet with those that have reached out after their release, as well as speak with other residents that may be interested in Title I services. Partnerships with the local probation/parole office have been developed, increasing referrals to serve those with criminal backgrounds. Title I collaborates with partners, Iowa***WORKS*** and Hawkeye Community Colleges, to attend Second Chance Friendly Job Fairs at the work release facilities in Black Hawk County twice a year.

Title I & III, Northeast Iowa Community College, Department of Corrections and Fountain of Youth have partnered to develop and implement a Workforce Acceleration Program in the Dubuque County Jail. This 4-week program, 8 session programs, has topics such as Career Pathways, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Reflection, Time Management, Attitude/Accountability, Workplace Culture, Barriers to Employment, and the EMERGE workshop (Values, Motivation, Mindset, O'Net, Job Hunting, Employer Incentives & Goal Setting).

Beyond Black Hawk County, a collaboration has been established with the residential release facility in West Union. Regular meetings are conducted with probation officers and residential officers at this location. Additionally, our staff actively engages with the probation office in Oelwein, receiving referrals from that office. Partnerships have been forged with other agencies in the region directly assisting ex-

offenders, including Hawkeye Community College, OneCity, and Catholic Charities Prison Ministry. These connections serve as conduits for referrals and resource sharing to bolster community support.

Employers can make a significant impact in transforming criminal liability into a community asset. Unemployed Returning Citizens are at a greater risk of re-offending compared to employed ex-offenders. Recidivism is higher for these individuals primarily because they cannot find a job paying a livable wage. In addition to these affiliations, conversations are initiated with local employers to discuss their hiring practices. This proactive engagement enables individuals to explore transitional employment opportunities as they stabilize and progress towards their long-term career objectives. Title III Career Planners are reaching out to returning citizens, engaging and establishing job development goals and career plans. These discussions are often in the AJC center, virtually or via the phone.

Materials have been developed to assist ex-offenders to create resumes that focus on their skills, without highlighting gaps in employment, as oftentimes this eliminates individuals from consideration before receiving an opportunity to interview. Additionally, individuals and their decisions regarding realistic career goals are supported by staff. Unfortunately, criminal history does reduce the scope of career goals available. Staff help these job seekers understand the limitations and plan accordingly.

The Reentry Program aims to break the cycle of recidivism by empowering individuals with the tools and support needed to reintegrate into the workforce successfully. Ultimately, the program seeks to contribute to the participants' sustainable employment, reducing the likelihood of future involvement with the criminal justice system.

## DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER PATHWAYS AND CO-ENROLLMENT IN CORE PROGRAMS

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board is dedicated to collaborating closely with entities responsible for implementing core programs to foster the development of robust career pathways and facilitate co-enrollment as appropriate within these programs. The Northeast Iowa LWDB recognizes the importance of aligning core programs with overarching career pathways to provide individuals with a clear and sequential progression toward their professional goals. Through ongoing consultations and strategic planning sessions with core program entities, the NEIWDB aims to identify key entry points, skill development milestones, and potential advancement opportunities within various career pathways. Additionally, the NEIWDB will actively promote co-enrollment initiatives, ensuring that individuals participating in one core program can seamlessly access complementary services or training offered by another program. This collaborative approach seeks to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of workforce development efforts by creating interconnected pathways that optimize resources, streamline services, and ultimately empower individuals to achieve sustained success in their chosen careers.

In the development of career pathways, the NEIWDB works with entities to carry out the core programs to facilitate the development of career pathways. Partners play a crucial role in creating comprehensive and effective strategies. Here are some current strategies utilized in Northeast Iowa:

### Use of Assessments

Participants will undergo evaluations conducted by career planners to determine their suitability and readiness for various career paths. These evaluations encompass a range of assessments, including the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) focusing on math and reading, O*NET Online (Occupational Information Network), and other relevant assessments.

Following the completion of these assessments, Iowa***WORKS*** Exploratory Services guide the development of plans and goals tailored to each individual. Career counseling is then provided to participants, taking into account various factors such as work history, educational levels, employability skills, job readiness, soft skills, industry sector needs, and Labor Market Information (LMI).

The formulated plans and goals are meticulously documented within the Iowa***WORKS*** system and case management files to ensure comprehensive and organized records of each participant's career development journey.

### Business Engagement Division

The Business Engagement Division was launched on September 1, 2022, the establishment of a comprehensive support hub for businesses and employers in Iowa. This division aims to serve as a "one-stop shop," offering personalized assistance and facilitating connections to federal and state services. The Business Engagement Division employs Business Engagement Consultants (BECs) who play a pivotal role in guiding businesses through their life cycle. These consultants identify and provide the relevant services tailored to the specific needs of the company at each stage. The proactive approach of BECs extends statewide, collaborating closely with Local Workforce Boards and operating at the pace of business to deliver timely guidance, resources, and responsive workforce solutions aligned with the evolving needs of Iowa's growing economy.

The Business Engagement Division in Northeast Iowa is committed to establishing and maintaining connections with local companies. This involves proactively reaching out to businesses, both through direct contact and on-site visits, to disseminate valuable information regarding available workforce services and potential employment opportunities. To enhance efficiency and minimize redundancy, a compact team of partner representatives will be strategically utilized in these outreach efforts.

Furthermore, regular meetings are scheduled to facilitate the exchange of information among core partners. These sessions serve as a platform to share current and pertinent business insights, including details on job openings, upcoming hiring events, and potential referrals for new positions. By fostering collaborative communication through these meetings, the goal is to ensure that all core partners are equipped with the most up-to-date and relevant information to effectively support the workforce and address the evolving needs of local businesses.

### Job Fairs and Hiring Events

The orchestration, promotion, and execution of job fairs and other hiring events will heavily rely on the active involvement of partner staff. Leveraging their knowledge of the local customer base, these staff members will play a crucial role in providing tailored assistance to job seekers through carefully screened job referrals. Recognizing the importance of adapting to evolving trends, the plan also embraces the

integration of Virtual Services. Presently, virtual services take the form of statewide virtual workshops and are also offered through local offices. The expansion of virtual services throughout the workforce area is actively under consideration and planning. Various programs are engaging with job seekers and employers in virtual settings, providing flexibility to participants who may prefer virtual interactions. Additionally, in-person options are available as requested, ensuring a blended approach that caters to diverse preferences and needs within the community.

### Industry Engagement

Building strong partnerships with local industries is essential. Core partners collaborate with employers to gain insights into their skill requirements, ensuring that career pathways are designed to meet the specific needs of the workforce within those industries. Our partners are constantly meeting with employers, especially our Business Engagement Consultants.

### Labor Market Analysis

Core partners engage in thorough labor market analysis to identify high-demand industries and occupations. By understanding local employment trends and opportunities, they can align career pathways with the current and future needs of the workforce.

### Subsidized Employment Activities

Subsidized employment initiatives, including On-the-Job Training, Internships, Apprenticeships, and Work Experience, offer employers a valuable avenue to address challenges in recruiting, screening, and training new hires. These programs provide a practical solution for businesses to overcome barriers they may encounter in the onboarding process. These opportunities allow participants to gain practical skills and knowledge while establishing connections within their chosen industries.

Moreover, the inclusion of Registered Apprenticeship programs presents an additional advantage for employers. This approach allows businesses to train their workforce while employees concurrently earn wages. By combining practical work experience with ongoing learning, Registered Apprenticeships offer a dynamic and effective method for employers to nurture and develop skilled workers within their organizations. This not only benefits the workforce but also serves as a strategic investment for businesses seeking to cultivate a well-trained and qualified team.

### Career Counseling and Guidance

Core partners offer career counseling services to guide individuals in making informed decisions about their career pathways. This includes assessments, goal-setting, and personalized plans to help participants navigate their chosen career trajectories.

### Credential Attainment

Core partners focus on facilitating the attainment of industry-recognized credentials and certifications. This enhances the employability of individuals within their chosen career pathways and meets the requirements of employers in the respective fields.

### Providing Supportive Services

Recognizing the potential barriers individuals may face, core partners integrate supportive services into career pathways. This may include childcare assistance, transportation support, and financial counseling to ensure that participants can focus on their education and training.

### Collaboration and Communication

Effective communication and collaboration among core partners are critical. Regular meetings and information-sharing sessions facilitate coordination, allowing for a cohesive and unified approach to career pathway development.

By employing these strategies, core partners contribute to the creation of robust career pathways that align with the needs of the workforce activities in the Northeast Iowa local area, foster individual advancement, and enhance the overall economic vitality of the community.

The NEIWDB works with entities to carry out the core programs to facilitate co-enrollments. Below are some co-enrollment strategies that are utilized currently by the Northeast Iowa local area and its partners:

### Streamlined Service Delivery

Partners follow a streamlined service delivery model, where individuals can access multiple services seamlessly without the need for redundant paperwork or redundant enrollment processes. This approach ensures that participants experience a cohesive and integrated support system. Partners meet on a regular basis to ensure processes and services are integrated and streamlined for better customer service outcomes.

### Joint Case Management

Partners collaborate in case management when working with participants. Together partners assess, plan, and monitor participants' progress collectively. This strategy facilitates an understanding of participants' needs, allowing for more targeted and coordinated interventions.

### Integrated Intake Processes:

Implementing a unified intake process across partner programs ensures that individuals only need to provide their information once when accessing various services. This reduces administrative burdens and enhances the overall customer experience. An example of this is our current Referral Process.

### Cross-Training of Staff:

Cross-training staff from different partner organizations helps create a shared understanding of each program's offerings and eligibility criteria. This enables staff to provide more comprehensive information to participants and guide them towards suitable services across different programs. Our Referral Process was revised to provide an overview of each partner program, eligibility requirements and services that are offered. Incorporating this into the Referral Process guarantees that partners make accurate referrals to the appropriate program. Additionally, it enables them to disseminate relevant information to participants under their current guidance. In our regular meetings with core partners, we've integrated program highlights into our agendas, providing a platform for partners to offer detailed insights into their programs and discuss eligibility criteria.

### Coordinated Outreach Efforts

Partners can collaborate on outreach efforts to ensure that individuals and employers are aware of the array of services available. This involves joint marketing and promotional activities to reach a wider audience and maximize the impact of program offerings. The Northeast Iowa LWDB has developed an outreach plan that all partners and programs utilize, and this outreach plan is included in our current MOU.

Outreach efforts play a pivotal role in the comprehensive suite of services provided to employers and job seekers. A multifaceted approach, combining electronic and print media campaigns, are employed to effectively disseminate information to employers and job seekers regarding the diverse programs available.

Through the Title II enrollment and orientation processes, students are able to identify barriers or obstacles to their success via the internal Title II form called the Individual Learning Plan. Once a barrier is identified, a referral to other Titles can be made through the Northeast Iowa Partner Referral Form, if applicable, or address that barrier via Title II funds and services.

Strategic and targeted electronic media campaigns will leverage digital platforms to reach a broad audience. These campaigns will harness the power of online communication channels, including websites, social media, and email newsletters, to ensure widespread awareness and accessibility. Simultaneously, carefully crafted print media materials, such as brochures and pamphlets, will be utilized for a tangible and direct outreach to businesses in the local community and job seekers.

By employing both electronic and print media channels, the aim is to create a comprehensive and well-rounded outreach strategy. This approach ensures that employers and job seekers receive clear and detailed information about the range of programs offered under WIOA, fostering increased awareness and engagement within the business community served by Iowa***WORKS***.

The primary initiative undertaken to achieve seamless integration across programs is aligning all of the core programs to ensure better customer service. Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is the lead state agency overseeing all core programs. This pivotal step represents the initial effort toward establishing a cohesive, adaptable, and efficient workforce delivery system tailored to the requirements of our clients.

The collaborative approach involves the development of joint policies, guidance, and the provision of collective technical assistance to address various Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements. These encompass a range of aspects, including local planning guidance, certification for one-stop centers, and the formulation of memoranda of understanding and infrastructure funding agreements.

Iowa Workforce Development has recently taken over the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), as of January 2023. The ongoing integration of SCSEP into the workforce delivery system aims to offer comprehensive support services to Iowans aged 55 and older. This approach, facilitated through co-enrollment, is designed to enhance their success in navigating today's workforce landscape.

The process involves complete co-enrollment, with a 100% integration between Trade Adjustment

Assistance (TAA) and Dislocated Workers who hold TAA certification Additionally, co-enrollment with other programs is pursued when it proves advantageous for the customer. The utilization of Integrated Resource Teams is actively promoted to optimize the advantages of co-enrollment without imposing undue burdens on the customer. This approach ensures that all programs fulfill their individual policy requirements effectively.

By implementing these co-enrollment strategies, core partners in Northeast Iowa can create a more seamless and integrated experience for participants, ultimately improving the effectiveness of workforce development services in the community.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board supports the States goals of the following:

- Increasing co-enrollment of core programs by 30% by December 31, 2025.
- Triple the number of Promise Jobs and Title I co-enrollments by December 31, 2025.
- Increase the number of Iowan's enrolled in SNAP E&T by 50% in December 31, 2025.
- Increase co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and iJAG participants by 10%.

Increase Co-enrollment of Core Programs:

- Core programs encompass essential workforce development initiatives that play a central role in supporting individuals in their employment and career goals.
- Achieving this objective requires fostering stronger partnerships among core programs, ensuring that individuals have access to a comprehensive set of services that address various aspects of their employment journey.

Triple Promise Jobs and Title I Co-Enrollments:

- Promise Jobs and Title I programs are crucial components of workforce development, providing targeted support for individuals with specific needs and barriers.
- Achieving this goal involves implementing strategies to enhance awareness, streamline processes, and create synergies between these programs, ultimately leading to increased enrollment and support for participants.

Increasing SNAP E&T Enrollment:

- SNAP E&T is designed to provide employment and training opportunities for individuals receiving SNAP benefits, promoting self-sufficiency and economic independence.
- The program offers training and supportive services, to increase workforce skills and help reduce barriers to employment.
- Realizing this objective requires targeted outreach efforts, collaboration with SNAP agencies, and the development of tailored programs to meet the specific needs of individuals enrolled in SNAP.
- In October 2023, IWD because the statewide Intermediary Network for Iowa's SNAP E&T program. Therefore, IWD will administer the SNAP E&T program in Iowa.
- SNAP E&T services are now offered directly from all Iowa***WORKS*** centers in the state, expanding accessibility to all 20 counties in Northeast Iowa.

By focusing on these strategies, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board aims to meet the state's ambitious goals, fostering a more interconnected and supportive ecosystem that enhances

opportunities for individuals seeking workforce development assistance.

## POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS AND INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATIONS

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will collaborate closely with entities responsible for carrying out the core programs to enhance access to activities that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials. The focus is on credentials that hold industry recognition, are portable, and can be stacked for further career advancement.

Partners and the Northeast Iowa LWDB will foster ongoing collaboration between Eligible Training Providers. The primary goal of this collaboration is to guarantee that individuals participating in workforce development programs receive high quality training. To ensure that we continue to improve access to these activities the following strategies will continue to be utilized.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will promote the credentials and how they can be stacked. This encourages participants to pursue a series of credentials that build upon each other. By stacking credentials participants accumulate a set of skills and qualifications over a period of time, enhancing their marketability and career progression.

Continued efforts will be made to expand access to postsecondary programs, ensuring that a diverse range of individuals, including those from underserved communities, are aware of and can participate in these activities. Outreach efforts will continue to involve the community colleges in Northeast Iowa, employers and community organizations.

Foster collaboration with the community colleges in Northeast Iowa to ensure that the postsecondary credential programs align with academic standards and seamlessly transfer into higher education pathways. This collaboration has continued to show us and strengthen the continuum of education and training opportunities for participants.

Upon determining whether training is necessary for a customer to meet the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) goals, staff will work closely with the customer to ensure the selected career training is appropriate and can be successfully completed. IEPs will identify skills gaps to better align needs and career goals.

When training needs are identified by the customers, financial situation is accessed. This assessment is completed as part of the Objective Assessment process. Career planners use a standardized form to ensure that before WIOA Title funds are spent, other sources of funding are either exhausted or unavailable and no unmet financial need exists. If a large unmet financial need exists after WIOA assistance, the customer must have a strategy to overcome the unmet need and be able to successfully complete training.

The career planner and the customer review other elements of the assessments, including the customers aptitudes, interests, transferable skills, and work values. This review also identifies strategies to overcome existing barriers. The appropriateness of the training is also discussed in terms of the customer's personal background. Potential barriers to completing training, such as past convictions, defaulted student loans, family circumstances or legal situations, are addressed with the customer in a respectful manner.

The customer completes a Will There Be a Job for Me? informational document to ensure that customers are making data-driven decisions regarding their training. Customers do their own research on the training program and provide the following information to the career planner:

- End date of training vs. end date of unemployment insurance
- Program placement rates and average starting wages
- Availability of work in the area
- Interview someone currently employed in the field

All information is documented in Iowa*WORKS* electronic case management system. All Individual Training Accounts (ITA) are administered in accordance with local and state policies as stated in the ITA agreement section of the Iowa*WORKS* individual Training Account form. Training funds must be available to enter into the ITA agreement. ITAs will only be awarded to customers who are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay for the cost of training or required WIOA Title assistance in addition to other sources. The student is responsible for any remaining balance. ITAs are only available for programs on the Eligible Training Provider List. ITAs are not transferrable and will only support the qualified training costs of the individual named on the account. Training costs incurred prior to the ITA may not be approved for payment.

Business and industry needs are researched through local sources, statewide labor market information projections, local current job openings and informational interviews with the employers. At the request of the service provider and with written approval of the participant, the training provider will provide the service provider with financial aid information, billing statements, class schedules, attendance reports, grades, and a certificate completion.

Occupations and employer needs are researched through local sources, statewide labor market information projections, Lightcast, local current job openings and informational interviews with the employers. Successful placements have the greatest on-the-job retention when the employer's needs are matched with job seeker skills.

WIOA Title I staff will require job placement and work-based learning activities to be tied to a specific career pathway identified in the customers IEP. Partner staff and customers have access to the most current labor market information available and use it as a guide when planning work-based leaning, upskilling, or training activities.

Business and industry relationships are essential to the successful connection of Adult and Dislocated Workers to the local area workforce. Staff have access to connections with area-employers to maintain communications and understanding of area business needs.

Customers have access to professional one-stop career planners and WIOA Title I staff who consult on local job openings, resume writing/critique, current labor needs, transferrable skills, and other aspects of job search. Meetings and progress are documented through Iowa*WORKS* system for consistency, detail, and safety.

Information gathered from sector boards in the area is discussed on how to create avenues for training that is needed by employers in the area. Partner with employers and Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship to create Registered Apprenticeship programs across the area. During orientations, partner program services are promoted and discussed with customers. Follow up with point of contact is made for those interested.

The Northeast Iowa Title I staff live in various locations outside the cities in which the Iowa*WORKS* centers are located. The geographical locations of staff allow more mobility in serving the entire local area. Title I staff travel to meet with participants in locations convenient to the participant when access to transportation is an issue. To maximize time and resources, staff plan outreach activities to build awareness of their availability in the area on specific dates. Potential customers will be encouraged to make appointments with staff during these planned visits.

As this practice is refined, the NEIWDB anticipates regular rural area recruitment events will be planned to serve as many potential customers as possible. These recruitment events can be set up as mini workshops to several customers at one time. The NEIWDB envisions the future workshops will provide an informational session on Iowa*WORKS* services, eligibility assessments, overview of enrollment requirements and an analysis of each participant's needs for future access to services. This access analysis will incorporate the resources available, such as the proposed hotspot and equipment loaner project.

The one stop operator facilitates better collaboration among partners, which includes the referral process and cross-training. These initiatives will prove helpful for equipping staff to represent all partners and services radiating from the Iowa*WORKS* centers and into the communities. The NEIWDB anticipates these events will promote more co-enrollment to maximize the funding resources available to help program participants overcome barriers to employment. Staff will become more aware of how programs can pay for education, portions of training wages to employers, subsidize the costs of dependent care and transportation, and provide support to improve resumes and interviewing skills of all job candidates.

As partners co-enroll participants, they will also have a better understanding of how various programs work to better serve the partner programs. The NEIWDB will continue to task partners with assessing the workflow in the provision of services for each program. The partners will use these assessments to better understand how the duties completed by staff can serve other partner programs. Where overlaps in program duties are identified when serving co-enrolled participants, staff will be asked to find ways to maximize the work they are doing to meet the requirements of the partner. The goal is to reduce duplication of appointments and case management wherever possible.

The synergy between these agencies and key partners, coupled with the financial support from the Title I WIOA grant, enables Title II partners to deliver complimentary services to students. These services encompass HSED and ESOL Programs, as well as preparatory initiatives for employability skills, upscaling, workforce readiness, and training through the Title II IELCE Program.

The Title II Program at Northeast Iowa Community College, in conjunction with our local One-Stop Center, plans to enhance collaboration further by minimizing redundancy in CASAS pre- and post-testing administration. A prospective approach involves Title II assuming responsibility for all CASAS testing, with Title I reimbursing in cases where the client opts not to co-enroll in Title II. In instances of co-enrollment, Title II would cover the testing expenses. This collaborative effort aims to streamline services, fostering improved communication between Titles regarding co-enrollment opportunities. This collaborative

approach will be explored at North Iowa Area Community College and Hawkeye Community College as well.

By implementing these strategies, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board aims to create a workforce system that supports individuals in accessing, completing, and benefiting from postsecondary credential programs, ultimately enhancing their employability and contributing to Northeast Iowa's workforce development goals.

## NORTHEAST IOWA STRATEGIES AND SERVICES

Local Plan Question:

3. Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to:
    a. Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
    b. Support a local workforce system that meets the needs of employers in the area.
    c. Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development.
    d. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.
    e. Implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, other work-based learning opportunities, registered apprenticeships, industry and sector strategies, career pathway initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of local employers. These initiatives must support the strategies described in a.-c. above.

### EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

In Northeast Iowa, a multifaceted approach will be implemented to actively engage employers in workforce development programs, with a particular emphasis on catering to the needs of small employers and those in high-demand industry sectors and occupations. To facilitate this engagement, the NEIWDB will deploy a range of targeted strategies and services.

Firstly, a customized outreach strategy will be developed to effectively communicate the benefits and opportunities of workforce development programs to small employers. This outreach will involve personalized consultations to understand the unique workforce challenges faced by small businesses, ensuring that the programs offered align with their specific needs.

NEIWDB has an integrated Business Services Team at each of our One-Stop Centers. The Business Services Team consists of our core partners and our Business Engagement Consultants. The goal is to support businesses in our local area. Coordinated efforts are made to ensure that there is a streamlined process in place to ensure that businesses are being contacted and are utilizing the services that are offered in the centers.

Partnerships with economic development organizations and chamber of commerce have been developed to support businesses in our local area and provide educational opportunities. We have a contact list created for all economic development organizations and chamber of commerce in Northeast Iowa. We include these folks in a number of mailings as well.

For employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, a proactive approach will be taken to identify and address their workforce requirements. This may involve conducting regular sector-specific

needs assessments and collaborating closely with industry associations to stay abreast of evolving trends and skill demands. The Northeast Iowa local area will tailor workforce development programs to directly address the identified needs of employers in these high-demand sectors.

To enhance engagement, a suite of services will be made available to employers. These services may include skill gap analysis, training needs assessments, and assistance in developing customized training programs. Moreover, the NEIWDB will offer incentives and support mechanisms, such as grants or tax credits, to encourage employers, especially small businesses, to actively participate in workforce development initiatives.

Recognizing the importance of fostering collaboration, the NEIWDB will establish partnerships with key stakeholders, including chambers of commerce, economic development, and educational institutions. Collaborative efforts will be aimed at creating a seamless pipeline for talent development, ensuring that workforce development programs in our area are closely aligned with industry needs.

Title II aims to establish connections with employers or facilitate student-employer connections through collaborative partnerships with Iowa*WORKS*, Promise Jobs, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, and Title I. Notably, the Northeast Iowa Community College Title II Program has, for the first time this year, appointed a full-time Integrated English Learning and Civics Education (IELCE) Instructor. Based in Dubuque County, this instructor will collaborate with local businesses employing English Second Language (ESL) workers.

The Title II IELCE program is initiating Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with local employers, offering free instruction to incumbent ESL workers. The curriculum focuses on subjects like workplace safety, civics, and language acquisition. The funding for this IELCE initiative is provided by the Iowa Workforce Development (IWD).

Simultaneously, Title II is committed to supporting local healthcare and nursing home providers, as well as clients from Title I and Vocational Rehabilitation, through the NICC CNA Flourish Program. Northeast Iowa Community College, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, Title I, and the Dubuque Community School District identified a need for an extended-time CNA class in the local Dubuque area. While CNA is one of NICC's popular Career Pathway Certificate courses, its rigor and the low retention rate for students facing social, emotional, intellectual, or economic barriers prompted the creation of this class. The aim is to address these challenges while meeting the demand for trained CNAs among local business partners.

Regular communication channels, such as employer forums, lunch and learn opportunities, roundtable discussions, social media avenues, and newsletters, will be leveraged to keep employers informed about the benefits and outcomes of workforce development programs. This transparent communication fosters a sense of partnership and encourages ongoing engagement.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board is committed to gaining a comprehensive understanding of employer needs across the entire local area. Our dedicated staff will persist in actively supporting and promoting hiring events and related activities for businesses in Northeast Iowa. With a focus on addressing the pervasive workforce shortage impacting Iowa, the Northeast Iowa local area will tailor business services to meet the specific needs of employers. Staff members will foster and strengthen relationships with businesses throughout the Northeast Iowa local area, ensuring a continuous dialogue to stay abreast of their evolving needs.

As part of our proactive approach, business services will be extended to all businesses, irrespective of size. These services will encompass a spectrum of offerings, including work-based learning opportunities,

on-the-job training, work experience opportunities, apprenticeship programs, and internships. By providing such diverse and tailored services, the Northeast Iowa local area aims to not only meet the immediate workforce needs of businesses but also to contribute to the long-term development and sustainability of workforce development initiatives. Through these initiatives, the Northeast Iowa local area seeks to establish a collaborative and mutually beneficial partnership with businesses, promoting a dynamic and skilled workforce that aligns with the evolving demands of the local economy.

In summary, Northeast Iowa's approach to employer engagement in workforce development programs involves tailoring outreach, services, and incentives to the specific needs of small employers and those in high-demand industry sectors. By adopting a proactive and collaborative strategy, the NEIWDB aims to create a dynamic ecosystem that promotes sustained employer involvement in workforce development, ultimately contributing to a skilled and resilient local workforce in Northeast Iowa.

In recent years, the significance of having a qualified labor pool has become increasingly critical for business expansion. This challenge has not only underscored the importance of existing workforce development relationships but has also created opportunities to forge new partnerships. Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board partners and staff have adopted strategic approaches to integrate and align workforce development with economic development activities. These strategies include:

- Economic representation on the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board.
- Community college representation on the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board.
- Fostering collaborative efforts with local chambers, community colleges, and economic development offices for organizing job fairs and employer-related events.
- Business Services Team, featuring representation from Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, has been established to improve employer communications and assess their needs, fostering a more inclusive approach.
- Business Services Meetings at times are facilitated by MSFW and LVER, contributing to leading discussions on employer programs and conducting employer visits.
- Sector boards in Northeast Iowa have undergone a revamp to enhance engagement and involvement from the LWDB, ensuring a more effective and responsive structure.
- Commitment to collaboration is evident through monthly meetings of Core Partners with the One-Stop Operator, facilitating information sharing for continued collaboration.
- Business Engagement Consultants stationed at each Comprehensive center in Northeast Iowa provide localized support to businesses and employers.
- Economic development representatives on the Planning and Operations Committee ensure a cohesive approach.
- Regular monthly report out from Business Engagement Consultants allows to the Planning and Operations Committee promotes collaborative discussions and insights into workforce development activities.
- Participation in Employer Council of Iowa events incorporates employer input on training ideas, marketing, and overall involvement in addressing local area needs.
- Business collaboration during Business Services meetings guarantees shared information among core partners.

- Coordinated outreach efforts involve collaboration among all Core Partners, including MSFW and LVER.
- Core Partners actively collaborate on joint visits, striving for a more cohesive and aligned approach to minimize service duplication.
- Ongoing efforts are in place to enhance coordination, ensuring a streamlined and effective approach in reducing redundancy of services.

An emphasis is placed on developing and maintaining relationships with businesses throughout the Northeast Iowa local area. Additionally, the implementation of sector partnerships across the entire local area is prioritized, reflecting a holistic approach to workforce development that addresses the diverse needs of the local area. Through these concerted efforts, Northeast Iowa is actively fostering a dynamic and collaborative environment to meet the evolving demands of its workforce and drive economic growth.

## SUPPORT LOCAL WORKFORCE SYSTEM TO MEET EMPLOYER NEEDS

In Northeast Iowa, a robust set of strategies and services will be implemented to ensure the support of a workforce system that effectively meets the diverse needs of employers in our area. Recognizing the critical role of a skilled and adaptable workforce in driving economic growth, the local workforce system in Northeast Iowa will prioritize several key initiatives. Firstly, a proactive engagement approach will be adopted to understand and address the specific needs of employers. This entails consistent discussions and needs assessments to customize workforce development programs and services to align with the demands of the local business landscape in Northeast Iowa.

To facilitate seamless collaboration, the workforce system will establish strong partnerships with local chambers of commerce, community colleges, and economic development offices. These collaborative efforts will extend to organizing job fairs, employer-related events, and workshops, providing a platform for employers to connect with potential talent. Furthermore, a comprehensive outreach process will be developed, with a particular emphasis on small businesses and those in high-demand industry sectors. This targeted outreach aims to bridge gaps in communication and ensure that workforce services are accessible and beneficial to businesses of all sizes in our area.

The development and implementation of sector partnerships will be a cornerstone of the local workforce system in Northeast Iowa. These partnerships will enable a more strategic alignment of training programs with the specific needs of industries, fostering a workforce that is not only skilled but also directly relevant to the evolving job market. The integration of representatives from various sectors in collaborative working groups or task forces. This ensures a comprehensive approach to decision-making, incorporating perspectives from both employers and employees in a manner that fosters effective coordination and collaboration. Sector boards will analyze labor market information, participate in workforce initiatives, identify training needs, address industry needs and issues, and resource sharing and collaboration.

Partner staff participation in local Business Service meetings is instrumental in creating a collaborative platform where they can not only attend but actively contribute to discussions on employer events,

initiatives, and opportunities for collaboration. By engaging in these meetings, partner staff members have the opportunity to share valuable insights and learn about upcoming employer events, initiatives, and potential areas for collaboration. Additionally, these gatherings serve as a knowledge-sharing hub where strategies to enhance business services are explored and refined collectively. The exchange of information during these meetings fosters a dynamic environment, ensuring that partner staff stay well-informed about the evolving landscape of employer needs, fostering effective collaboration and the continuous improvement of business services. Community college representatives are part of these meetings as well.

Business Engagement Consultants stationed at each Comprehensive Center in the local area will provide tailored support to businesses and employers, fostering a more localized and responsive approach. Business Engagement Consultants will provide regular reports to the Planning and Operations Committee to ensure that goals and strategic priorities are being met in Northeast Iowa.

Regular reporting mechanisms and collaborative discussions through forums like the Employer Council of Iowa events will be prioritized, allowing for continuous feedback and improvement of workforce development activities. Overall, the local workforce system's commitment to proactive engagement, strategic partnerships, targeted outreach, and sector-focused initiatives will create a dynamic and adaptable ecosystem that meets the evolving needs of employers and promotes sustained economic growth in the community.

To advance workforce development and bolster the local workforce in Northeast Iowa, the offices of Business and Community Solutions at each community college, along with business and industry coordinators, will collaborate closely with local businesses. The aim is to discern ways in which the colleges can contribute to meeting the specific needs of businesses and employers in the area. Following this assessment, the colleges will be well-positioned to deliver customized short-term or long-term classes and training sessions. Programs that are developed will be utilized to address the identified needs, ensuring that the educational offerings align precisely with the requirements of the local business community. This collaborative approach between colleges and businesses serves as a dynamic strategy to provide targeted and effective workforce development solutions in response to the evolving demands of the local job market. Community college representatives will ensure new programs and services are communicated with One-Stop partners to raise awareness of such programming. Periodic meetings will allow for collaboration, gather feedback, and explore additional ways to further partner on projects together.

Our Title II Adult Education and Literacy partners provide programs that are dedicated to delivering classes directly to local businesses, with a particular focus on offering English Language Learner (ELL) classes. This tailored approach involves bringing our educational services directly to the workplace, ensuring accessibility for employees seeking to enhance their language skills. By offering on-site classes, we aim to address the specific needs of local businesses and their workforce, facilitating language development and literacy skills improvement. This initiative not only promotes a supportive learning environment within the workplace but also contributes to the overall professional development and inclusivity of employees, aligning with the diverse linguistic needs of the community. For example, Hawkeye Community College has provided on site classes to Tyson Fresh Meats in Waterloo and NIACC has provided similar classes to Hawkeye Pride egg producers.

Our community college partners in Northeast Iowa actively engage with businesses through various channels beyond the previously mentioned initiatives. These connections are multifaceted and extend to diverse methods of collaboration. Our community colleges establish and nurture relationships with local businesses through industry advisory boards, networking events, and participation in business-related forums. This proactive engagement allows our partners to stay attuned to the evolving needs of businesses and ensures that educational programs are aligned with industry expectations.
Moreover, our community colleges facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities, fostering direct interactions between students and businesses. This hands-on approach not only provides students with valuable real-world experience but also allows businesses to actively participate in shaping the skill development of the future workforce. The opportunities provided align closely with those offered by our Title I Programs. Ongoing collaboration among our partners remains steadfast to ensure that participants have optimal chances to fulfill their employment requirements. This continued teamwork aims to create a seamless and comprehensive support system, maximizing the opportunities available for participants to meet their employment needs effectively.

Additionally, community college partners in Northeast Iowa are involved in employer-focused initiatives such as job fairs, workshops, and seminars, creating platforms for businesses to connect with potential employees and vice versa. These collaborative efforts contribute to a dynamic and mutually beneficial relationship between community colleges and businesses, enhancing the overall synergy between education and industry. Through these multifaceted connections, our community college partners play a pivotal role in creating a responsive and adaptive educational ecosystem that meets the evolving needs of the local business community.

In specific instances, representatives from John Deere actively engaged with our college's CNC I-BEST class, providing valuable insights into job openings and training opportunities. This direct interaction facilitated a meaningful exchange of information, enhancing the students' understanding of potential career paths within the company. Additionally, students enrolled in the CNA I-BEST program embarked on clinical visits to the NewAldaya Lifescapes retirement community in Cedar Falls. This hands-on experience allowed them to apply theoretical knowledge in a real-world setting, gaining practical skills and insights relevant to their future roles in the healthcare sector. These examples underscore the importance of industry engagement and experiential learning, ensuring that educational programs remain closely aligned with the evolving needs of employers and provide students with a holistic understanding of their chosen fields.

In Northeast Iowa, an ongoing commitment to supporting businesses and meeting their evolving needs remains a top priority. The local area consistently explores and embraces additional strategies and initiatives to enhance the support offered to local businesses. This proactive approach involves a continuous assessment of the challenges and requirements faced by businesses across various sectors. By staying attuned to the ever-changing economic landscape, Northeast Iowa aims to identify innovative ways to provide targeted assistance, whether through customized training programs, workforce development initiatives, or strategic partnerships.

Collaboration with key stakeholders, including chambers of commerce, industry associations, and educational institutions, plays a crucial role in shaping these supportive efforts. The goal is to foster an environment that not only responds to immediate challenges but also anticipates future needs, ensuring

a resilient and adaptive business ecosystem in Northeast Iowa. Through ongoing dialogue, feedback mechanisms, and a commitment to staying abreast of industry trends, the region endeavors to tailor its support services and programs to align seamlessly with the dynamic demands of local businesses. In essence, Northeast Iowa's dedication to exploring additional ways of support reflects a proactive and responsive approach to sustaining a thriving business community in the Northeast Iowa local area.

## COORDINATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the State of Iowa, the collaboration between Economic Development and Workforce Development programs has been a longstanding and mutually beneficial partnership. These two essential components of the state's infrastructure have worked hand-in-hand, leveraging their respective strengths to support and complement each other's objectives. Economic Development initiatives focus on fostering the growth and sustainability of businesses, attracting investments, and driving economic prosperity. On the other hand, Workforce Development programs concentrate on cultivating a skilled and adaptable workforce to meet the demands of evolving industries.

The synergy between these sectors is evident in various ways. Workforce Development programs provide a pipeline of skilled talent, aligning training and education with the specific needs of businesses identified by Economic Development efforts. This collaboration ensures that the workforce is equipped with the right skills, enhancing the overall competitiveness of the state.

Conversely, Economic Development initiatives create a conducive environment for businesses to thrive, thereby generating job opportunities. Workforce Development programs step in to prepare individuals for these opportunities, ensuring a seamless integration of the labor force into the expanding economic landscape. This interdependence promotes a cycle of growth, where a skilled workforce attracts businesses, and thriving businesses, in turn, contribute to workforce development.

Through joint efforts, these programs also address challenges such as skill gaps, unemployment, and the overall economic resilience of the state. By coordinating strategies, Economic Development and Workforce Development create a comprehensive framework that addresses both the supply and demand sides of the labor market.

This longstanding collaboration showcases the importance of aligning economic and workforce initiatives for sustainable growth. By continuing to support and complement each other, Economic Development and Workforce Development programs in Iowa and especially Northeast Iowa contribute significantly to the state's economic vibrancy and the well-being of its residents.

Northeast Iowa maintains a collaborative and coordinated effort with economic development offices throughout the entire local area. A couple of representatives specializing in economic development actively participates in the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB), offering valuable

insights and fostering collaboration within the group. The Planning and Operations Committee Chair, a key figure in our decision-making structure, is also a representative from economic development, ensuring that business priorities are effectively integrated into our planning processes. Moreover, the committee includes economic developers from various parts of the local area, ensuring diverse perspectives and regional insights.

To facilitate seamless communication, we maintain a comprehensive economic development contact list encompassing all economic developers in Northeast Iowa. Regular communications are disseminated to this list to keep our partners well-informed. This collaborative approach is vital in addressing business-driven priorities and tackling job openings strategically. Our collaboration with economic development is instrumental in the retention, expansion, and attraction of local businesses. The focus on finding a skilled workforce underscores our joint effort to bridge gaps in the labor market.

The Business Engagement Consultants in Northeast Iowa actively engage with economic development partners to promote existing programs and support both current and new businesses in the region. This collaborative synergy reinforces our commitment to building a skilled workforce and supporting economic growth in Northeast Iowa.

Continuing to collaborate with economic development entities provides us with a nuanced understanding of current trends in Northeast Iowa. This knowledge enables us to work collaboratively and target shared goals effectively. Through sustained collaboration, we leverage the expertise of economic development partners to navigate the intricacies of the local business landscape and implement targeted strategies for collective success.

Additionally, economic development representatives actively participate in our rapid response teams, which are designated for each local office within Northeast Iowa. These teams play a crucial role in providing early intervention to help avert or minimize the duration of potential layoffs to companies. Our rapid response teams conduct employer and worker information meetings and provide job fairs and workshops to showcase our programs and services that are offered by our partners. By having economic development members on these rapid response teams, we ensure a well-rounded and comprehensive approach to swiftly address business needs during a rapid response. Their inclusion enhances the effectiveness of our rapid response efforts, allowing us to navigate and respond to the intricacies of each community's economic environment in a timely and targeted manner. This collaborative engagement reinforces the synergy between economic development and workforce initiatives, contributing to the overall resilience and adaptability of our local area’s workforce support system.

## LINKAGES BETWEEN ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

UI services are incorporated in Northeast Iowa at the following locations Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, and Decorah. Each of these offices has staff trained and available to provide UI services and identify and address issues that might arise with a claim. Staff are available during office hours either in-person, by phone or by email to aid and answer any questions that a claimant might have or about their current situation. Training opportunities are provided to staff on a regular basis. Iowa participates in the RESEA program or Reemployment Services. During the first five weeks of an unemployment claim accounts are reviewed to determine if the individual should participate in RESEA. Some programs that are offered because of RESEA are:

- Reemployment Orientation Workshop
- Reemployment Eligibility Assessment
- Emergency Unemployment Compensation Audit
- National Career Readiness Certificate Testing

The Iowa***WORKS*** case management system facilitates the recording of case notes and details about services delivered to individuals. Any program utilizing the Iowa***WORKS*** system has the capability to retrieve information on a specific individual, including the services rendered and the respective service providers. Access to case notes is also available through this system. Employing the Iowa***WORKS*** system streamlines service delivery across programs, eliminating the duplication of services and ensuring efficient coordination and collaboration among Title I and Title III.

The Iowa***WORKS*** system provides job seekers with a comprehensive platform for career exploration, offering a glimpse into current job openings in the surrounding area. Beyond job listings, this system enables job seekers to stay informed about ongoing events such as workshops, job fairs, and employer recruiting events. A noteworthy feature is the seamless registration capability for workshops directly within the system, streamlining the participation process for individuals seeking skill development or additional training.

Furthermore, the Iowa***WORKS*** system serves as a hub for valuable labor market information, empowering job seekers with insights into industry trends, demand, and potential growth areas. It extends beyond mere information provision by offering interactive job seeker services, including a virtual recruiter, resume builder, and a comprehensive job search feature. This multifaceted approach ensures that job seekers can not only explore career opportunities but also actively engage in skill-building activities and leverage essential tools for enhancing their job search and application processes. The Iowa***WORKS*** system stands as a versatile resource, providing a user-friendly interface for job seekers to navigate their career paths efficiently and make informed decisions based on real-time labor market dynamics.

The One-Stop Center offers a comprehensive array of job search activities and workshops directly within its office space. Notably, the center hosts employer hiring events and recruitment tables on-site, facilitating direct interactions between job seekers and potential employers. For individuals requiring

assistance with job searches and the completion of employment applications, dedicated computers and knowledgeable staff members are readily available to provide support.

An efficient referral process is in place to seamlessly connect individuals entering the center with other relevant programs, ensuring a holistic and tailored approach to their needs. This collaborative referral system enhances the range of services available to individuals, promoting a coordinated effort to address diverse employment-related requirements. Importantly, these services are extended to all Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants, emphasizing inclusivity and accessibility within the One-Stop Center's offerings. Overall, each center functions as a dynamic hub, fostering an environment where job seekers can access resources, receive personalized support, and engage directly with potential employers, streamlining their path toward successful employment opportunities.

Here is a look at the process when a participant walks into the Iowa*WORKS* office and how they are served:

Often individuals seeking UI benefits are not eligible, however can and should be referred to Title III, Title I or other core or required partner services. Iowa*WORKS* center services provide individuals, including unemployed and underemployed Iowans, valuable services to help them meet their immediate and long-term employment goals.

All customers who visit an Iowa*WORKS c*enter receive a warm welcoming and register for an IowaWORKS.gov account. Customers seeking assistance with filing an unemployment insurance claim will be provided with general information. These services are considered basic career/self-service and are provided immediately and continuously without further eligibility documentation requirements. Such services include labor exchange services, labor market information, initial skills assessments, workshops, program eligibility information, email assistance, and basic information regarding resumes and unemployment.

Through an enhanced triage process, Iowa*WORKS* career planners ask probing questions that help guide claimants to other Iowa*WORKS* services. Customers seeking further assistance are referred to complete a program application and, as a result of a warm handoff, meet individually with a career planner who provides specific assistance depending on the needs of the participant. At this time, the customer completes the appropriate program application and completes enrollment into the applicable program.

Career Planners encourage and facilitate access for center customers to all appropriate career services at each and every center visit to continuously engage them in the service delivery process until employed in self–sufficient employment.

Iowa's Unemployment Division is a One-Stop partner that provides a robust menu of services to UI claimants/unemployed individuals in partnership with the American Job Center Division. These individuals receive services beyond what they could obtain on their own using self-service tools including but not limited to staff-assisted services.

All offices have dedicated phones for customer use that can be used to dial directly into the UI customer service line for assistance if a team member is not available in person. All Wagner-Peyser Career Planners have received basic UI training and can answer basic unemployment related questions. Career Planners are able to submit questions or eligibility issues to the main UI department through technology if additional assistance is needed.

All Iowa***WORKS*** Centers have dedicated phones for customer use to contact the UI customer service line for assistance if a Career Planner is not available in person. Additionally, all Iowa***WORKS*** Career Planners have the ability to call the UI line to obtain additional assistance for a customer if necessary. Iowa***WORKS*** Operations Managers also have access to the UI Benefits Managers if needed to assist a customer.

## IMPLEMENT INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LOCAL EMPLOYERS

Northeast Iowa is focused on a lot of initiatives that support strategies such as:

Transitional Jobs- Individuals facing multiple barriers to employment may initially benefit from engaging in less intensive activities, such as transitional jobs. These roles serve as a time-limited work experience coupled with comprehensive employment and supportive services. Tailored for those with barriers to employment, chronic unemployment, or an inconsistent work history, transitional jobs aim to help individuals establish a positive work record, showcase success in a work setting, and cultivate skills necessary for acquiring and maintaining unsubsidized employment. This work-based learning initiative is designed to provide a supportive pathway for individuals overcoming obstacles on their journey toward sustained employment success.

Incumbent Worker Training- Northeast Iowa has developed policies and procedures around Incumbent Worker Training in our local area. This program is initiated by employers in our area and fill out and interest and application form to support their program efforts. The program is designed to provide direct financial assistance to train current employees to avert a layoff or improve the economic competitiveness of a business. The program is designed to assist employers in upgrading the skills of the current workforce. Employees benefit by receiving training to upgrade their skills, wages, and increased experiences within an organization. These initiatives have demonstrated a notable impact on bolstering the competitiveness of employers within their specified markets. Additionally, they contribute to the cultivation of an internal workforce whose proficient skills play a vital role in supporting the employer's sustained competitiveness. This is achieved through the development of a skilled workforce and the extension of worker tenure, fostering a work environment that not only attracts but also retains valuable talent. The cumulative effect is a heightened competitive edge for employers, underlining the significance of investing in and nurturing the skills of the internal workforce for long-term success in the market.

On-The-Job Training - The On-The-Job Training Programs (OJT) are extended to participants who are deemed job-ready. These programs play a pivotal role in imparting specialized skills to participants, equipping them with the expertise needed for specific job roles. The duration of the training is meticulously determined, incorporating input from the employer and an assessment of the individual's prior work experience and existing skills.

Participating businesses are integral to the OJT process, making a substantial investment by actively contributing to the formulation and execution of a comprehensive training plan. They serve as the official employer of record, shouldering the responsibility of guiding participants through the training process and ensuring that they acquire the necessary skills for successful job performance. This collaborative approach not only enhances the participants' skill set but also reinforces the partnership between training programs and businesses, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship that contributes to the overall success and development of the workforce.

Customized Training Programs- Customized training provides training that is specific to an employer. These training programs ensure that training needs for the individual and employer and being met and that the development of certain skills is taking place. Skill development is important to ensure successful job completion. Currently, Northeast Iowa does not have a policy developed specifically for customized training programs. This is something that will be addressed in the near future.

Work-Based Learning- Work-based learning encompasses a range of activities that leverage the collaborative partnership between industry and education to actively involve individuals in the learning process. This dynamic approach is designed to foster meaningful engagement and facilitate the in-depth application of specific skills. Unlike traditional learning methods, work-based learning goes beyond theoretical understanding, providing individuals with hands-on experiences within a real-world work environment. Work Based Learning Opportunities are created in partnership with various groups such as employers with employees, but also the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) Training Program through AARP and Work Experience Placements with Promise Jobs.

Through this collaborative model, individuals gain practical insights and actively apply the knowledge and skills they acquire in educational settings. This engagement often occurs through internships, apprenticeships, or other experiential learning opportunities that bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice. By immersing individuals in authentic workplace scenarios, work-based learning not only enhances their skill proficiency but also cultivates a deeper understanding of the practical applications of their education.

Registered Apprenticeships- Registered Apprenticeships represent a comprehensive and strategic approach that blends on-the-job training with Related Training Instruction to systematically enhance workers' skill levels and corresponding wages. Individuals can receive a Nationally recognized credential. This structured program is designed to create a progressive learning trajectory, allowing individuals to gain practical experience while simultaneously acquiring the necessary theoretical knowledge.

Registered Apprenticeships present a highly effective avenue for recruiting, training, and retaining highly skilled workers. By offering a dynamic combination of hands-on training and structured education, RA programs ensure that workers are equipped with the specific skills demanded by the industry. This not only addresses the immediate needs of the employer but also contributes to the long-term development of a highly proficient workforce.

One of the key advantages of Registered Apprenticeships is their capacity to provide job seekers with immediate employment opportunities. These opportunities are not just jobs; they are sustainable positions that offer competitive wages and a clear pathway for career advancement. This ensures that individuals entering RA programs not only gain valuable work experience but also enjoy the prospect of building a rewarding and progressive career.

Business Engagement Consultants in Northeast Iowa play a pivotal role in this process by collaborating closely with employers to promote and support Registered Apprenticeship programs. Their engagement involves creating awareness, facilitating connections between employers and potential apprentices, and advocating for the benefits of these programs. This collaborative effort between Business Engagement Consultants and employers ensures the successful implementation and promotion of Registered Apprenticeships, contributing to a skilled and adaptive workforce that meets the evolving needs of the industry.

Industry and Sector Strategies- Sector partnerships are established with the aim of providing support to business leaders within the same industry. These collaborative alliances are specifically designed to tackle workforce-related matters pertinent to their respective industries. A well-executed sector partnership demonstrates effectiveness by:

- Identifying shared issues, challenges, and opportunities encountered within the industry.
- Addressing the priority needs of the industry, ensuring a targeted and strategic approach.
- Tackling existing and emerging skills gaps to enhance the overall proficiency of the workforce.
- Improving the alignment of programs, educational initiatives, and various resources that cater to the needs of both employers and workers.
- Facilitating effective communication of industry priorities to all relevant partners.

In various counties within the Northeast Iowa local area, there is a notable emergence and re-establishment of Sector Partnerships. These partnerships are dynamic collaborations between businesses, educational institutions, community organizations, and other stakeholders within specific industries or sectors. The primary goal is to foster a strategic and cooperative approach to address the workforce and economic development needs of those particular sectors.

The establishment of new Sector Partnerships signifies a proactive effort to enhance regional economic vitality, promote job growth, and ensure that the local workforce is equipped with the skills and knowledge demanded by the evolving industries. Through these partnerships, stakeholders can collectively address workforce challenges, share resources, and implement strategies to boost the overall competitiveness and sustainability of the region's key economic sectors. This collaborative approach contributes to a more resilient and responsive workforce ecosystem in Northeast Iowa.

Career Pathway Initiatives- Career pathways are designed to educate and inform individuals and workforce about occupations available. Sector partnerships employ career pathways as a strategic approach to effectively tackle labor market needs identified by the industry. These pathways structure education and training in a systematic, stackable sequence that aligns with specific occupations within a particular industry. Career pathways are designed to offer comprehensive support to individuals, aiding in the development of personal, technical, and employability skills necessary for progress within the

industry. Furthermore, these pathways facilitate a seamless transition from training and education to entering the workforce.

The development of career pathways involves the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, including colleges, primary and secondary schools, economic development agencies, workforce service providers, employers, labor groups, and social service providers. Each of these entities plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of career pathways. They contribute to the alignment of educational and training programs with industry demands, creating a coordinated and effective system that empowers individuals to navigate their career trajectories successfully. This collaborative approach ensures that career pathways serve as a dynamic tool for both personal and professional growth within the industry, fostering a skilled and adaptable workforce.

examples of what is currently taking place in Mason City that is solely focused on needs of employers:

Every Tuesday Iowa***WORKS*** in Mason City host employer to conduct hiring events on-site in our center. We've found that job seekers may not be comfortable with attending large-scale job fairs with rooms full of other job seekers and employers. Having a low-stress opportunity to speak with one or two at a time can be much more manageable. Employers bring signs, tablecloths, and other materials they normally bring to job fairs and set them up at a table in front of the welcoming area.

In addition to the table, employers are given exclusive access to a small computer lab where applications can complete the company application while on-site. The employer is provided with an additional conference room (attached to the computer lab) to conduct private interviews or screenings. The goal is to give the employer the ability to conduct as much of their selection and hiring process as they can while visiting our center.

In Mason City there are normally multiple employers that attend the Tuesday hiring events. Customers realize every Tuesday we'll have different employers in the building, and we've seen an increase in claimants come in on Tuesdays to file their weekly claim, then apply for openings with the employers we have on site. Hiring events are promoted through core partner and community programs. These events are managed by a Career Planner who assists the BEC by managing existing partnerships.

We also heavily utilize our office's Facebook page to promote events. Once the recruiter has their table set up, someone on the business engagement team takes a photo of them at the table and creates another post, encouraging people to stop by. Putting a face to the event helps encourage job seekers to plan on attending and gives a more personal touch to job search.

In addition to the Business Engagement Consultant, all Career Planners in Mason City have Business Engagement assignments and assist the BEC with some of the employer communication duties by entering job orders, setting up hiring events, coordinating Employer Council of Iowa trainings, and answering questions when employers visit or call our center. Our Career Planners also notify local employers when customers apply for their job openings, reassuring the employer that the customer is work ready and qualified for the position.

The core local Business Engagement Team consists of the Business Engagement Consultant, Title III Career Planners, Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Outreach Specialist, Title I team members, Title II Director, Title IV team members, and the regional LVER. Meetings are typically held monthly, but the

team primarily functions through integrated business outreach meetings. When the BEC (or anyone else on the team) sets up a meeting or site visit with a new employer, they try to bring as many members from the Business Engagement Team as possible.

## COORDINATION OF LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Local Plan Question:

4. Describe how the LWDB will coordinate local workforce investment activities with economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the LWDB will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board is committed to fostering a seamless coordination between local workforce investment activities and economic development initiatives within the local area. Acknowledging the interconnected nature of these domains, the NEIWDB will actively engage in collaborative efforts with economic development entities, local chambers of commerce, and educational institutions to align workforce strategies with economic growth objectives. Through regular consultations, joint planning sessions, and sustained communication, the NEIWDB will ensure that workforce development activities are strategically integrated with economic development plans, creating a harmonious synergy that supports both business expansion and the cultivation of a skilled workforce.

In promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, the NEIWDB will continue to implement targeted programs and partnerships. This involves collaborating with educational institutions to design curriculum tailored to entrepreneurial needs, facilitating workshops, and training sessions, and establishing connections with microenterprise service providers. By actively engaging with local businesses and entrepreneurs, the NEIWDB aims to create a supportive ecosystem that nurtures entrepreneurial skills, encourages innovation, and fosters the development of microenterprises. This comprehensive approach aligns with the broader goal of enhancing economic vitality and promoting sustainable growth within the Northeast Iowa local area.

Local partnerships play a pivotal role in fostering collaboration between workforce development programs and economic development initiatives. These partnerships are characterized by regular meetings and events, serving as platforms for community stakeholders to convene, exchange ideas, and build awareness of the diverse services and resources available within the local area. It's through these interactions that the community gains insights into the various avenues for support and development. Importantly, county economic development assumes a critical role in delivering services to residents in rural communities. This inclusion ensures that the unique needs and challenges of individuals in rural settings are effectively addressed, contributing to the overall well-being and growth of the community. The collaboration between workforce and economic development, facilitated by these local partnerships, reflects a commitment to holistic community advancement and the optimization of available resources for the benefit of all.

Strategic business service initiatives, including incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, registered apprenticeships, and various work-based learning

opportunities, are strategically employed to precisely align with industry and sector-specific strategies. These initiatives are meticulously designed to cater to the unique needs of businesses within the Northeast Iowa local area. An integral aspect of this approach involves the implementation of career pathway initiatives aimed at strategically placing workers in roles that align with their skills and aspirations. To optimize this process, effective business intermediaries are engaged to identify suitable employers willing to host work-based learning sites.

All business services and strategies implemented in the Northeast Iowa local area are crafted with a central focus on meeting the distinct requirements of local employers, ensuring the development of a high-quality and skilled workforce. Furthermore, sector strategies play a crucial role in advancing entrepreneurial skills training and facilitating microenterprise services. By aligning these initiatives with specific sectors, the Northeast Iowa local area aims to not only address immediate workforce needs but also stimulate entrepreneurial growth and support the development of microenterprises. This comprehensive and targeted approach underscores the commitment to fostering a resilient and dynamic business environment in Northeast Iowa.

The NEIWDB aims to align and support our local workforce initiatives with economic development efforts for a seamless integration. Additionally, we can enhance collaboration between various stakeholders, foster innovation in programs, and explore strategic partnerships with businesses to further strengthen the effectiveness of our efforts. Incorporating feedback mechanisms and regularly assessing the evolving needs of both the workforce and economic landscape will contribute to a dynamic and responsive approach.

Community colleges within the Northeast Iowa local area have established numerous partnerships and collaborative initiatives aimed at fostering economic development and entrepreneurship. An illustrative instance is NIACC's hosting of the NIACC Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, serving as a hub for entrepreneurial training. This center not only offers comprehensive entrepreneurial training programs for students spanning from elementary to college levels but also extends its support to existing business leaders and aspiring entrepreneurs. In collaboration with the North Iowa Small Business Development Center, the Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center becomes a focal point for educational resources and workforce development opportunities across the North Iowa local area. Through these collaborative efforts, community colleges actively contribute to the promotion of economic growth, skill development, and the cultivation of an entrepreneurial spirit within the local community. NIACC maintains continuous partnerships with the North Iowa Corridor and other nearby local economic development corporations.

Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) has established enduring collaborations with the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, notably engaging in the Opportunity Dubuque program. Within this initiative, NICC plays a pivotal role by providing training across eighteen in-demand career fields. Students have the opportunity to enroll in Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) and Career Pathway Certificate (CPC) courses, strategically linked to Integrated Education and Training (IET) or Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) classes. Funding for this program is sourced from a combination of government support and contributions from business partners.

Hawkeye Community College (HCC) has forged partnerships with organizations like Grow Cedar Valley to actively contribute to economic development. Additionally, HCC collaborates with the University of

Northern Iowa's Small Business Development Center to promote economic growth and entrepreneurship. An illustrative example is the collaboration between HCC's Hospitality Management program, the Small Business Development Center, and local employers. This partnership has facilitated the placement of students in high-demand jobs, enhancing their practical skills and industry readiness. Furthermore, HCC's Hospitality Management and AEL programs are actively engaged with a local microenterprise group to establish a forthcoming partnership in the coming year, further reinforcing the college's commitment to fostering economic development at both local and regional levels.

Iowa*WORKS* customers aspiring to initiate their own business ventures receive referrals to the Small Business Development Center, NIACC, and the UNI Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Centers. These centers serve as invaluable resources, offering support, guidance, and expertise to budding entrepreneurs. Additionally, customers can be referred, with a particular emphasis on Title I, for entrepreneurial training. This ensures that Iowa*WORKS* customers seeking to embark on entrepreneurial endeavors receive comprehensive and tailored support through specialized programs, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their entrepreneurial pursuits.

The local Business Services teams at each center engage in regular meetings with economic development groups, including the North Central Iowa Alliance, Northeast Iowa Business Network, Prosperity Eastern Iowa, and Cedar Valley Regional Partnership. These groups function as economic developers overseeing the workforce area. During these collaborative sessions, a wide array of topics is explored, encompassing local workforce needs, challenges, and opportunities. These discussions serve as a platform for fostering effective communication and strategic coordination between business services and economic development entities, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic factors influencing the workforce landscape. The exchange of insights and information during these meetings contributes to the development of targeted initiatives and solutions that address the evolving needs of the local workforce and support economic growth.

Title IV provides individuals with disabilities interested in self-employment with two distinct services: the "full self-employment program" and the "microenterprise program." Both programs aim to support individuals in achieving a level of self-sufficiency aligned with their unique abilities, preferences, and needs. The "full self-employment program" and the "microenterprise program" offer flexible options, including different levels of funding and the potential for a more expedited process, tailored to individual preferences.

These programs encompass a range of services designed to facilitate the entrepreneurial journey for individuals with disabilities. Technical assistance, financial support, referrals to relevant resources, and supportive services are provided to address the specific needs of each participant. The emphasis is on offering knowledgeable guidance in self-employment endeavors and connecting individuals with community resources that align with their unique circumstances.

Iowa Department for the Blind actively engages with the self-employment program, reinforcing the commitment to inclusivity and ensuring that individuals with visual impairments have access to the resources and support needed to pursue self-employment opportunities. Overall, Title IV's comprehensive suite of services underscores its dedication to empowering individuals with disabilities to navigate the path of self-employment successfully and attain a level of self-sufficiency that aligns with

their capabilities and aspirations.

Title I actively forges connections and partnerships with local organizations and committees dedicated to addressing critical issues such as eradicating generational poverty, supporting nontraditional students, and aiding individuals with criminal backgrounds as they reintegrate into the workforce. This proactive engagement aligns with Title I's commitment to fostering comprehensive community support and inclusivity.

In times of workforce challenges or dislocation, Title I responds swiftly by providing rapid response services to both employers and affected workers. Worker Information Meetings are organized to offer crucial support and guidance to dislocated workers, ensuring they have the resources and information needed to navigate transitions effectively.

Recognizing the importance of direct engagement with the local workforce, Title I actively participates in and organizes local job fairs. These events serve as valuable platforms for connecting with employers and job seekers, offering support where it is most needed. By facilitating these connections, Title I contributes to the creation of a robust and responsive local job market.

In collaboration with local schools, Title I establishes connections to ensure that students at risk of falling through the cracks receive individualized support to complete their education. This includes linking students to work readiness programs and career pathways, fostering a seamless transition from education to the workforce. Title I's multifaceted approach reflects a dedication to addressing diverse needs within the community and building bridges between education, workforce development, and community support.

Beje Clark Residential Center is a transitional center operated by the Department of Corrections for recently released offenders. Beje Clark is located within walking distance or a short bus ride from the One-Stop Center in Mason City. The primary goal of the center is to get residents into stable jobs and prepare to fully transition out of the prison system. When new residents arrive, they are referred to Iowa***WORKS*** and required to register with our program as part of their job search. New residents who served in the military are immediately referred to the DVOP. When visiting Iowa***WORKS***, residents are required to document their time at the center and detail the progress they have made. Iowa***WORKS*** and Beje Clark staff have set up a communication system to ensure that residents continue to follow their program's rules while out at the center or searching for work. staff are aware that temporary employment is not allowed as part of their transitional program and encourage residents to only pursue permanent opportunities. If a resident violates an Iowa***WORKS*** or Beje Clark rule while at the center, Iowa***WORKS*** staff immediately notifies the Beje Clark case managers. Beje Clark residents have benefitted greatly from the services they have been offered through Iowa***WORKS***. They regularly attend virtual workshops and in-person hiring events at the center. They utilize our computers as part of their daily job search routine. Most find employment within the first few weeks of participating in our services.

## NORTHEAST IOWA ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

Local Plan Question:

5. Describe the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including:
    a. How the LWDB will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.
    b. How the LWDB will facilitate access to the services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.
    c. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with section 188 of WIOA, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.
        i. Include how the LWDB will utilize Disability Access Committees (DACs) as a strategy.
        ii. Describe the process that an individual would use to request an accommodation as well as how an individual will know what accommodations/assistive technology equipment are available.
        iii. Describe how partners/operator will ensure individuals with disabilities can participate in workshops and services offered throughout the center.
    d. The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

## IMPROVEMENT OF ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board is committed to ensuring the continuous improvement of eligible providers within the system, with a primary focus on meeting the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers. This commitment is realized through a systematic approach that involves ongoing assessment, feedback mechanisms, and strategic collaboration.

Continuous improvement is fostered through regular evaluations and performance assessments of eligible providers. The NEIWDB employs robust monitoring mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of these providers in meeting the evolving employment needs of the local community. This evaluation includes an analysis of program outcomes, participant satisfaction, and the alignment of services with the dynamic demands of the local job market.

Feedback loops are established to encourage open communication between the NEIWDB, eligible providers, employers, workers, and job seekers. Regular forums, surveys, and direct engagement allow for the collection of valuable insights and perspectives. This feedback is instrumental in identifying areas for improvement and tailoring services to better meet the specific needs of the community.

Strategic collaboration with eligible providers involves fostering partnerships that prioritize responsiveness to local employment trends. By aligning programs and services with the demands of local employers, the NEIWDB ensures that eligible providers are equipped to address emerging workforce challenges effectively. This collaborative approach extends to ongoing communication with employers, ensuring that the training and services provided align with current industry requirements.

Through a commitment to ongoing assessment, open communication, and strategic collaboration, the NEIWDB establishes a framework for the continuous improvement of eligible providers. This approach ensures that the services offered remain relevant, effective, and responsive to the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers, fostering a dynamic and adaptive workforce development

system.

The One-Stop delivery system is the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides collective access to career services to meet the diverse needs of job seekers. Career and training services, tailored to the individual needs of job seekers, form the backbone of the One-Stop delivery system. While some job seekers may only need self- service or other basic career services like job listings, labor market information, labor exchange services or information about other services, some job seekers will need services that are more comprehensive and tailored to their individual career needs. These services may include comprehensive skills assessments, career planning, and development of an individual employment plan that outlines the needs and goal of successful employment. Basic career services will be made available to all job seekers and include services such as labor exchange services, labor market information, job listings, and information on core and other partner programs. Individualized career services identified in WIOA will be provided by the Northeast Iowa local area, as appropriate, to help individuals obtain or retain employment.

Northeast Iowa's One-Stop system is designed with a strategic focus on responding to the workforce improvement demands articulated by businesses in the local area. The primary objective is to enhance the skills of individuals and equip them with contemporary, in-demand capabilities that are essential for success in today's dynamic job market.

To achieve this goal, the One-Stop system actively engages in identifying the specific skill sets and qualifications that local businesses require. By staying attuned to the evolving needs of the job market, the system can tailor its offerings to address the skill gaps identified by employers. This proactive approach ensures that individuals accessing services through the One-Stop system receive training that directly aligns with the current demands of the workforce.

The system emphasizes up-skilling, recognizing that continuous learning and development are crucial in an ever-changing employment landscape. Through targeted programs, workshops, and training initiatives, the One-Stop system seeks to empower individuals with the latest skills and knowledge, enabling them to compete effectively in various industries.

Furthermore, the One-Stop system adopts a collaborative approach, working closely with local businesses, industry leaders, and educational institutions to stay abreast of emerging trends and technological advancements. This collaboration ensures that the training and up-skilling initiatives offered by the system remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the business community.

In essence, Northeast Iowa's One-Stop system is a dynamic and adaptive resource that actively addresses the workforce improvement demands of local businesses. By prioritizing up-skilling and aligning training programs with current industry requirements, the system plays a vital role in enhancing the competitiveness of individuals in the local job market.

To foster ongoing enhancement, the NEIWDB, in collaboration with core partners, will administer annual satisfaction surveys to both job seekers and employers. These surveys aim to gather feedback from users of the one-stop centers within the Northeast Iowa Local Area. Additionally, monthly meetings of the local business service teams, comprising all four core partners and the One-Stop Operator, will be conducted

to guarantee that individual clients and job seekers establish connections with local employers, utilizing platforms such as the Iowa Jobs site and direct communication channels. Regular quarterly performance reports will be presented to the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board to maintain transparency and ensure continuous improvement efforts are aligned with the overarching goals.

## FACILITATE ACCESS

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board is committed to facilitating widespread access to the services offered through the one-stop delivery system, ensuring inclusivity even in remote areas. This commitment is achieved through the strategic utilization of technology and other innovative means.

The NEIWDB will look more into digital platforms and online resources to make services accessible remotely. This includes a new user-friendly website that is currently being developed and will be available in Spring 2024. Online portals and mobile applications will be explored as well. Currently, a lot of resources and flyers can be accessed by social media and email platforms.

NEIWDB offers virtual services, which allows individuals in remote areas to participate in programs without the need for physical presence. This virtual approach ensures flexibility and accommodates diverse schedules. Iowa***WORKS*** workshops are offered virtually. Unemployment claims and job searches can be completed virtually. Resources such as online training, assessment, and instruction are available through Title II providers. Title II will continue to help in obtaining devices and internet service for online coursework for low-income individuals in need. The NICC Title II Program provides online ESOL classes throughout our 10-county district as well as online study options for HSED students.

The Northeast Iowa local area utilizes telecommunication services, such as phone consultations and virtual meetings, this enables individuals in remote areas to connect with service providers, counselors, and other support personnel. This ensures that communication channels remain open for those who may not have access to physical one-stop centers. Orientations and in-take appointments are offered virtually.

The Northeast Iowa local area has established partnerships with local community organizations, libraries, and other institutions that allow staff to extend services to remote areas. These partners can serve as access points where individuals can receive information, guidance, and support. The Postville Public Library provides dedicated space for Title I and III meetings with customers, hosting sessions every Wednesday. Similarly, the Oelwein NICC campus designates a dedicated space for Title I on Thursdays. Title I operates at the Fayette Public Library on Fridays, and the West Union Public Library accommodates Title I sessions on Mondays. Additionally, the Guttenberg Resource Center and Clayton County Alternative High School extend the opportunity for Title I sessions on specified days of the week.

The Northeast Iowa local area has developed an outreach plan with a dedication to rural and remote areas. This will help to extend our reach to customers in these areas to bring awareness of the available programs and services.

Some staff members offer flexible scheduling for in-person services, this allows individuals in remote areas to plan visits at times that suit their needs. This accommodates those who may face challenges in accessing services during regular business hours.

By employing a combination of digital tools, virtual services, telecommunications, mobile access, community partnerships, and flexible scheduling, the NEIWDB creates a comprehensive approach to facilitate access to one-stop delivery system services, addressing the unique needs of individuals in remote areas.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and one-stop partners, are committed to ensuring compliance with Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), where applicable, and relevant provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). This commitment extends to both physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, and comprehensive measures are implemented to address the needs of individuals with disabilities.

In accordance with Federal regulations, Iowa has developed One-Stop Certification Standards in three areas, all of which are in alignment with Federal requirements and guidance:

1. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility
2. Effectiveness; and
3. Continuous Improvement

The developed process sets standard expectations for a minimum level of quality and consistency of customer-focused services provided by partners in the Iowa workforce delivery system and through Iowa***WORKS*** centers across the state. The certification standards in these three areas were developed by the core partners, in consultation with local partner representatives who participated in the development process. To ensure compliance and support, the WIOA core partners and local partner representatives also developed a certification process guide, recorded training, as well as related tools, to support the official launch of the process.

Three types of certification can be awarded from the One-Stop Center certification review team:

- Full Certification
- Provisional Certification
- Not Certified/ Decertified

A scoring approach was developed that allows each evaluation team member to individually determine if a standard has been met. The final determination for each category will be based on the number of standards successfully achieved. The evaluation team must reach a consensus on the category decision for determination of certification status. If the recommendation is provisional certification or not certified, the team must clearly describe the specific issues identified for corrective action.

The evaluation team determined that the Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, and Decorah offices all met the requirements for full certification. Full certification is good for three years.

Utilization of accessible technology is prioritized to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access digital resources and online services. This may involve the use of screen readers, captioning, and other

assistive technologies. Local areas conduct accessibility and assistive technology assessments at the local level. While all standards are critical, the core partner team has made a commitment to ensuring that all future hardware/software within Centers are accessible and are a specific focus of the partners.

Partner staff are cross-trained on Windmills Disability Awareness training to ensure staff understand the culture of disability in the workplace. Additionally, partner staff are offered ADA training where they can become certified ADA trainers. The Iowa Department for the Blind, offered an 8 week online, self-paced course focusing on providing an introduction to accessibility topics for Iowa's Workforce System. The Northeast Iowa DAC had a trainer from the Great Plains ADA provide training sessions to our DAC and made it available for all partners and their staff to attend. The training topics included were:

- Digital Accessibility Practices for Vision
- Digital Accessibility Practices for Hearing
- Digital Accessibility Practices for Motor
- General Digital Accessibility Practices

Statewide Wednesday Morning Trainings is another great opportunity for partners to be cross-trained. Some of the trainings include ADA forms and powerpoint, assistive technology, disability etiquette, and language access. Our local area has determined a number of topics relating to ADA and accessibility that will be part of future trainings.

Processes are established to facilitate accommodation requests from individuals with disabilities. Clear and accessible communication channels are provided, allowing individuals to request specific accommodations to participate fully in programs and services.

Partnership with the Disability Access Committee in Northeast Iowa is crucial to gain insights into best practices and ensure that the one-stop system is aligned with the evolving needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Disability Access Committee is of paramount importance for the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board as it plays a crucial role in ensuring inclusivity, accessibility, and equity within the workforce development system.

Here are some key reasons why the Disability Access Committee is vital to our local area:

- The DAC ensures that individuals with disabilities have a voice in decision-making processes related to workforce development. By including representatives from the disability community, the committee helps shape policies, programs, and services to be more inclusive and responsive to diverse needs in the local area.
- The committee actively identifies barriers—both physical and programmatic—that may hinder the full participation of individuals with disabilities. This includes assessing accessibility of facilities, websites, training materials, and other resources. The committee's insights guide efforts to remove barriers, creating a more accessible environment for all.
- The committee assists the NEIWDB in complying with legal requirements around Section 188 of WIOA and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. This ensures that the workforce development system adheres to legal standards regarding accessibility and nondiscrimination.
- The committee supports the implementation of staff training programs focused on disability

awareness and accommodation. This helps staff to effectively serve individuals with disabilities.

- The committee promotes inclusive practices across all aspects of the workforce development system. This includes advocating for reasonable accommodations, promoting accessible communication methods, and ensuring that individuals with disabilities are fully integrated into workforce programs.
- The Disability Access Committee plays a role in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of accessibility measures implemented by the NEIWDB. Regular assessments help identify areas for improvement, ensuring ongoing progress and responsiveness to the changing landscape of disability access.

The Disability Access Committee is led by a Title IV supervisor who brings a wealth of disability expertise to the committee. Comprising diverse members from the Northeast Iowa local area, the DAC collaborates closely with the local workforce board. This committee serves a crucial role by offering insights and information to all center staff on essential accommodations and assistive technology options, addressing the diverse needs of customers with disabilities. Additionally, the DAC delivers disability training to center staff, ensuring they possess knowledge in universal design and assistive technology. All partners are obligated to guarantee the accessibility of their programs and activities, providing reasonable accommodations upon request. The DAC stands ready to offer consultation to all programs, assisting in ensuring accessibility and providing solutions for potential challenges that may arise when working with individuals with disabilities.

The Northeast Iowa local area will enlist the support of the One-Stop Operator in coordinating trainings, checklists, or any other lists that encompass information or inquiries pertaining to accommodation needs or assistive technology. The Disability Access Committee will offer resources to aid each center in assessing the need for necessary accommodations. A comprehensive joint training initiative will be implemented for all center staff, ensuring that each member is well-informed and capable of assisting every center customer effectively. To promptly cater to the needs of individuals with disabilities, Assistive Technology (AT) devices will be made available at centers based on the specific requirements of the local area. Additionally, center staff can collaborate with the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) at any point to seek guidance and support.

Partners ensure the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in workshops conducted throughout the center through the implementation of the following measures:

- Prominent signage in common areas will inform customers about the availability of reasonable accommodations.
- All Iowa***WORKS*** materials feature a contact phone number for customers to request accommodations.
- Center staff will proactively remind customers that reasonable accommodation requests can be made at any point.
- Staff undergo training on reasonable accommodations, enabling them to identify situations where accommodations may be necessary.
- Center staff can collaborate with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) at any time to seek guidance and support.

Entities within the one-stop delivery system in Northeast Iowa actively uphold the principles of Section 188 of WIOA and the ADA. This commitment ensures that individuals with disabilities have equal access to services, programs, and facilities, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment within the one-stop system.

## ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP

The one-stop delivery system in the Northeast Iowa local area is a collaborative and integrated approach to providing comprehensive workforce development services to job seekers, employers, and individuals seeking career advancement. This system involves multiple partners working together to create a seamless network of resources and support. Here is an overview of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners:

- **Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board:** The NEIWDB provides strategic oversight and guidance to the one-stop delivery system in the local area. The board is responsible for aligning workforce development efforts with the needs of the local labor market, promoting collaboration among partners, and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations.
- **One-Stop Operator:** The OSO is responsible for convening the partners and coordinating the operations of the one-stop centers. They provide training to the partners and facilitate the integration of services, ensure accessibility, and oversee the effective use of resources.
- **Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth:** These programs funded under WIOA, offer a range of employment and training services to eligible individuals. Including job search assistance, skills development, and support for individuals enrolled in the program.
- **Title II Adult Education and Literacy:** These programs focus on enhancing the fundamental skills of adults, contributing to the educational dimension of the one-stop delivery system. They deliver instruction in literacy, numeracy, English language learning, and other educational services. The primary objective is to address the basic skills and English language requirements of individuals and job seekers accessing One-Stop Centers. Title II programs employ CASAS testing to assess the basic skill levels of adult job seekers. They then connect these individuals to training programs related to literacy, computer skills, high school completion, and English language acquisition. Classes are available both online and in person to accommodate students' accessibility needs, ensuring they can pursue education through AEL programs in a manner that suits their preferences and requirements.
- **Title III Wagner-Peyser:** These services connect job seekers with employment opportunities and provide labor market information. This program helps in job matching, recruitment, and workforce information dissemination.
- **JVSG-DVOP:** Disabled Veteran Outreach Program aids veterans with barriers to securing employment. JVSG program is collaborating with Core Partners for co-enrollment utilizing the referral system.
- **Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Program (MSFW):** Aids businesses who are hiring for agricultural positions to find help both locally, across the U.S., or abroad if needed. The Outreach Worker makes sure that fair labor practices are followed and connects workers to other agricultural positions that become available.
- **Promise Jobs:** As part of the TANF program, individuals who can work must attend activities that lead to gainful employment. Participants are assigned to attend center workshops, job search,

connect to educational programs, or On-The-Job Training while providing supportive services such as childcare and transportation as they are actively engaged in employment activities and until they have reached employment. These participants often drive the success of workshops as they come from surrounding communities and will refer others to our services.

- Reemployment Case Management (RCM): Implemented in January 2022 which puts more intensive focus on getting unemployed Iowans back to work more quickly. Engaging claimants more quickly in the UI process and enrolling them in Title III Wagner-Peyser services and providing a direct connection to the labor exchange system right away has proven to be a beneficial approach.
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA): RESEA is a federally funded program designed to reduce the duration of UI benefits through evidence-based improved employment outcomes. RESEA works with claimants who are in at least their fifth week of collecting unemployment benefits and provides intensive 1-on-1 career planning services.
- Ticket-to-Work: These incentive funds are generated from individuals who are on SSI or SSDI benefits and have assigned their ticket to the office for employment assistance. Once employment is secured, incentive funds are generated from the wages that they have earned and awarded to that provider each year. These funds have been focused to assist individuals with disabilities within any core partner program (whether it is directly for the individual enrolled in ticket to work or not or for the partner to purchase items to serve individuals with disabilities).
- Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Programs: Title IV programs support individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes. They provide vocational rehabilitation services, assistive technology, and other resources to facilitate the employment of individuals with disabilities.
- Community Colleges and Training Providers: Educational institutions and training providers contribute to the one-stop system by offering skill development programs, vocational training, and educational services. They collaborate with employers to align training programs with industry needs.
- One-Stop Centers: These are the physical locations where individuals can access a variety of employment-related services. The Iowa*WORKS* centers serve as the frontline interface for job seekers and employers, offering job search assistance, career counseling, and access to other resources.

In summary, the one-stop delivery system in the local area is a collaborative effort involving multiple partners with distinct roles. Together, they create a comprehensive network that addresses the diverse needs of the workforce, fosters economic development, and facilitates successful employment outcomes for individuals in the community.

Title I emphasizes the importance of continual training on partner programs to ensure all Title I staff are knowledgeable about the various supports available and are able to identify what other programs could be brought in to ensure individualized wrap-around supports for participants.

Language link is available to assist in supporting English Language learners. Iowa*WORKS* centers are handicap accessible. Various forms of communication are offered to ensure that participants can communicate with Title I staff in a manner that suits their individual needs and abilities (phone, email, text message, virtual). Title I staff will offer options other than in-person meetings in the Iowa*WORKS*

office, if participants are not able to travel to our location. These options include meeting participants closer to home or offering virtual meetings.

The Iowa*WORKS* One- Stop centers will be as prepared as possible to serve customers with disabilities. One-stop centers will have adaptive equipment and/or assistive technology available to persons with disabilities so services can be accessed at the physical locations. Promotional materials for services and workshops will include a statement such as, Accommodations are available upon request, to encourage customers to request accommodations when needed.

Staff will be trained and be sensitive to the requests and needs for accommodations. Frontline staff will respond to specific accommodations requested for use in the one stop center. If front line staff needs assistance or has questions, they will inform their superior who will work to provide a solution to the request.

Resources are made available to serve individuals outside the centers. Whenever possible, services will be offered virtually to mitigate transportation or physical barriers. Print materials will also be provided in an accessible format. The application of the provisions of the ADA regarding the physical programming accessibility of facilities, including providing training and support addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

IVRS spends considerable time out in the communities and in our local schools. In some offices, there are staff whose entire caseload is comprised of high school students. IVRS is always available to assist the other core partners with making connections to our area schools and their personnel.

One outcome from this partnership and outreach has been the ability to bring soft skill training the schools, particularly schools in more rural areas. A few team members on Title I and Title III are certified in facilitating "Bring Your A Game to Work", a comprehensive interactive workshop that helps people build the soft skills most valued by employers. Though the workshop was originally designed to take up a full day, the team found ways to modify it to fit a shorter timeframe. A Game was facilitated at Decorah High School in partnership with IVRS.

The goal of going out into the community to conduct these workshops is not just to help people build the skills from the workshop itself, but to use them to market other Iowa*WORKS* services and encourage people to continue their career development with us. In the next few months, we plan to bring this training to Prairie Ridge Behavioral Health Center as part of their residential treatment program.

## ADULT & DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Local Plan Question:

6. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

The Northeast Iowa local area offers a diverse range of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities to address the needs of individuals seeking meaningful employment and those displaced from their previous jobs.

Adult and Dislocated Worker activities are available in the twenty county Northeast Iowa local area.

Services are provided through three comprehensive Iowa***WORKS*** centers including Mason City, Waterloo, and Dubuque. One affiliate location in Decorah. Efforts are underway to establish additional locations where Title I services can be accessed.

Basic career services must be made available to all job seekers seeking employment and training services. Basic career services are universally accessible. One-Stop Center customers registered in Iowa***WORKS*** will have access to any of the basic career services immediately and continuously without further eligibility or documentation requirements. Individualized career services must be provided to individuals after it has been determined that such services are required to retain or obtain employment. These services involve significant staff time and customization to each individual's needs, and generally will be provided by staff funded by WIOA Title I programs. However, it may also be appropriate for staff funded by WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Service to provide some of these services.

<u>Basic Career Services</u>

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.
- Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system.
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive services needs.
- Labor exchange services, including Job search and placement assistance, and, as-needed, career counseling, including:
  - information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA)
  - information on nontraditional employment (as defined in sec. 3 (37) of WIOA)
- Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs.
- Workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including providing accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including Job vacancy listings in labor market areas, information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs.
- Performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of education, training, and workforce services by program and type of providers.
- Information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's one-stop delivery system.
- The availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: childcare, child support, medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), benefits under Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), assistance through the earned income tax credit, assistance under a State program for TANF, and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program

- Information to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation.
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA Title I.

Individualized Career Services

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
  - diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
  - in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, the eligible training providers.
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling
- Career planning
- Short-term pre-vocational services including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers.
- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs

Adult and DW training services will include the following:

- On-the Job training (OJT): OJT occurs when objective assessment indicates that this will be the best process to meet the participants needs.
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include education programs.
- Secondary Education Certificate Training: The focus of the training is for the customer to achieve high school completion by taking and passing the HiSED/GED and other adult education and literacy activities including English Language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
- Training programs operated by the private sector
- Pre-Vocational Activities
- Entrepreneurial training

- Job readiness training
- Occupational Skills Training (OST): OSTs include short term occupations skills training programs such as Certified Nursing Assistants, production welding, commercial driver's license (CDL), and longer-term training programs leading to a certificate or a credential such as nursing or industrial maintenance.
- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.
- Registered Apprenticeships: WIOA staff will work with employers in the LWDA to find apprenticeship opportunities in high growth/high demand occupations.
- Work Experience (WEP)
- Transitional Jobs
- Job Shadows
- Internships

Follow-up services for participants placed in unsubsidized employment for up to 12 months.

Outreach efforts and strategies revolve around engaging with a diverse populations throughout the twenty-county local area through targeted initiatives and partnerships. Collaboration with local organizations, businesses, libraries, community colleges, etc. to reach individuals from various demographics, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, older workers, minorities, and other underserved populations. By actively engaging with the community and expanding access to our services, we aim to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to benefit from Title I services in our local area.

Title II is connected with Title I through a partnership that involves not only referrals but also payment assistance of HiSET testing fees for clients as needed. As part of the collaboration efforts, Title II students who express interest in training beyond or in addition to what AEL programs can provide are referred to Title I for additional services and assistance.

The assessment of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in Northeast Iowa indicates a well-rounded and responsive system. The diverse range of programs and services align with the dynamic needs of the local labor market. However, ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms are in place to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of these activities. Additionally, efforts to enhance accessibility, especially for underserved populations, will contribute to a more inclusive workforce development ecosystem. Continuous collaboration with employers and community partners will be key to addressing evolving challenges and maximizing opportunities for participants in the local area.

## STATEWIDE RAPID RESPONSE ACTIVITIES COORDINATION

Local Plan Question:

7. How the LWDB will coordinate workforce investment activities in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the local area with statewide rapid response activities through a strategic and collaborative approach.

Rapid Response efforts in Iowa continued to play an important part in business engagement. As Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARN) are received, RR staff immediately begin working with company officials and local area leadership to organize and deploy RR activities. Iowa legislated that employers with any layoffs of more than 25 employees must notify IWD. This state requirement is in addition to the federal requirement to notify in the event of a layoff impact of 50 or greater.

When WARN notices are received, each employer is contacted by State RR staff. Subsequently, most receive local-level delivery of RR services. The RR Worker Information Meetings (WIMs) are scheduled as soon as possible to ensure services reach as many employees as possible. Iowa's Dislocated Worker Survey remains a key component to the WIM.

In the event of a closure or large layoff event, dislocated workers will be provided outreach services immediately upon notice of the layoff. Title I leadership will be part of the Rapid Response team that meets with the company's management and workers to discuss the impending or recent layoffs. Rapid Response meetings leverage and coordinate community and public resources for lay-offs, including linking to One-Stop partners and Trade Act programs and promote seamless delivery of services to affected businesses and employees.

Distinct strategies to recruit and serve Dislocated Workers will be employed by WIOA staff. Rapid Response activities will be held following large layoffs (25 or more employees) or business closures. The activities and meeting will be coordinated and set up by Title I as the lead for communicating with that company. Initial meetings with company management, core partner representatives, local economic development representatives, chamber of commerce, and a state-level representative as appropriate. These initial meetings cover issues such as the timing of layoffs, specifics on vacation and/or pension payouts and other matters that may impact unemployment insurance benefits. The implications of any pending Trade Act petitions are discussed, and worker information meetings are scheduled.

Staff will hold worker information meetings to provide impacted workers with details on services available to them, information on Unemployment Insurance (UI), WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers services, health care coverage and any area resources that may be of assistance to the workers as they transition to new careers. Worker information meetings are scheduled to allow every impacted worker to attend, whenever possible the meetings are held on the job site. Typically, multiple meetings are scheduled to ensure accessibility for all workers. Dislocated Worker Surveys will be collected to gain an understanding of the needs of the individuals affected by the layoff.

Rapid Response is a proactive, business focused, and flexible strategy designed for two major purposes:

1. To help growing companies access an available pool of skilled workers from other companies that are downsizing or who have been trained in the skills Iowa companies need to be competitive
2. To respond to layoffs and plant closings by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to companies and the affected workers

Rapid Response provides early intervention to worker groups who have received a notice of layoff or closure. Northeast Iowa has a Rapid Response Team consisting of staff from various partners within the local area. Whenever possible, the team conducts on-site visits to those affected. Every effort is made to provide information sessions prior to the commencement of the lay-offs and/or plant closure. The presentation consists of an overview of the benefits and services that can be expected from each of the partner groups. During these sessions, the emphasis is how partner agency staff will be working together as a team to offer the individualized and comprehensive re-employment services. Following initial contact with those affected, customers on an individual basis for co-enrollment into Core Programs, where needed.
All customers receive assessments, review labor market information, establish employment goals, and develop Individual Employment Plans that are shared. Job seekers have access to Page 52 electronic and in person career services for industry exploration, resume preparation, skill assessment and testing, job search, work registration and unemployment insurance claim filing, skill building workshops, job search assistance and individualized career services.

Re-employment Services will also be offered within the Northeast Iowa Local Area. This program is designed to help persons identified as being at risk for long-term unemployment insurance eligibility to return to the workforce as quickly as possible. A variety of services are available, including but not limited to career assessment, job search workshops and job search/job placement assistance.

By actively participating in statewide efforts, sharing information, and aligning strategies, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board aims to create a cohesive and coordinated approach to workforce investment activities during times of economic transition. This collaboration enhances the effectiveness of rapid response efforts and contributes to a more resilient and adaptable statewide workforce development system.

## YOUTH SERVICES

Local Plan Question:

8. The type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which much include an identification of successful models of such activities.
    a. Include how the LWDB will utilize the Youth Standing Committee as a strategy.
    b. Pending approval of the State's waiver request, include if the LWDB will utilize the waiver to lower the out-of-school youth expenditure rate to 50%, or if the LWDB opts to retain the 75% out-of-school youth expenditure requirement.
        i. If the LWDB opts to utilize the waiver, include:
            1. A summary of the outreach strategies and partnerships the LWDB will utilize to engage out-of-school youth and ensure in-school youth participation is targeted to students in underserved populations;
            2. Quantifiable projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implantation of the waiver;
            3. Individuals, groups, or populations benefiting, or otherwise impacted by the waiver; and
            4. How the LWDB plans to monitor waiver implementation progress, and the collection of measurable waiver outcome information.

## AVAILABILITY OF YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

Title I of WIOA outlines a broad youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which states and local areas can leverage other Federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources to support in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY).

Youth program career planners should deliver services in a customer-centered, high-quality manner which seeks to advance the following for participants:

- Enhanced skill sets
- Increased likelihood of entry into meaningful employment
- Enhanced chances of retaining employment leading to self-sufficiency, and
- Removal and reduction in barriers to employment

Iowa shares the commitment to providing high-quality services for all youth and young adults through the following activities:

- Career exploration and guidance
- Continued support for educational attainment
- Opportunities for skills training for in-demand industries and occupations, such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, and
- Job placement assistance in a field that supports a career pathway, enrollment in postsecondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship

Iowa's youth program connects eligible youth to a continuum of services and activities, aimed at teaching the youth to navigate the appropriate educational and workforce systems based on an established career pathway. Services based on the unique needs of each individual participant are applied program wide.

WIOA Title I Youth program is focused on ensuring services are delivered and available to all eligible youth, including those with barriers to education and employment. Title I Career Planners persistently provide guidance and counseling to assist youth with the next steps toward successful, self- sustaining employment. The program design focuses on utilizing the 14 Youth Required Elements to help participants meet their educational and employment goals. These elements are:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential.
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate. These solutions include alternative schools, career academies, and High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) programs.
3. Experiential learning opportunities, consisting of paid and unpaid work experiences that have, as a component, academic and occupational education, which may include:
    - summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year
    - pre-apprenticeship programs
    - internships and job shadowing; and
    - On-the-Job (OJT) training opportunities
4. Occupational skills training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the Northeast Iowa local area.
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate
7. Supportive services such as transportation, childcare, clothing, etc.
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate
11. Financial literacy education
12. Entrepreneurial skills training
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and

14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Work experience services to include youth job shadows, internships, work experiences, one-the-job training, and pre-apprenticeship are valuable training methods – and one that Iowa continuously highlights the importance of. Iowa policy 8.2.6.3 Experiential Learning 20% Requirement states local youth programs must expend not less than 20 percent of the funds allocated to them to provide in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY) with paid and unpaid experiential learning activities.

Iowa encourages career pathway design through policy 8.1.3 Career Pathways. Career planners and participants should work together to identify appropriate career pathways by utilizing the objective assessment results. Career pathway goals, timelines, and other considerations must be established and entered in the data management system.

## YOUTH STANDING COMMITTEE

The Youth Standing Committee, is led by a member of the NEIWDB, comprises both NEIWDB members and youth partners and employers within the local area. The Youth Standing Committee serves as a dedicated platform within the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board with the specific purpose of addressing and advocating for the needs and interests of the youth population. This committee plays a crucial role in shaping policies and initiatives related to workforce development that directly impact young individuals entering the job market. It focuses on understanding the unique challenges faced by youth in accessing employment opportunities, skill development, and career advancement. By fostering collaboration between various stakeholders, including educational institutions, employers, and community organizations, the Youth Standing Committee aims to design and implement strategies that enhance the overall workforce prospects for the younger generation, contributing to their successful transition into the labor market. The Youth Standing Committee prime purpose is to oversee and guide youth workforce development initiatives, ensuring alignment with the goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), conducting needs assessments, monitoring program effectiveness, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, shaping policy, advocating for youth interest, and engaging with young people to promote access to education, training, and employment opportunities. The Youth Standing Committee goals and objectives are the following:

- Develop strategies to address the needs of youth
- Ensure compliance with WIOA requirements
- Oversee eligible youth program responsibilities
- May serve as the youth program RFP procurement reviewers
- Develop youth program language for the local and regional plans
- Suggest ways to leverage resources and coordinate services
- Provide ongoing leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs

- Increase work experience opportunities

The expectations of the Youth Standing Committee are as follows:

- Advise board on how to direct funds to implement youth services to best meet the needs of youth in the local area
- Create a formal working relationship with the board
- Build community awareness and demonstrate leadership
- Address key development, education, and employment issues affecting youth
- Facilitate coordination of youth activities in the community
- Influence and leverage other community youth funds and services
- Address specific needs of youth in the community
- Engage and partner with the business community

The NEIWDB will leverage the youth standing committee as a dynamic and proactive entity to address the specific needs of the youth population in the realm of workforce development. The committee will continue to actively engage with youth representatives, community leaders, and educators to gain insights into the challenges and aspirations of young individuals entering the job market. This information can be used to inform the development of targeted policies and initiatives.

The committee will serve as a liaison between the NEIWDB and relevant stakeholders, including educational institutions, employers, and community organizations. Collaboration with these entities can lead to the creation of comprehensive programs that enhance youth skills, provide meaningful employment opportunities, and support career advancement.

Regular communication channels will be established to ensure ongoing dialogue and feedback between the youth standing committee and the broader local area. This ensures that the committee's recommendations align with the overall goals and strategies of the NEIWDB.

The NEIWDB will empower the youth standing committee to conduct research, gather data, and stay informed about emerging trends in the job market affecting young individuals. This information can be instrumental in shaping responsive and forward-thinking workforce development policies.

The Youth Standing Committee played a pivotal role in the development of the Youth Strategic Plan for our local area. They will continue to strategize and provide input. The strategic plan will be finalized, and the final product will be available on July 1, 2024.

The Youth Standing Committee will lead the local area on accomplishing the initiatives and strategies that are outlined in the Youth Strategic Plan.

| Relevant Strategies |
| --- |
| • **Promote use of work-based training:** Partner with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Corporations, and employers to identify and support training projects such as work experience, on-the-job-training, and internships in target in-demand industries. |

- **Prioritize projects:** Projects will be prioritized to serve priority populations such as youth with barriers to employment, disabled youth, and equal focus on in and out-of-school youth.
- **Increase access to rural areas:** Increase youth employment and skill development opportunities in rural areas over the next two years.
- **Enhanced post-secondary readiness:** Improve post-secondary readiness for Title I Youth by ensuring they have the necessary skills and information to pursue higher education or vocational training.
- **Youth leadership development:** Foster leadership skills among Title I Youth to empower them in their communities and workplaces.
- **Increase youth engagement:** Promote active engagement of youth participants and integrate their input into the enhancement and refinement of the youth program.

The NEIWDB will continue to utilize the youth standing committee as a proactive force for change, incorporating their insights, recommendations, and collaborative efforts to design and implement effective strategies that cater to the unique needs of the youth within the workforce.

## YOUTH WAIVER REQUEST

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board opts to utilize the waiver to lower the out-of-school youth expenditure rate to 50%. By utilizing this waiver this would allow the NEIWDB to meet the needs of In-school youth in the Northeast Iowa local area as needed. This waiver would provide more flexibility for us to deliver youth services to those most in need and meet Northeast Iowa local area's workforce needs and demands, such as occupational skills credentials for youth, and providing intensive work readiness preparation such as work-based learning programs.

Prioritizing out-of-school youth will continue, and reducing the spending requirement will strengthen initiatives aimed at preventing in-school youth from reaching that phase. The flexibility to increase services to In-School Youth provides a great opportunity to directly impact youth prior to graduation. This would allow for those organizations that serve ISY in Northeast Iowa can refer youth services while attending school, helping to streamline efforts to identify and locate those in need of assistance.

Examining the provision of services to youth, particularly in the K-12 sphere, presents an opportunity to address the needs of economically disadvantaged In-School Youth (ISY) facing barriers. By refocusing our approach, we aim to offer employment and training opportunities that prepare in-school youth for careers in high-demand sectors. This includes facilitating work-based learning experiences such as on-the-job training and apprenticeships, equipping them with valuable skills for future career success.

WIOA places an emphasis on pre-employment education and training as well as access to a continuum of work-based learning opportunities. This waiver will provide us with more flexibility to utilize funding to support these strategies in schools, connecting students to the training and education they need and providing employers with an expanded talent pipeline of available workforce. Additionally, while students

who are defined as “in-school” theoretically already have supports available, many students are close to disengaging from the education system and the utilization of this waiver will allow our local area to connect with those students prior to dropping out, connecting them to different education and training strategies that will increase their likelihood of success and improving job and career results.

This waiver will provide our local area the flexibility to serve more youth and young adults in work-based learning, including apprenticeship, regardless of school status. It will streamline the process of securing essential funding and navigating current regulations, crucial for developing programs that support youth and young adults in preparing for sustained engagement in Iowa’s workforce. Economic growth in Iowa and its high-growth industries will be sustained with the infusion of skilled workers ready to fill current job openings and adequately trained for future openings. Additionally, this waiver supports Governor Reynolds plans to ensure all Iowa students have opportunities for meaningful work-based learning experiences. Iowa’s students and eligible youth population, as well as Iowa employers who need immediate assistance to fill open positions and train their future workforce, will benefit from this waiver.

### Summy of Outreach Strategies

The 'Youth Peer Mentorship Initiative' will serve as a strong outreach plan for out-of-school youth by broadening its scope beyond program confines. To connect with a wider audience, the mentorship program will expand its pool of mentors to include not only current participants but also former graduates who have successfully transitioned to education, apprenticeships, or meaningful employment. This extended mentorship network will actively engage with community organizations, local businesses, and educational institutions, showcasing the program's supportive environment beyond its immediate boundaries. Success stories, both from mentors and mentees, will be leveraged as powerful outreach tools, disseminated through various channels like social media, community events, and local campaigns to inspire and attract out-of-school youth. Collaborative efforts with community partners will be initiated to create joint mentorship initiatives, extending the program's impact to a broader audience. Additionally, the initiative will embrace online platforms and social media to create a virtual extension, facilitating accessible mentorship opportunities for out-of-school youth. In this way, the 'Youth Peer Mentorship Initiative' transforms into a dynamic outreach plan, actively engaging and supporting out-of-school youth in the broader community.

We are committed to strategically engaging in-school youth and underserved populations to ensure inclusivity and provide tailored support. Building strong partnerships with local schools, our plan involves collaborating with administrators, counselors, and teachers to understand the unique needs of in-school youth. We aim to integrate workforce development concepts into school curricula, offering educational materials that align with academic standards. Active participation in school career fairs, assemblies, and support for career-focused clubs will enable direct interaction and showcase the benefits of workforce development programs.

Recognizing the importance of in-person connection, including conducting workshops and seminars within schools, covering essential topics such as resume building and interview skills. Utilizing existing school communication channels, including newsletters and bulletin boards, we will regularly disseminate

information about workforce development initiatives, ensuring consistent visibility. To cater to the preferences of in-school youth, we will establish a dynamic online presence through social media platforms and organize interactive webinars to share success stories and upcoming events.

We plan to extend our focus to engaging educators, encouraging them to incorporate workforce development information into classroom discussions and providing resources for student enrichment. To further amplify our reach, the creation of a workforce youth council, with students who can serve as advocates, sharing their experiences and insights with their peers. Regular feedback sessions, including surveys and focus groups, will be established to continually understand the evolving needs and preferences of in-school youth, allowing us to adapt our outreach strategies effectively. Through these concerted efforts, the Northeast Iowa local area strives to create meaningful connections, raise awareness, and provide valuable resources to support the academic and career success of in-school youth and underserved populations.

### Projected Programmatic Outcomes of the Waiver

- Lower the rate of students who are dropping out, with a specific focus on those facing significant barriers in both education and employment.
- Amplify in-school youth's access to hands-on work experiences and diverse learning opportunities, contributing to the State and local Workforce Development Boards' aim of allocating 20% of WIOA youth program funds to work-related initiatives.
- Strengthen accountability measures for youth performance, aligning with the criteria outlined in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in credential attainment and measurable skills gains.
- Expect an increase in the number of in-school youth acquiring industry-recognized credentials through their participation in training programs listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- Stronger partnerships and relationships between K-12 school districts in Northeast Iowa.
- More youth may benefit from the program, leading to a potential increase in the economic impact as participants acquire skills and contribute positively to the workforce.
- Improved diversity and inclusion within the program, as it becomes more accessible to a broader range of youth, including those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Serve more youth in work-based learning, including apprenticeships, regardless of school status.

### Individuals, Groups, or Populations Impacted by the Waiver

The waiver request to lower the out-of-school youth expenditure rate to 50% will have far-reaching impacts across diverse segments of our community. In-school youth stand to benefit significantly, gaining enhanced access to workforce development opportunities while still enrolled in educational programs,

thereby fortifying their readiness for future employment and academic success. Concurrently, the waiver still seeks to provide targeted support for out-of-school youth, addressing specific barriers to their reintegration into education or vocational training programs. Educational institutions will experience increased collaboration with workforce development initiatives, aligning curriculum with industry needs, while employers and industries stand to gain from an expanded talent pool enriched by the inclusion of in-school youth.

Community organizations supporting youth development will find new avenues for collaboration, and local communities in Northeast Iowa can expect economic growth, reduced unemployment, and an improved quality of life with a well-prepared and engaged youth population.

Underserved populations will benefit from equitable access to workforce opportunities, fostering inclusivity and socio-economic equity. Policymakers, too, stand to gain from a more efficient and targeted workforce development strategy that aligns with broader education and economic goals, ensuring evidence-based decision-making for the benefit of our community as a whole.

Parents and families in Northeast Iowa who have youth that have barriers to employment will see positive impacts as their children gain access to valuable educational and training opportunities.

K-12 school districts in Northeast Iowa will be greatly impacted by the youth waiver as will help reduce drop rates as students can find meaningful alternatives and connections between their education and future employment. Employment and training opportunities for ISY can result in better career preparation. Students will have access to work-based learning experiences that align with high demand sectors.

### Monitor Waiver Implementation Progress

Periodic reviews of the Title I Youth program each year will encompass an assessment of the waiver's influence on local programs, ensuring alignment with programmatic goals and desired outcomes. This process is designed to monitor expenditure rates, assess progress towards negotiated performance levels, and uphold the integrity of collected data. This approach guarantees that the stated goals, outlined in the State's Unified Plan and the Northeast Iowa's local plan, align consistently with the established objectives of WIOA, along with federal and state regulations.

To ensure this waiver positively impacts the Youth program in Iowa, IWD will report on the following projected programmatic outcomes for PY24 and PY25:

- Increase co-enrollment of eligible WIOA Title I Youth and iJAG participants by 10%
- Enroll five new Youth participants in a Registered Apprenticeship
- Iowa anticipates to maintain or improve outcomes for all fix WIOA key performance outcomes for the Title I Youth program
- Increase overall Title I Youth program enrollment by 10% at the end of PY25

We will use the information above that is provided to local areas along with providing monthly tracking of youth expenditures, and through programmatic and fiscal monitoring of our Title I Youth program. As a local area, we anticipate email communications and technical assistance meetings will be provided by Iowa Workforce Development.

The annual report will be utilized to submit data. Data collected will include program engagement, participant demographics, educational achievements, and employment outcomes. Monitoring and oversight practices in Northeast Iowa will undergo changes to incorporate programmatic reviews. These reviews will entail sampling and evaluating the impact of this waiver on local programs, specifically assessing their performance outcomes. We will consider implementation of a quarterly reporting system that necessitates updates from the Title I Service Provider, outlining the advancements in youth programming across Northeast Iowa. These updates will be directly presented to the Executive Committee. Additionally, the Quarterly LWDB meetings will be utilized to scrutinize the progress and outcomes of the programs. The consistent reporting mechanism will enable board members to engage in discussions regarding challenges, share valuable insights, and make well-informed recommendations and decisions based on the collected data.

## SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Local Plan Question:

9. How the LWDB will coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.
    a. Include the name of the Title II adult education provider grantee(s) in the local area that were included in this coordination.

The coordination of relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs with education and workforce investment activities by the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board is a critical aspect of fostering synergy, optimizing resources, and avoiding duplication of services. To achieve this, the NEIWDB has established robust communication channels and partnerships between the community colleges in Northeast Iowa.

In the Northeast Iowa local area there are three community college grantees within the Northeast Iowa Local Area that provide Title II services: Northeast Iowa Community College, Hawkeye Community College, and North Iowa Area Community College. Although the three grantees have some differences among them in terms of the format and policies regarding their classes, all three offer similar services to assist adults with basic skills needs to raise their math, digital, and English literacy levels, obtain a high school equivalency credential, or receive training in high-demand career areas. Title II providers also collaborate with other core partners to provide employability services to both individuals and businesses. The programs attempt to meet students at their own level and meet their individual needs to help them be successful.

Secondary and post-secondary educational strategies in NEIWDB are strategically aligned with workforce services through various coordination efforts. The AEL program plays a pivotal role by establishing a direct linkage, enabling partners to exchange referrals, and preventing redundant assessments and services. The board structure is designed to incorporate Adult Education representatives as active voting members, further engaging them with the board to enhance collaboration and synergy. This integrated approach ensures a seamless connection between educational initiatives and workforce services within the Northeast Iowa framework.

Staff are provided cross-training on Title II program services, eligibility, and requirements. When a participant has been determined to benefit from Title II services, they are referred through the referral process directly to a Title II staff member. An eligible participant must be a minimum age of 16 years + 9 months. Participants under 18 years must provide permission to attend (documentation from a legal parent or guardian). Participants under 19 years must provide proof of non-enrollment in a community school district. Eligible participants are adult basic education students who either do not possess a high school credential or who demonstrate skill gaps in reading and/or math on the intake assessments. English language learners are eligible if they demonstrate skill gaps in reading and/or listening English language on the intake assessments.

Moreover, the Title II program fulfills the role of administering Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) intake assessments for Title I participants. Individuals who, upon assessment, lack a high school credential or exhibit deficiencies in basic skills are provided guidance regarding available options through the AEL program. Should the participant choose to co-enroll in Title II services, their status is transitioned to active participant within the Title II program. The Title II programs utilize CASAS for all intake and post-assessments. Upon completion of the assessments (reading and math for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and HSE participants; reading and listening for ELL), the intake scores are assessed to determine academic skill levels. These levels inform the program in the placement of the student in appropriately leveled curriculum.

Participants qualify for Title II services based on criteria established by the state department of education. To be eligible, a participant must be at least 16 years and 9 months old. For participants under 18, permission to attend documentation from a legal parent or guardian is required, while those under 19 must provide proof of non-enrollment in a community school district. Eligible participants are adult basic education students who either lack a high school credential or exhibit skill gaps in reading and/or math during the intake assessments. Additionally, English language learners qualify if they demonstrate skill gaps in reading and/or listening to the English language in the intake assessments.

***Adult Basic Education:***

The community colleges offer instruction for adults with low levels of reading, math, or writing. This is offered both in group and individual settings upon request. These courses could be stand-alone or could provide a bridge to HiSET preparation or other courses.

***High School Completion:***

All three community colleges offer preparation and testing for the HiSET exam, Iowa's designated high school equivalency exam. Career counseling, goal setting, digital literacy, financial literacy, and other support is provided throughout the high school equivalency exam preparation to assist students with a seamless transition to the workforce or post-secondary education options. Hawkeye Community College also offers a credit-based option to complete a high school diploma.

***English Language Acquisition:***

English language acquisition (also known as English Language Learning, English for Speakers of Other Languages, or English as a Second Language) courses are offered through the three grantee colleges and address the needs of English Language Learners based on their level of proficiency. Digital literacy, financial literacy, employability skills, and civics education are also components of the courses. The Title II providers also assist local employers with training needs around English language instruction for their employees. On-site classes are offered to area employers and course content can be tailored to the needs of the work setting via the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program, as referenced earlier in this report.

***Career/Technical Education and Training:***

The three community colleges also collaborate with Career/Technical education within their community colleges to offer short-term training that results in marketable credentials which can quickly enable adults to enter high-demand fields. Some of these short-term areas include Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA), Commercial Driver's License (CDL), Computer Numeric Control (CNC), construction, welding, and hospitality management. Many of these courses are also available as Integrated Education and Training (IET) or Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) courses, which Title II programs currently offer. Many of the courses also provide college credit. To avoid duplication of services with career/technical faculty, Title II providers manage IET and IELCE courses.

Many of the non-credit short-term credential options are also designed to articulate with credit-based career and technical programs to give individuals the opportunity to advance along a particular career pathway.

With the implementation of Perkins V, a comprehensive local needs assessment (Perkins Action Section 134) is now completed once every two years by the federal funds' local recipients. The needs assessment includes a review of CTE student performance, program quality, labor market needs, educator development and special populations' access to programs of study. This data is used by the partners and the NEIWDB to ensure efficient coordination of programming.

***Education Providers' Connections to Employers:***

Establishing robust connections between education providers and employers is a priority for the three colleges, as they actively promote employer engagement to optimize services and coordinate effective strategies. This collaboration aims to facilitate the seamless entry of individuals into high-demand careers within the local area. The sector boards, designed to be both industry-specific (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, transportation) and area-specific, play a pivotal role. Sector boards will be revamped and

will be the priority of the Northeast Iowa local area. Sector boards will be structured to offer input from businesses to education providers, fostering the development of career pathways that span from secondary education to adult learners.

AEL participants have access to work-based learning through Integrated Education and Training programming. This innovative approach combines basic skill development with workplace skills training in a concurrent training model. Furthermore, employers can take advantage of opportunities to involve cohorts of incumbent workers in tailored, on-site training. This not only offers curricular support but also integrates a mix of skill-building and workplace-related content.

The three colleges have instituted industry advisory boards that serve as crucial forums for bringing together industry leaders, career and technical faculty, and leaders from both secondary and post-secondary education. These boards function to ensure that training opportunities align closely with the evolving needs of employers. By fostering this collaborative dialogue, the colleges strive to equip completers of both non-credit and credit courses with comprehensive preparation tailored to the specific requirements of the fields they intend to enter. This proactive approach ensures that individuals are not only well-trained but also aligned with the current demands of the workforce, enhancing their readiness for successful integration into their chosen professions.

Through regular meetings and collaboration, the board will facilitate the exchange of information on emerging skills and industry demands, ensuring that educational curricula align with current workforce needs. This coordination aims to create a seamless transition for students from secondary to postsecondary education and subsequently into the workforce, promoting a continuum of learning and skill development. Additionally, the NEIWDB will strategically integrate education and workforce investment activities to enhance services, such as career counseling, job placement, and skills training. This holistic approach ensures that individuals receive comprehensive support throughout their educational and professional journey, ultimately contributing to a more effective and responsive workforce development system.

## TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

Local Plan Question:

10. **How the LWDB will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.**

The coordination of WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other supportive services in the local area is a critical aspect of WIOA and involves a collaborative effort among the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board, community partners, and service providers. Access to reliable transportation and essential supportive services is fundamental in ensuring that individuals can fully engage in and benefit from workforce development programs. To ensure a seamless integration, the partners in Northeast Iowa have established partnerships with entities that offer transportation and supportive services. This includes coordinating with local transit agencies, community

organizations, and social service agencies to identify and address transportation barriers faced by job seekers. Additionally, the NEIWDB and its partners work closely with educational institutions, childcare providers, and healthcare agencies to understand and meet the diverse supportive service needs of individuals seeking employment. By fostering strong connections within the community, the NEIWDB can create a comprehensive and accessible network of resources that align with the goals of WIOA Title I, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of workforce development initiatives and promoting economic mobility for individuals in the local area.

Supportive services are available to WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth who meet WIOA eligibility requirements. Support service payments may be provided, when necessary, to enable a participant to participate in a WIOA Title I activity or a partner activity. Support service payments can be made only when the participant is unable to obtain the service through other programs providing such services. The One-Stop Center partners will work in conjunction to ensure that duplication of services does not happen for dual enrolled participants. As WIOA programs are not an entitlement, supportive service payments are made on a case -by-case basis only when determined necessary and allowable. Due to funding limitations, WIOA supportive services are always the last resort. All other sources of funding must be sought first and documented to avoid duplication of services. All attempts to find other supportive service funding and the reasons for needing WIOA funding must be documented in the state case management system.

Supportive services, may only be provided to participants who:

- Are participating in Career services or Training services approved by WIOA Title I.
- Are unable to obtain supportive services via their support network or through other programs including community agencies that provide these services; and
- Require those services to enable him/her to participate in WIOA Title I activities.

The Comprehensive and Affiliate Job Centers must keep an up-to-date listing of available community resources (paper and/or electronic) and make them available to participants prior to any WIOA payment for supportive services. Providing information about the availability of, and referrals to, alternate supportive services sources is required by 20 CRF 678.430 (a) (9).

Integral to the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), supportive services play a crucial role within WIOA Title I programs. In cases where unmet needs have the potential to impede a customer's successful engagement with WIOA Title I services or partner activities, the programs are designed to provide accessible supportive services. WIOA Title I Career Planners, equipped with substantial experience, play a pivotal role in assisting customers in identifying their specific needs and barriers. Subsequently, these career planners collaborate with customers to formulate effective strategies to address the identified challenges. It's noteworthy that Title IV extends the availability of some of these supportive services, particularly catering to individuals with disabilities. This comprehensive approach ensures that individuals receive tailored support, fostering an environment conducive to successful participation in WIOA Title I initiatives and partner activities.

Following are the allowable types of Support Service Payments available in Northeast Iowa:

- Clothing (CHG)

- Dependent Care (DPC)
- Educational Assistance (EST)
- Educational Testing (EDT)
- Financial Assistance (FAS)
- Health Care (HLC)
- Miscellaneous Services (MSS)
- Services for Individuals with Disabilities (SID)
- Transportation (TRN)
- Supported Employment and Training (SET)
- Youth Incentive Payments (YIP) and Stipends

Needs related payments and stipends for youth are not allowed in Northeast Iowa.

Secondary and post-secondary school initiatives are also opportunities for WIOA Title I staff to work diligently to align and coordinate their efforts with other initiatives that includes:

- GAP Tuition
- PACE
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Federal Work Study
- Iowa Vocational Technical Tuition Grant
- Kibbie Grant
- All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship
- Last Dollar Scholar Program
- National Farm Worker Program
- Snap Grant

The primary objective of WIOA Title I is to extend its services to encompass all Adult and Dislocated Worker participants by capitalizing on the resources made available through core partner organizations. A paramount focus on customer service underscores the importance of optimizing the utilization of resources housed within the One-Stop Center. This strategic approach aims to blend and leverage resources wherever feasible, ensuring the broadest reach and coverage, thus facilitating effective re-employment, or upskilling for as many customers as possible.

Specifically addressing individuals qualifying as dislocated workers, the commitment is to serve them appropriately, expeditiously guiding them back into the workforce. Achieving this may necessitate interventions such as upskilling and retraining, outcomes determined through a meticulous and customer-focused review process. By engaging in personalized interactions, WIOA Title I aims to discern the unique needs and circumstances of each individual, tailoring the support provided to ensure a swift and effective transition back into gainful employment. This approach reflects the program's dedication to addressing the diverse challenges faced by participants and fostering their successful reintegration into the workforce.

Northeast Iowa Local Policies and Procedures is available on the Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Development Board website for additional information.

By proactively addressing transportation and supportive service needs, the Northeast Iowa LWDB aims to remove barriers to employment and enhance the overall effectiveness of WIOA Title I programs in the local area.

## STRATEGIES TO MAXIMIZE SERVICE AND MINIMIZE DUPLICATION

Local Plan Question:

11. **Plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system.**

Addressing plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provide through the one-stop delivery system is paramount to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of workforce development efforts. The NEIWDB acknowledges the importance of seamless integration and collaboration among various service providers within the one-stop system. To enhance the effectiveness of the Wagner-Peyser Act services and optimize the overall delivery of employment and training services through the one-stop delivery system, comprehensive plans, assurances, and strategies are implemented. The integration of One-Stop Career Centers stands as a pivotal approach, consolidating various services under one roof to streamline access for job seekers and employers. This integration ensures a harmonized delivery of Wagner-Peyser Act services in conjunction with other federally funded programs like the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), mitigating the risk of duplication.

Clear communication channels and formal agreements among partner agencies to delineate roles, responsibilities, and referral pathways. Further, a strong emphasis is placed on service coordination, fostering partnerships among diverse entities within the one-stop delivery system, such as public employment services, education institutions, and community organizations. Technology will be leveraged to facilitate information sharing and streamline service delivery processes across partner organizations. Data sharing and information exchange mechanisms are established to facilitate seamless collaboration, preventing redundant efforts, and ensuring individuals receive tailored services. The implementation of robust performance measurement and evaluation frameworks allows for continuous improvement, guiding resource allocation for optimal outcomes. Strategic planning, involving stakeholder input, outlines clear goals and action steps, while ongoing training and technical assistance empower staff and service providers to deliver high-quality services. Public outreach initiatives raise awareness about available resources, fostering broader community engagement. The NEIWDB will regularly convene meetings and trainings to foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement among partners within the one-stop system.

Title I participants are referred to the virtual workshops to attend if appropriated. Title I –does not provide their own workshops to participants. Events and outreach are discussed together with WP and Title I, looking at coverage for the events together, creating a team approach to referring their participants to these events.

Participants from Title II and Title IV who are in need of Wagner Peyser services are referred to Title III for co-enrollment. Partners will meet regularly to review mutual co-enrollment customers for cross program needs planning.

The core partner managers meet at least once a month in each office. Iowa Department for the Blind staff have ongoing communication with partners through mutual clients, one-stop visits, and staff assist with events.

Also, all those that qualify for services are referred within agencies to make networking and services more accessible and easier for potential students. Cross training has reinforced this concept to contribute to seamless transition and collaboration between agencies.

The Northeast Iowa Local Board is committed to implementing a set of strategic initiatives to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its services. Continuous communication stands out as a fundamental principle aimed at eliminating duplication of services and expanding offerings. This involves fostering an open and ongoing dialogue within the organization and with external partners to ensure a seamless and well-coordinated provision of services. Regularly scheduled meetings with partners further reinforce this commitment, providing a platform for transparent communication on the services offered and collaborative strategies to better serve the public.

Utilizing the Iowa***WORKS*** system, the board emphasizes data-driven decision-making to determine the skill levels and needs of individuals accessing the center. This approach enables a targeted alignment of services with the evolving demands of employers, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the necessary skills. Building strong partnerships with schools, economic development entities, businesses, and community agencies is a key aspect of the board's strategy. This collaboration facilitates the identification of populations facing barriers to employment, allowing for the targeted deployment of services to address specific needs within the community.

Continuous assessment of services is integral to the board's commitment to adaptability. This involves a proactive evaluation of the effectiveness of existing services and accommodations, with a focus on meeting the evolving needs of individuals seeking access to services. By staying attuned to the changing landscape and demographics, the board ensures that its offerings remain responsive and relevant.

In summary, the Northeast Iowa Local Board's approach encompasses a commitment to continuous communication, data-driven decision-making, collaborative partnerships, and ongoing assessment. These initiatives collectively contribute to a dynamic and responsive system that addresses the diverse needs of individuals seeking employment services in Northeast Iowa. The NEIWDB aims to create a cohesive

service delivery network that maximizes resources and ultimately enhances outcomes for job seekers and employers alike.

Collectively, these initiatives create an integrated, coordinated, and efficient approach to employment and training services, aligning with the objectives of the Wagner-Peyser Act and the broader one-stop delivery system.

## WIOA TITLE I AND WIOA TITLE II PROGRAM COORDINATION

Local Plan Question:

12. **How the LWDB will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II, including how the LWDB will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II.**

Coordinating WIOA Title I with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II is essential for ensuring a seamless and comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of adult learners and job seekers. The NEIWDB recognizes the link between workforce development and adult education, understanding that proficiency in literacy and numeracy is often a prerequisite for gaining meaningful employment. To coordinate these activities effectively, the NEIWDB will establish partnerships with the local adult education and literacy providers.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) programs in the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Area operate through North Iowa Area Community College, Northeast Iowa Community College, and Hawkeye Community College. These programs, facilitated by AEFLA providers, offer a diverse range of services to support adult learners in their educational pursuits. Among the services provided are Adult Basic Education classes, High School Equivalency Diploma instruction, English Language Learning (ELL) Centers tailored for non-native English speakers, and engaging computer workshops. Title I participants are directed to AEFLA when there is a need to enhance their foundational skills in reading, math, or computer literacy. Additionally, AEFLA serves as a resource for those seeking to attain a high school equivalency diploma or improve their proficiency in the English language. The collaboration between AEFLA and Title I ensures a comprehensive approach to addressing the varied educational needs of individuals within the NEIWDB, fostering a supportive environment for adult learners to achieve their educational goals.

### *Coordination of Services between Titles I and II:*

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB) is dedicated to fostering a collaborative approach between Title I and Title II providers, leveraging the unique strengths of each program to enhance academic support and promote career readiness for participants. Recognizing the distinct assets brought by each program, Title I is well-positioned to offer practical support such as transportation and class materials assistance, including essentials like scrubs for nursing assistants or tools for welding. On the other hand, Title II excels in providing instructional expertise and strategies crucial for participants to excel in their chosen program of study. This may involve offering basic skills support for Integrated Education and Training classes.

To facilitate seamless collaboration, Title I and II staff will engage in the One-stop center's standard referral process, ensuring efficient communication and coordination in making and receiving referrals from their respective programs. Moreover, Title II providers will actively share information and promotional materials for Title I services during new student orientation sessions, extending invitations to Title I representatives to present to students about the array of services they offer.

Adult Education and Literacy staff attend monthly core partner meetings and office meetings to discuss service coordination and collaborate on workforce initiatives. Adult Education and Literacy staff attend training sessions and the in-service trainings opportunities that are available. The Northeast Iowa referral process is in place and offers an opportunity for ongoing collaboration and ongoing communication.

The NEIWDB places a high priority on encouraging co-enrollment between the two programs. Emphasizing this collaborative approach, the Board stresses the importance of participants benefiting from the combined resources of both Title I and Title II. By fostering a spirit of cooperation, the NEIWDB aims to create a supportive environment where individuals can seamlessly access the diverse range of services offered by both programs, ultimately enhancing their academic and career success.

*Review of AEFLA applications:*

WIOA mandates Local Boards to coordinate activities with education and training providers within the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) area [WIOA Section 107(11)(d) and Title 20 Code of Federal Regulations 679.370(n)]. In accordance with WIOA Title II, the Iowa AEFLA grant applications (section 231 and Section 243/IELCE) requires a Local Board(s) to review each application to determine whether the proposed services is consistent with the strategies, needs and activities of the local plan. Upon completing this review, the NEIWDB will submit a recommendation to the IWD that rates the degree of alignment and offers suggestions for better alignment with the local plan.

There are 13 federal considerations that Title II eligible providers must respond to in the AEFLA application. The NEIWDB will review the entire application. However, the following considerations are most relevant to local plan alignment:

- Consideration 1 – Needs Assessment.
- Consideration 4 – Alignment with proposed activities and services.
- Consideration 10 - Coordination with partners to access educational services and remove barriers; and
- Consideration 11 - Coordination with community resources in promoting career pathway strategies

*Review Process for Local Boards:*

The IWD developed the following five-step process for the Local Board's review of WIOA, Title II AEFLA applications. The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will select a committee to review and score applications based on the scoring criteria that is provided. The NEIWDB will adhere to this process when reviewing applications.

1. Providers will submit their AEFLA applications to the IWD through the IowaGrants system.

2. The IWD will review and determine eligibility. Only those eligible will be forwarded for review. Some local areas may receive multiple applications per grant.
3. The IWD will provide the NEIWDB's designated point of contact access to the online AEFLA applications with a rubric for an alignment review based on the board's approved local plan.
4. The NEIWDB will organize a committee to review the AEFLA applications. Reviewers will sign a conflict-of-interest agreement and disclose in writing any potential conflicts.
5. The NEIWDB's point of contact, with the assistance of a committee organized by the Board, must complete and submit the review and any recommendations through the IowaGrants system. The IWD will consider the results of the review by Local Boards in making awards.

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Local Plan Question:

13. Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(11)) between the Local WDB or other local entities described in WIOA Sec. 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (other than Sec. 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to Sec. 121(f)) in accordance with Sec. 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts of cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

The executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between required partners is included as Appendix O.

## PROCUREMENT OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

Local Plan Question:

14. The competitive process that will be used to award sub-grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will follow the principles specified in 29 CFR Part 97 and adhere to the procurement procedures mandated by the State of Iowa. Every stage of the procurement process, such as solicitations, selection processes, contract negotiations, and awarding, will be documented in accordance with 29 CFR Part 97. Furthermore, all documents created throughout the procurement process will be retained as per the requirements of Iowa Workforce Development.

The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will be governed by the procurement policy as developed in accordance with Federal, State, and local policies. The NEIWDB has the responsibility to provide policy guidelines for the Northeast Iowa local area.

NEIWDB has established a code of conduct for Board members and employees engaged in the awarding and administration of contracts using grant funds. The code of conduct is attached to and made a part of these procurement policies. Violation of the code of conduct shall be grounds for disciplinary action including removal from the Board or termination of employment. An official position may not be used for personal gain, nor shall a board or staff member engage in any business transaction, none have a financial or other interest, direct or indirect, which is a conflict with the proper discharge of duties. Announcement of a potential conflict must be made and refrain from further discussion or voting. No board member or staff shall, without proper authorization, disclose confidential information concerning the procurement of property and services administration or affairs of the Board. Nor shall they use such information to advance the financial or other private interest of themselves or others.

Federal regulations require that written standards of conduct governing the performance of their employees engaged in the award and administration of contracts. No employee, officer or agent shall participate in the selection; award or administration of a contract supported for Federal funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. Included are employees, officers or agents and any member of his or her immediate family, partner, or organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties, has financial or other interest in the firm selected for an award.

No Board member or staff shall, without proper authorization, disclose confidential information concerning the procurement of property and services, administration, or affairs of the Board. Nor shall they use such information to advance the financial or private interest of themselves or others. Violation of the code shall be grounds for disciplinary action including removal from the Board or termination of employment.

All potential providers and vendors, who have expressed interest in being considered for contracts, will be placed on the bidder's list, and sent solicitations for the areas of services for which they wish to be considered when such awards are due to be made. When possible, attempts will be made to procure minority firms by placing all qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on the potential vendor's list. Contractors will also be encouraged to take these affirmative steps.

The procurement process for the selection of service providers will take into consideration the provider's ability to meet contract objectives as well as other criteria as determined locally by the NEIWDB. Examples of how the ability to meet the procurement objectives can be demonstrated include, but are not limited to:

- Financial resources, technical qualifications, experience, organization, and facilities adequate to carry out the project.
- Resources to meet the completion schedule contained in the contract.
- A satisfactory performance record for completion of contracts.
- Cost analysis of proposed budget-accounting and auditing procedures adequate to control property, funds, and assets.

Requests for proposals (RFPs) will be requested for WIOA services and will be publicized to identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance for WIOA activities. All responses to publicized requests for proposals will be reviewed by the policy set forth.

The competitive procurement process for the selection of service providers and One-Stop Operators will occur every four years.

The NEIWDB will ensure that any entity is not debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible to participate in Federal assistance programs or activities. Information about the selection of contactors and providers will be made available to the public on a regular basis through electronic means, in accordance with the Sunshine Provision.

All negotiations of the contract for or with potential contractors/service providers must be arm's length negotiations. The definition of arm's length negotiation is a negotiation where the parties to the negotiation have equal bargaining power and symmetric information, leading to agreement upon fair market terms.

Methods of Procurement:

NEIWDB shall use one of the following methods of procurement, depending upon the nature of goods and services to be secured, and the terms and conditions contained within this policy.

- Micro Purchases
- Small Purchases- Request for Quotes
- Sealed Bids
- Competitive Proposals- Request for Proposals
- Noncompetitive Procurement- Sole Source

NEIWDB shall have the sole discretion to choose whatever procurement method is applicable within these guidelines.

Methods of procurement vary by the size and type of the purchase. In all cases, purchases will be reviewed for cost reasonableness to foster greater economy and efficiency. Applicable NEIWDB policies and procedures should be followed in conjunction with these policy guidelines.

Where appropriate, an analysis will be made of lease versus purchase alternatives, and any other appropriate analysis to determine the economical approach.

Informal written solicitation documentation shall be used to secure responses from an adequate number of qualified third parties. Information collected should include a description of the item or service needed; proposed time schedule needed; comparison of costs including setup, delivery, taxes, etc.; and reason for selection if other than cost.

Use of intergovernmental agreements within the state for cooperative procurement or where goods and services have already been evaluated and procured is encouraged to foster greater economy and efficiency, and do not need additional solicitation documentation.

- Micro-purchases may be awarded without soliciting competitive quotations for acquisitions if the price considered to be reasonable.
- Micro-purchases will be distributed equitably among qualified suppliers.

NEIWDB may elect to use another method of procurement for purchases under $10,000 and if it does shall adhere to the requirements pursuant to that method selected.

Small Purchases0 Request for Quotes:

Threshold: Required for Purchases of $10,000- $50,000.00. For purchases where the price is the overriding factor, which involves standardized products or services, and where the aggregate acquisition costs are greater than the micro-purchase threshold ($10,000) but do not exceed the small purchase threshold ($50,000.00).

Or services where price is not the overriding factor but are relatively simple and straightforward purchases the NEIWDB may use relatively simple and informal procurement methods by obtaining price or rate quotations from an adequate number of qualified sources but not less than three sources, if three sources are available.

Sealed Bids:

An option for purchases of $50,000.00 and above is a Request for Bid (RFB). A RFB is always a publicly advertised, formal solicitation.

- The RFB includes well-defined specifications and/or scope of work, including all contractual terms.
- A Request for Bid (RFB) is always publicly advertised. Formal solicitation is required, fixed price (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder who conformed to all material terms and is the lowest in price.
- The RFB includes well-defined specifications and/or scope of work, including all contractual terms.

- Bids for the goods or services must be received by a set date, time, and place, where they may be publicly opened.

Responsible bidder means a vendor that has the capability in all respects to perform the contract requirements. In determining whether a vendor is a responsible bidder, the board may consider various factors and will be determined by the Executive Committee.

Procurement by sealed bids is most appropriate when there is relatively no difference between the good or service offered by one vendor from that offered by another. Procurement by sealed bids is not appropriate when the procurement decision will be based on more than price (i.e., quality of the good or service.

Competitive Proposals- Request for Proposals

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is always publicly advertised, formal solicitation and is used when it is not appropriate to use sealed bids and the amount of the contract is over $50,000. This occurs when other factors in addition to price influence the award decision.

- Purchases of supplies, equipment, and any professional service, including delivery of services of WIOA Title I-B activities, of $50,000 or more shall be procured through competitive proposal.
- Requests for Proposals (RFP's) will be publicized and solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources.
- Well-defined specifications and/or scope of work and contains all contractual terms and conditions. The RFP solicits two parts to a proposal- technical and cost- from prospective vendors.
- Description of required services or components, clear description of any technical requirements, and evaluation factors and their relative importance will be identified in the proposal.
- Responses will be reviewed and evaluated based on consistent grading methods for each proposal. Review Committees will be established for evaluating delivery of WIOA Title I-B services and One-Stop Operator duties.
- After an evaluation of all proposals submitted, a contract is awarded to the provider who submits the proposal most advantageous to NEIWDB.

The NEIWDB shall use Request for Proposals when the conditions are not appropriate for the use of competitive sealed bidding, micro-purchases, small purchases, or non-competitive proposals. The technique of competitive proposals is normally conducted with more than one source submitting an offer, a contract is awarded, and the following conditions are met:

- The complex and technical nature of the procurement cannot be described in bid specifications; and
- It is logical to award a contract on factors other than price.
- You anticipate that a good or service expected to cost less than $50,000 will need to be procured again from the same vendor during the same fiscal year and the aggregate amount of procurements is expected to exceed $50,000.

When selecting contractors and service providers, award will be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program. Selection consideration will be given to such matters as price, contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and

technical resources. An additional price analysis will be conducted if the anticipated award amount is in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold as set by federal guidance.

Contractors will be verified they are not excluded from participation in federal awards.

Contracts will be administered to ensure contractor conformance with the terms, conditions, and specifications. Contractor performance reviews and monitoring shall be done per programmatic requirements.

Records sufficient to detail the history of procurement will be maintained. These records will include but are not necessarily limited to the following: rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price.

Solicitations for goods and services (requests for proposals or RFPs) should provide for all of the following:

- Requirements that the bidder/offer must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.
- Funding level range or an up-to amount must be provided in the RFP that ensures the responsibilities in the Statement of Work can be performed.
- Requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including the range of acceptable characteristics or minimum acceptable standards. (45 CFR Part 75.328(c)(1))
- The specific features of "brand name or equal" descriptions that bidders are required to meet when appropriate. (45 CFR Part 75.328(c)(1))
- A description of the format, if any, in which proposals must be submitted, including the name of the person to whom proposals should be sent.
- The date by which proposals are due.
- Required delivery or performance dates/schedules.
- The release of an RFP for services does not obligate the NEIWDB to accept any or all proposals. The NEIWDB shall be held harmless of any action resulting from any decision not to accept any or all proposals.

Noncompetitive Proposals- Sole Source:

Procurement by noncompetitive proposals, or sole source, is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source and may be used only when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- The item is available only from a single source;
- The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation;

- The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to a written request from the non-Federal entity; or
- After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.
- The purchases are for equipment or services where the prices are established by law for technical equipment requiring standardization and interchangeability of parts with existing equipment.

Noncompetitive proposals require the mutual discussion and arrangement of terms of a transaction or agreement for the purpose of arriving at a common understanding of contract essentials such as technical requirements, schedules, prices, and terms. For any noncompetitive proposal in excess of the small purchase threshold, written documentation must be included in the records to show why a noncompetitive proposal was used instead of competitive bidding.

### Sole Source for Providers

Sole source must only be pursued after a minimum of two attempts to competitively procure, including one attempt that combines the procurement of the Adult and Dislocated Woker service provider with the selection of the One-Stop Operator. Sole source selection of a service provider can only be completed under the criteria outlined in WIOA. Should the NEIWDB request to use sole source procurement for services providers it will submit a formal request to IWD electronically.

The request must include justification that all other options were exhausted and identify the reason for sole source. The NEIWDB will identify the timeline and the activities performed prior to the sole source request and must certify that all appropriate measures consistent with the WIOA and this policy have been taken.

The following documentation will be included with the request for sole source:

- Copy of the RFP or IFB
- Proof of the announcement medium used (newspaper, social media)
- Documentation showing how long the announcement was posted
- The name of the entity to which the sole source is to be awarded
- Documentation showing that the entity has the capacity and ability to perform the one-stop operator functions, OR
- Documentation showing that the entity has the capacity and ability to perform the functions required to provide career services and/or youth workforce innovation opportunity activities.
- Well-defined specifications and/or scope of work and contains all contractual terms and conditions. The RFP solicits two parts to a proposal- technical and cost- from prospective vendors.
- Description of required services or components, clear description of any technical requirements, and evaluation factors and their relative importance will be identified in the proposal.
- Responses will be reviewed and evaluated based on consistent grading methods for each proposal. Review Committees will be established for evaluating delivery of WIOA Title I-B services and One-Stop Operator duties.
- After an evaluation of all proposals submitted, a contract is awarded to the provider who submits the proposal most advantageous to NEIWDB.

Rejection of Bids or Proposals:

A bid/proposal response that fails to provide the required forms or which does not comply with the specifications, terms, and conditions of the RFB or RFP may be considered non-responsive and rejected. Unless stated otherwise in the solicitation documents, submissions that include an alternate bid/proposal are unresponsive and subject to disqualification.

Cancellation of Solicitation:

The NEIWDB may cancel a solicitation at any time during the procurement process prior to signing a contract if the requirement stated in the solicitation no longer exists, funds are lacking, the board decides not to proceed with the solicitation, or for any other reason.

Procurement Records:

The NEIWDB must develop and maintain a record/file of each relevant procurement sufficient to detail the significant history of the procurement and support the procurement decisions made. The record should include the following information as appropriate for the type of procurement performed:

- A description of the item(s) being procured.
- Evidence of NEIWDB involvement in the decision-making and planning process.
- A copy of the solicitation package (RFP/RFQ/RFB).
- A copy of the public notification.
- Bidder's list
- A copy of each bid received.
- Results of all reviews and evaluations for all proposals received and score sheets completed during the evaluation process.
- The name of the selected provider or vendor, the amount of the procurement, and the delivery date of the good or service.
- Copy of any submitted grievances and the resolution of each.
- Risk analysis determinations and special award/ contract conditions, if appropriate.

Contract Provisions:

In the limited contracts in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold as stated in this policy, the majority of contract provisions required for WIOA expenditures include:

- Termination for cause and convenience
- Termination for default
- Damages
- Compliance with WIOA
- Access to Contractors records
- Maintenance of records
- State energy conservation.
- EEO/ADA/Drug Free workplace provisions as appropriate.

- In instances of NEIWDB acting as a pass-through entity every subaward will be clearly identified as such and include the information as required in § 200.331

RFP attachments must address:

- Anti-lobbying certificates
- Debarment and Suspension certificate

Affirmative Action considerations will be made in making effort to solicit and utilize small business, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises, whenever possible. This will include gaining access to the Chamber list of minority owned and small businesses and actively seeking bids.

Right to File a Grievance:
Any organization making an application under an RFP has the right to file a grievance related the RFP process within five (5) business days of the award announcement.

- All grievances must be made in writing and must fully identify any contested issues and/or policy or procedural violations.
- Subjective interpretations by evaluators are not subject to protest or grievance.

A bidder may file a grievance in writing, with the NEIWDB Executive Director, who will then have ten (10) days in which to reach an informal written resolution of the grievance.

Should the grievance not be resolved within ten (10) days, the bidder may submit in writing a protest to the NEIWDB Executive Committee .

The Executive Committee will then have twenty (20) days to reach a formal written decision.

A hearing is not right under this NEIWDB grievance policy.

- No further appeals will be allowed.
- This does not prohibit the bidder from seeking other resolutions in addition to those allowed by the Northeast Iowa local area.
- Any further resolutions taken by the bidder outside of this policy will be handled by the CEOs in the Northeast Iowa local area.

Standards of Conduct:

The proper operation of a democratic process requires that actions of Board members and employees be open and impartial; that decisions and policy be made in the proper channels of NEIWDB organizational structure; that neither Board membership nor NEIWDB staff positions shall be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of the Board and its staff. In recognition of these goals the Council has established a written Code of Ethics for all Board members and staff.

Any officer, employee, or agent of the NEIWDB who is either:

- engaged in negotiations with a potential contractor.
- has arrangements concerning prospective employment with a potential contractor; or,
- has a financial interest in a potential contractor may not participate in the review, award, or administration of a contract for a potential contractor. Such relationships constitute a Conflict of Interest. This prohibition also extends to:
- an immediate family member of any officer, employer, or agent of the grantee/sub-grantee.
- a partner or organization who employs any officer, employee, or agent of the grantee/sub-grantee.

Additionally, no NEIWDB member shall participate in the selection or in the awarding of a contract if a conflict of interest is involved.

This provision does not prohibit a community-based organization, educational agency, employer, or other service provider represented by an NEIWDB member from receiving a contract for the provision of training and/or services to participants.

However, when such a conflict of interest arises, LWDB members must abstain from voting on the award and disclose all financial/non-financial information of the contractor. No employee, officer, or agent of the NEIWDB shall participate in the selection, awarding, or administration of a contract if a conflict of interest exists. No contract will be awarded to any NEIWDB member or entity with which he/she is affiliated which results in direct personal gain to that NEIWDB member. NEIWDB officers, employees, or agents shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from service providers, potential service providers (i.e., persons who perform services of the type contracted for), or parties to grants.

Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure:

Information will not be disclosed to anyone who is not directly involved in the procurement process relating to the intent to implement a procurement, the amount of funds available, or any related data, until that information is made known to all bidders through a notification of the intent to solicit or dissemination of a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Quote (RFQ).

Technical and cost/price information from any proposal must not be disclosed to anyone not officially involved in the procurement process while the procurement is still in progress.

Certain technical or proposal information that a bidder has designated as proprietary or trade secret, and with which NEIWDB concurs, must not be disclosed to other bidders, even after the award is made and publicized.

The number of names of bidders will not be disclosed to anyone not officially involved in the procurement process until the contract is awarded and the decision is made public.

Technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting contractors will be conducted. The NEIWDB review committee will review all proposals that meet the submission requirements and may submit summary reports of all proposals received.

After evaluation and recommendation of the RFPs by the NEIWDB review committee, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will make the final selection of service providers. The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will have final authority for selection of service providers.

Final selections will primarily be based on, yet not limited to, effectiveness, demonstrated performance, potential for meeting performance goals, costs, quality of training, participant characteristics, past workforce development experience and performance of the bidder and non-duplication of services. The proposals will be weighed against established criteria and the NEIWDB will then select the winning proposal based upon this scoring.

Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board will adhere to Federal, State and Local Policy when procuring a service provider. The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board's Procurement Policy can be found here: https://www.iowawdb.gov/northeast-iowa/policies

## NEGOTIATED PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Local Plan Question:

15. Each local area must submit an expected level of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The Local Area is required to reach agreement with the State on local-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

    Local areas may identify additional indicators in the plan. Please identify any such local indicators in the Additional Indicators of Performance section.

In accordance with WIOA Section 116 and 20 CFR Part 677, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB) will establish local negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs for Program Years 2026 and 2027 through the required negotiation process with Iowa Workforce Development (IWD).

At the time of submission of this Local Plan Modification, formal negotiations with the State of Iowa have not yet been completed. Therefore, negotiated levels are identified as "TBD" in Appendix P and will be finalized through the State's performance negotiation process.

Upon completion of negotiations, the NEIWDB will operate in accordance with the agreed-upon local negotiated levels of performance and will monitor outcomes regularly to ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement across all Title I programs.

## MAINTAINING A HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Local Plan Question:

16. The actions the LWDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing WDB, consistent with the factors developed by the State WDB.

## PROVISION OF TRAINING SERVICES

Local Plan Question:

17. How training services will be provided through the use of individual training accounts (ITAs), including:
    a. If contracts for training services will be used.
    b. How the use of contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs.
    c. How the Local WDB will ensure informed consumer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

WIOA Title I training services for WIOA eligible Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth are provided through Individual Training Accounts (ITA). Individual Training Accounts are the standardized methodology by which a participant's training costs are funded. It is the mechanism through which funds will be used to make payment only for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Out-of-School Youth ages 16-24 for purchasing training services from eligible training providers. Participants can select an eligible training provider, maximizing participant choice, in addition to consultation from the participant's case manager. The participant will be referred to the selected training provider unless program funds are insufficient or exhausted. The enrollment selection process for an ITA will follow the same process as for selection into WIOA.

Individual Training Accounts are the standardized methodology by which a participant's training costs are funded. It is the mechanism through which funds will be used to make payment only for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Out-of-School Youth (OSY) ages 16-24 for purchasing training services from eligible training providers.

Participants have the opportunity to select an eligible training provider, maximizing participant choice, in addition to consultation from the participant's case manager. The participant will be referred to the selected training provider unless program funds are insufficient or exhausted. The enrollment selection process for an ITA will follow the same process as for selection into WIOA.

ITAs are no entitlements and shall be provided to eligible participants on the basis of individualized assessment of the person's job readiness, employment, and training needs, financial, social, and supportive needs, labor market demand and potential for successful completion, as documented on the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP). For residents of the Northeast Iowa Local Area, the actual implementation of an ITA will involve the Title I Service Providers. ITAs are subject to cost limitations listed in the Occupational Skills Training (OST) and Educational Assistance (EST) sections of the Northeast Iowa Policies and Procedures document.

ITAs will be issued only for approved training programs, and only after career counseling (including Labor Market Information) has been provided by the case manager and clearly documented.
In order to enhance consumer choice in education and training plans, as well as to provide flexibility to service providers, youth program-funded ITAs may be used for out-of-school youth (OSY) ages 16-24, when appropriate. In-school youth (ISY) cannot use youth program-funded ITAs. However, ISY between the ages of 18 and 21 may co-enroll in the adult program and receive training services through an adult program-funded ITA.

Coordination of WIOA Training Funds and Other Federal Assistance WIOA Service Providers must consider the availability of other sources of grants, excluding loans, to pay for training costs so that WIOA funds are used to supplement but not supplant other sources. WIOA funding for training is limited to participants who are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the cost of their training or require assistance beyond that available under grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training. In making the determination, WIOA Service Providers may take into account the full cost of participating in training services, including the cost of supportive services and other appropriate costs.

As stated in WIOA Final Rules, and TEGL 19-16, Department of Veterans Affairs benefits for education and training services are not included in the category of "other resources of training grants" listed in 20 CFR sec. 680.230(b). Therefore, veterans and spouses are not required to first use any available benefit entitlements associated with their military service before being considered eligible for WIOA-funded training, and Service Providers are not required to consider the availability of those funds.

Total payments on an ITA may not exceed $7,000. Maximum for OST - $5,000 and $2,000 for EST services per participant per program year; however, may be increased in extraordinary circumstances by up to $500.00 by the NEIWDB Executive Director when unusual circumstances occur.

ITAs will not be issued to any student who does not have a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent. An ITA must be completed and approved by the service provider before the participant begins training. Participants must maintain satisfactory progress/grades throughout the training program. A copy of grades/transcripts must be uploaded each semester/quarter prior to issuing ITA.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides a framework for a workforce development system designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services. One of the key components of WIOA is ensuring that individuals have access to a variety of training options and can make informed decisions about their training and career pathways.

The Northeast Iowa LWDB follows State Policy when it comes to consumer choice. Training services, whether under Individual Training Accounts (ITA) or under contract, must be provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in selecting an eligible provider.

In the Northeast Iowa Local Area, we are committed to ensuring that all consumers have the ability to make informed choices regarding their services and support. Our consumer choice process involves several key steps:

1. **Career Services Determination:** Determining the career services that are best performed by the Iowa*WORKS* Center consistently and career services that require contracting with a career service provider.
2. **Assessment and Eligibility Criteria:** Determine individual eligibility for training services. This includes evaluating the individual's employment history, skill levels, and career goals to ensure they meet eligibility criteria. This is a part of the OBA and ISS process. The IEP/ISS will outline the individual's career goals, the services needed to achieve those goals, and the steps required to complete the plan. During this process and the need for training determined, individuals will receive career counseling to help identify suitable occupations and training programs.
3. **Information Dissemination:** Title I provides comprehensive information about the available services and providers and programs. This includes details on the cost, duration and outcomes of the programs.
    - Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL): Individuals will use the ETPL to compare different training providers and programs. The ETPL is a state-maintained list of training providers who have been approved to provide training services to WIOA participants.
    - This helps to ensure sufficient access to services for individuals with disabilities, including opportunities that lead to integrated, competitive employment for individuals with disabilities and sufficient access for adult education and literacy activities.
4. **Consultation and Support:** Career Planners work one-on-one with participants to help them understand their options and make informed decisions. They select a provider and program that best meets their needs and career goals.
    - Research and Information: Individuals are provided with information about various eligible training providers and programs. This includes details on the cost, duration and outcomes of the programs (e.g., completion rates, employment rates, average wages).
    - Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL): Individuals will utilize Iowa*WORKS* ETPL to compare different training providers and programs. The ETPL is a state-maintained listing of training providers who have been approved to provide training services to WIOA participants. The ETPL list can be accessed online at the Iowa*WORKS* website. Under *Job Seekers*, click *Additional Services*, and then click *Training Services*. Next, click *ETPL Approved Programs* to explore and review training programs.
    - Performance Data: Individuals are given access to performance data for each training provider to make an informed choice. This data includes metrics like job placement rates, average earning of graduates, and industry-recognized credentials earned.
5. **Selection Mechanism:** Participants can select their preferred options thorough individualized counseling sessions with their Career Planner and by completing the State of Iowa – Consumer Choice Worksheet.
    - Consumer Choice: With the guidance of their Career Planner, individuals make an informed choice about which training provider and program best meets their needs and career goals.

- Consumer Choice Worksheet: Participants will complete the comparison worksheet of approved training providers to help them select the program that best matches their career goal. This document will need to be signed by both the participant and Career Planner and document uploaded to Consumer Choice case note. The Consumer Choice Worksheet is available on the IWD Employment & Training Hub, Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth, Title I Resources, F)Training, Training Justification & Consumer Choice.

6. **Referral Process:** Once a decision has been made, the Career Planner facilitates the referral process with the chosen provider.
7. **Participant Rights and Responsibilities:** Participants are informed of their rights to choose among available options without undue influence, as well as their responsibilities in maintaining eligibility for services.
8. **Conflict of Interest:** The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board has conflict of interest policies in place to manage and mitigate conflicts of interest ensuring that all advice and support provided by staff are unbiased and in the best interest of the participant.
9. **Coordination with Other Services:** The ITA process is closely coordinated with other services offered by the Iowa***WORKS*** offices, including workforce preparation activities, job search and placement assistance and supportive services to provide a holistic support system.
10. **Staff Training:** Career Planners and other relevant staff undergo training to stay informed about the ITA process, consumer choice requirements and how to support participants in making informed decisions.
11. **Continuous Improvement:** Northeast Iowa LWDA has mechanisms in place for the continuous improvement of the consumer choice process, including policy reviews, feedback loops from participants and staff and the integration of best practices.

This process ensures clarity and transparency, helping participants understand how they can exercise their choice and ensuring that the process is systematic and fair. The cornerstone of the WIOA Consumer Choice process is ensuring that individuals make well-informed decisions about their training and career paths. Information and services should be accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities.

## LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Local Plan Question:

18. **The process used by the LWDB to provide a 20 business days' public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations.**

    The Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB) utilized a transparent and inclusive process to develop the PY26 Local Plan Modification and provided a 20-business day public comment period in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and applicable state requirements.

Following approval of the draft Local Plan Modification for public review, the NEIWDB conducted a public comment period from April 2, 2026, through April 29, 2026. During this period, representatives of business, education, labor organizations, required one-stop partners, community organizations, elected officials, and members of the public were invited to review the draft plan and provide comments.

To maximize accessibility and stakeholder engagement, the NEIWDB publicized the availability of the draft Local Plan Modification through its regular communication channels, including email notifications and postings on the NEIWDB website. The draft Local Plan Modification was made available on the NEIWDB website throughout the public comment period, ensuring stakeholders had the opportunity to review the document and submit comments.

As an additional opportunity for public participation, the NEIWDB conducted a Local Plan Listening Session on April 8, 2026, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The listening session provided stakeholders and members of the public with an opportunity to ask questions, provide feedback, and offer comments regarding the Local Plan Modification.

No public comments were received during the public comment period or during the Local Plan Listening Session.

The NEIWDB remains committed to an open, transparent, and collaborative planning process and will continue to engage businesses, educational institutions, labor organizations, workforce system partners, elected officials, and the public in the development and modification of local workforce plans to ensure the workforce system reflects the needs and priorities of Northeast Iowa.

## INTEGRATED, TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED INTAKE AND CASE MANAGEMENT

Local Plan Question:

19. **How one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning into an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.**

One-stop centers are actively undergoing a transformative process as they embrace and transition into an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of programs conducted under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in collaboration with one-stop partners. This evolution is driven by the recognition of the benefits that technology can bring to streamline and improve the delivery of workforce development services.

The implementation of integrated systems involves the incorporation of advanced technologies to facilitate seamless intake processes and efficient case management. These systems are designed to handle various aspects of program administration, including but not limited to participant registration, needs assessment, and service coordination. By leveraging technology, one-stop centers in Iowa aim to create a unified platform that consolidates relevant information, allowing for better collaboration and coordination among partners involved in WIOA programs.

The Iowa***WORKS*** data management system serves as a comprehensive platform encompassing case management, data collection, reporting, labor exchange, LMI, and more. It is utilized across all One-Stop Centers and involves collaboration with various partners to track customers and activities within a unified database. Iowa***WORKS*** stands out as an intuitive and WIOA-compliant system, prioritizing a customer-centered approach. This system enhances access to workforce services for both jobseekers and employers, providing center staff with improved tools for service delivery.

The Iowa***WORKS*** system offers a coordinated approach to managing multiple programs, effectively streamlining services to customers. The communication center within the system facilitates seamless interaction between center staff, jobseekers, and employers. Notably, appointments and notifications can be effortlessly shared through the system, ensuring continuous accessibility for individuals accessing various programs and services.

As of the date of this plan, the Iowa***WORKS*** Case Management System is actively utilized by Title I, Title III, PROMISE JOBS, DVOP/JVSG, RESEA, REO, RCM, Trade, and Ticket to Work, demonstrating its integration across multiple workforce programs. Title II and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) are not currently integrated into the Iowa***WORKS*** Case Management System.

Because not all required one-stop partners have access to Iowa***WORKS***, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board (NEIWDB) and its partners utilize established communication and referral processes to ensure seamless coordination of services. Partner agencies collaborate through regular meetings, direct staff communication, coordinated case management, shared resource planning, and warm handoffs to support participant success while maintaining compliance with applicable confidentiality and data-sharing requirements.

When appropriate and permissible, partners exchange participant and employer information through approved communication methods to promote coordinated service delivery, reduce duplication of services, and improve customer outcomes. In addition, the NEIWDB continues to support development of a Business Relations Report designed to facilitate the sharing of employer engagement activities and business intelligence among workforce system partners. These collaborative practices strengthen the integrated one-stop delivery system and ensure customers receive coordinated, customer-centered services regardless of the case management system utilized by each partner.

The Iowa***WORKS*** data management system houses comprehensive modules for Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, TAA, WOTC, SNAP E&T, PROMISE JOBS, and Wagner Peyser, including JVSG and RA services. Iowa***WORKS*** incorporates a common intake system which:

1. Determines program eligibility and promotes co-enrollment;

2. Assigns a unique identifier to each program participate that is used across programs;

3. Gathers required reporting elements common across all partners;

4. Creates a common portal by which customers may access services;

5. Allows participants to self-refer to partner agencies and partner agencies to refer participants and track referral follow-up and outcomes; and

6. Creates a staff dashboard with the status of each program participant and shares data across agencies.

Iowa is currently exploring ways to integrate Titles II and IV into the system and/or pursue the development of interface system(s) that integrate data via API tools when applicable. Currently, information is batched into the system and shared with Titles that do not have mainframe access. All core partners utilize a single reporting system for the Employer Services tracking functionality. This allows partners to report Effectiveness in Serving Employer measures jointly. As Iowa continues to develop and refine data management systems, the exchange of information and common data elements will improve and expand.

The Iowa***WORKS*** system emphasizes the importance of data accuracy, accessibility, and security. The system enables real-time data sharing, ensuring that partners have access to up-to-date participant information. This promotes informed decision-making and enhances the overall quality of services provided through WIOA programs.

The integration of technology into intake and case management processes contributes to a more streamlined and participant-centric approach. Participants can benefit from improved accessibility to services, timely communication, and personalized assistance, fostering a more user-friendly experience within the Iowa***WORKS*** system. This transition aligns with the overarching goals of WIOA, which seeks to enhance the delivery of workforce services, improve access for job seekers, and promote collaboration among different service providers.

Partner programs currently college data necessary to develop and produce performance accountability reports required under Section 116(d)(2). Each partner submits quarterly and annual reports to the Departments of Labor and Education to meet federal reporting requirements. These reports are reviewed with state and local program administrators to ensure Iowa continues to meet and exceed negotiated performance levels. Predictive Reports in the Iowa***WORKS*** case management system is an important tool to assist staff to identify service gaps and areas for technical assistance.

As Iowa continues assessing best practices in streamlining services, evaluation of how other programs can be integrated into the system will occur for improved customer access. Modernization efforts of Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Benefits System is currently being implemented to improve customer service, eliminate labor-intensive processes, allow real time data sharing, improve security, increase data accuracy, and improve maintenance and support; the new system will go-live in June 2024.

Iowa***WORKS*** is also the State's labor exchange system and Iowa's larges job bank. Job seekers have the have virtual access to enter work registrations, resumes, and explore careers from their homes, or by visiting an AJC. Similarly, employers can easily enter job order information virtually at their own convenience. Iowa has added the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) module which offers Employer Outreach Specialists, Business Services Representatives (BSRs), and other workforce system staff a full range of tools and resources to actively manage employer recruitment efforts.

The State of Iowa is working to implement Single Sign On (SSO)/OKTA. This initiative will simplify login processes to state resources for internal and external users by allowing all users to utilize one login to access state recourses, including Iowa***WORKS***. This change will impact staff, individuals (job seekers and claimants), employers, providers, and out-of-state entities (WOTC). Implementation of SSO will increase secure access to Iowa***WORKS*** and other state resources.

Regular meetings are convened for all Core and Required Partner Programs to foster open communication and facilitate coordinated strategies for intake and case management. Core Partner programs hold monthly meetings, which include a distinct monthly session for Core Partner staff specifically focused on serving employers. Required partners align their meetings with Core Partner sessions, occurring quarterly. The One-Stop Operator plays a pivotal role in coordinating and facilitating these meetings, ensuring consistent attendance and active participation from all partners.

In Northeast Iowa, a unified referral system has been put in place for every Core and Required partner operating locally. Through the use of an online form that accommodates screen readers, staff from Core and Required partner organizations can enter essential customer information based on standardized prompts. The online form is structured to automatically dispatch an email notification to the agency receiving the referral, guaranteeing timely updates and subsequent follow-up with the customer. The online Referral Form encompasses all Core and Required Partner agencies, simplifying the process for partner staff to seamlessly refer individuals among different programs. All partners have access to the backend spreadsheet of the referral system and are able to obtain information immediately on referrals made among partners in the local area. Specifically, partners can pull reports on data pertaining to the number of referrals made to various programs and get information as to whether specific referrals have been contacted.  Referrals among all core programs include a warm hand-off approach. Recently, a Referral System SOP has been developed to support all partners in the referring process.

To guarantee that every partner collects and receives customer feedback, an integrated customer satisfaction survey has been introduced across all Core Partner programs. The objective behind developing and deploying this unified tool for soliciting and analyzing customer satisfaction data is to guide strategies for ongoing enhancement. The survey was created by gathering, analyzing, and adapting the evaluation tools currently employed by Core Partner programs, transforming these tools into a digital

format, and devising a common set of questions applicable to all Core Partner programs. Additionally, the customer satisfaction data serves as a valuable resource to inform strategic planning activities for the Local Area undertaken by the NEIWDB.

In the Northeast Iowa LWDA, we prioritize the safeguarding of confidential information, including social security numbers. Rather than requesting customers to verbally provide their social security numbers for accessing UI claim or Iowa*WORKS* information, we employ a secure approach by having them input the information using the 10-key keypads attached to our staff computers, which are designated for welcoming and exploratory purposes.

Staff members are given clear instructions to lock their computers whenever they step away from their desks to prevent unauthorized access to confidential information displayed on their desktops. They are well-acquainted with and routinely use shortcut keys to swiftly lock their screens.

In the process of printing documents containing sensitive information, staff members are directed to promptly retrieve the document from the printer or utilize the secure print feature. The secure print feature holds the document until they enter a 4-digit code into the printer to release it. In the event that any document with sensitive information is discovered unattended, staff members are trained to shred it immediately, ensuring the secure handling of confidential materials.

## PRIORITY OF SERVICE

Local Plan Question:

20. A description of how the LWDB will ensure priority of service for the WIOA Title I-B Adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient (20 CFR 680.600).

WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult individualized career services and employment and training activities; there is no priority applied for receipt of basic career services. Funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and individuals with barriers to employment. Priority must be implemented regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the local area.

Priority of Service: Defined as the right of eligible covered persons to take precedence over eligible non-covered persons in obtaining DOL-funded services. It is important to understand that priority of service does not change the intended function of a program or service. Covered persons must meet all statutory eligibility and program requirements for participation in order to receive priority for a program or service.

AJC staff must prioritize services to these populations at all times, regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the local area.

a) These priorities are in addition to the requirements in the WIOA regulations at 20 CFR 680.650 that veteran and their eligible spouses receive priority of service for all Department of Labor (DOL)-funded job training programs, including the WIOA Adult program.

b) A veteran must meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training program.

Adult Title I clients receive priority of service based upon need. Priority should be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Services are to be provided to those who can benefit from and who are most in need of such opportunities. The Northeast Iowa LWDA gives priority to individuals who fit one of the three priority populations below. Additional priority groups are listed below who may be enrolled by approval from the ***Executive Committee.*** Acceptable documentation for verifying priority of service is provided in **Attachment A** of the Northeast Iowa Policies and Procedures document.

1. Recipient public assistance:
    a. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
    b. General Assistance (GA)
    c. Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)
    d. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
    e. Other income based public assistance
2. Low-income individuals
    a. Receives or in the past 6 months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance To Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, or state or local income-based public assistance program
    b. Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current U.S. DOL 70 Percent Lower Living Standard Income Level Guidelines and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines or
    c. Is a homeless individual, or
    d. Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirements above, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.
3. Individuals who are basic skills deficient. The term "basic skills deficient" is defined to mean a youth or adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society.
    a. Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or
    b. Is enrolled in Title II adult education (including enrolled for English Language Acquisition); or
    c. Has poor English-language skills and would be appropriate for ESL, even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA participation; or
    d. The career planner makes observations of deficient functioning, and, as justification, records those observations in the data management system; or
    e. Scores below 9.0 grade level (8.9 or below) on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE); Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) or other allowable assessments as per National Reporting System (NRS) developed by the U. S. Department of Labor's Division of Adult Education and Literacy; or

f. Individual does not earn the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) (e.g. one or more of the scores are below a Level 3 on the Workplace Documents, Applied Math, or Graphic Literacy assessments

4. Additional Priority Groups
   Individuals (non-covered persons) who do not meet the above priorities may be enrolled on a case-by-case basis with approval from the ***Executive Committee.*** The WIOA eligible adult must meet one or more of the following categories of an individual with a barrier to employment:
   a. Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities
   b. Older individuals (age 55 or older)
   c. Ex-Offenders
   d. Eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers
   e. Single parents (including single pregnant women)
   f. Individuals who are:
      - English language learners
      - Have low levels of literacy (an individual is unable to compute or solve programs, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, or in the individual's family, or in society)
   g. Underemployed individuals. Underemployed individuals may include:
      - Not employed in a career of choice, or a low skilled position;
      - Individuals employed less than full-time who are seeking full-time employment;
      - Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training;
      - Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of low-income individual in WIOA sec. 3(36); and
      - Individuals who are employed, but whose current job's earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous job's earnings from their previous employment. Must be at 80% or below previous earnings.

Individuals who are underemployed and meet the definition of a low-income individual may receive career and training services under the Adult program on a priority basis. Individuals who meet the definition of an individual with a barrier to employment (see WIOA sec. 3(24)) who are underemployed may also be served in the Adult program. Individuals who were determined eligible for the Dislocated Worker program who are determined by policy to be underemployed, may still be considered eligible for career and training services under this program.

The above list is used only for applying priority for the individual to receive individualized career services and training services. Certain individualized career services or training services may require pre-and post-test scores to measure skills gain for the specific activity; in this case the determination is made by administering an acceptable skills assessment or by using scores from any partner's previous assessment.

All Parties certify that they will adhere to all statutes, regulations, policies, and plans regarding priority of service, including, but not limited to, priority of service for veterans and their eligible spouses, and priority of service for the WIOA Title I Adult program, as required by 38 U.S.C. §4215 and its implementing regulations and guidance, and WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and its implementing regulations and guidance.

A WIOA Adult Fourth Priority of Service Enrollment Request Form must be submitted for those participants that fall under the Adult Fourth Priority of Service. Approvals will be granted by the Executive Committee on a case-by-case basis. The Enrollment Authorization Request form must be submitted by the Monday prior to the next scheduled Executive Committee meeting to be considered.

The NEIWDB will ensure that priority of service is granted to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and those with basic skills deficiencies. This oversight involves monitoring regular reports of participants served by the Title I Director and overseeing the Title I Service Provider.

The Title I service provider(s) will compile a list of potential Title I clients and collect information on their income status and involvement in other assistance programs (e.g., SNAP, TANF, SSI) through an application process. Prospective clients will undergo one-on-one meetings to assess eligibility. Basic skills deficiency status will be determined by administering the CASAS assessment, conducted either by Title I staff or in collaboration with Title II providers if the individual expresses interest in Adult Education & Literacy services. Cost-sharing agreements will be established between Title I and II when Title II staff/resources are utilized to assess individuals who are not co-enrolled. The cost-sharing agreement between the local Dubuque Title I and Title II partners is ongoing.

The Title I service provider(s) will create an inclusive system for all eligible clients as the program expands. For instance, if enrollment necessitates a waiting list, priority will be assigned based on the greatest need. A follow-up system will be implemented to track and retain all clients and referrals.

All Parties certify that they will adhere to all statutes, regulations, policies, and plans regarding priority of service, including, but not limited to, priority of service for veterans and their eligible spouses, and priority of service for the WIOA title I Adult program, as required by 38 U.S.C. §4215 and its implementing regulations and guidance, and WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and its implementing regulations and guidance. Partners will target recruitment of special populations that receive a focus for services under WIOA, such as individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, basic skills deficient youth, andEnglish language learners. Currently, IVRS has a waiting list. Our priority of services is based on severity of disability.

In situations where the demand for services from the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) exceeds its immediate capacity, the organization may implement a waiting list. This waiting list serves as a structured system to manage and prioritize individuals seeking assistance. The priority of service on the waiting list is determined by the severity of the individual's disability.

The severity-based prioritization ensures that individuals with more significant disabilities receive priority access to IVRS services. This approach aligns with the organization's commitment to addressing the needs of those with the greatest challenges and barriers to employment. By prioritizing based on the severity of disability, IVRS aims to allocate its resources efficiently and effectively, directing support and services to those who require them most urgently.

It's important to note that the waiting list and its priority system are designed to be fair and

responsive, considering the unique circumstances and challenges faced by each individual. This approach reflects IVRS's dedication to providing equitable access to vocational rehabilitation services while acknowledging the varying degrees of disability among its clients.

## VETERANS PRIORITY OF SERVICE

Local Plan Question:

21. A description of how the LWDB will provide Veterans priority of service.

Iowa policy 8.3.3.3 Veterans Priority of Service defines the requirements surrounding serving Veterans and eligible spouses.

Priority of service means that veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job training program.

Depending on the type of service or resource being provided, priority of service may mean:

- The covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the noncovered person.
- If the service or resource is limited, the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA Title I programs. A veteran must meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training program.

Priority of Service is the right of an eligible "Covered Person" to be given priority of service over an eligible non-covered person for the receipt of employment, training and placement services, notwithstanding other provisions of the law.

To determine eligibility for veterans and spouses:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funding. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low- income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive priority for services with WIOA Adult formula funds for individualized career services and training services. (NOTE: Military earnings are not to be included when calculating income for veterans or transitioning service members for this priority.)
- Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Fourth, priority populations established by the Governor and/or Local WDB.

In Northeast Iowa Veterans and eligible spouses are identified, or able to self-identify, at the point of entry and informed of:

- Their entitlement to priority of service
- The full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service
- Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and services

Point of entry includes reception through an AJC, the application process for a specific program, or through any other method by which covered persons may express an interest in receiving services, either in person or virtually.

### Triage and Referral Process for Eligible Veterans

All Iowa***WORKS*** team members are trained on veteran services and resources to include understanding of Priority of Service. State policies across Department of Labor funded programs contain requirements for Veterans Priority of Service, which ensures veterans and their eligible spouses receive access to services before or instead of a non-covered person. Iowa's Standard Operating Procedure is designed to identify veterans and eligible spouses at their first point of contact.

During Welcoming, a customer who self-discloses their veteran status during their Iowa***WORKS*** system registration, will be prompted to answer additional veteran-related questions regarding their service and potential barriers to employment. Non-JVSG Career Planners will refer any veteran who discloses one or more of the following barriers, and who expresses interest in receiving additional services from the Veteran Career Planner:

a. Receiving service-connected disability benefits or have a disability claim pending with the VA;

b. Discharged or released from the military because of a service-connected disability;

c. Homeless, living in a shelter, at risk of losing your current living arrangements, is fleeing or attempting to flee a domestic violence situation or other dangerous or life-threatening condition (see VPL 03-14, Change 2);

d. A Vietnam era veteran who served between Feb. 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, in the Republic of Vietnam or between Aug. 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975, in all other cases;

e. Released from active duty in the last three years and have been unemployed for 27 or more weeks;

f. Incarcerated or have been released from incarceration;

g. Without a high school diploma or equivalent certificate such as a GED/HSED;

h. Aged 18-24;

i. A member of the Armed Forces who is wounded, ill or injured and receiving treatment in a military treatment facility or warrior transition or the spouse or other family caregiver of such an Armed Forces member;

j. Income in the last six months – excluding any military wages or disability benefits – less than 70 percent of lower living standard income levels.

All eligible veterans who self-attest to one or more of the significant barriers to employment (SBE) criteria will complete a Wagner-Peyser (WP) application before his/her appointment with a Veteran Career Planner. Non-JVSG Career Planners will enroll the veteran into Wagner-Peyser, set the JVSG Eligibility date, and refer the veteran to the Veteran Career Planner using service code 151 – Referred to DVOP. If available, the Veteran Career Planner will meet with the veteran on the same day that the veteran visits the office; however, if the Veteran Career Planner is not available, the veteran will be served by Iowa***WORKS*** team members and an appointment will be scheduled with the Veteran Career Planner as soon as possible. Any services provided by non-JVSG Career Planners will be documented in the Iowa***WORKS*** system. On rare occasions, Veteran Career Planners may also meet with an SBE veteran before the (WP) application is completed and can then assist the veteran with completing the application.

When customers register in Iowa***WORKS*** from outside the center and attest to having a SBE, a system-generated email is sent to the office email address and then passed along to the Veteran Career Planner so that they can reach out to the customer and offer services.

Individuals leaving the military, encompassing those who receive Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Military members (UCX), typically meet the criteria for dislocated workers. WIOA Title I's Dislocated Worker funds can assist separating service members in transitioning into or rejoining the civilian workforce. Usually, a notice of separation, which may be a DD Form-214 from the Department of Defense or other relevant documentation (such as separation orders) indicating a separation or impending separation from the Armed Forces, serves as the necessary notice of termination or layoff to fulfill the dislocated worker definition requirements.

In most cases, an individual must be eligible for or have utilized unemployment compensation (including UCX) to receive dislocated worker services. For separating service members or those on terminal leave from the military, initiating career services while still on Active Duty with imminent separation dates is advisable. Providing career services to separating service members with anything other than a dishonorable discharge is appropriate.

Separating service members are obligated to participate in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to ensure readiness for civilian employment. Throughout this program, service members and their spouses are encouraged to contact Iowa***WORKS*** in their desired service area. WIOA extends the dislocated worker definition to include military spouses who lose employment due to relocation for a permanent change in the service member's duty station.

Military spouses may also qualify if they are dependent spouses of active-duty Armed Forces members experiencing a significant family income reduction due to deployment, active-duty orders, permanent

change of station, or the service-connected death or disability of the service member. Additionally, military spouses can qualify if they are unemployed or underemployed and face challenges in obtaining or upgrading employment.

Northeast Iowa covers an area with a wide arrange of veteran services. The WIOA team members work together to provide services for veterans in the AJC Centers leading to Title I services as needed.

Priority of Service is delivered by:

- Cross Training with partners has occurred with all WIOA team members for understanding of the Priority of Service policies. This training ensures veterans and eligible spouses receive service before or instead of non-covered persons.
- The Iowa***WORKS*** SOP is designed to identify veterans and eligible spouses at their first point of contact. As part of Iowa's Standard Operating Procedures, each new customer who visits an American Job Center (AJC) is asked by non-JVSG (Jobs for Veterans State Grant) Career Planners, "Have you, or your spouse, ever served in the U.S. Military?" If the customer states that they are a veteran, they are thanked for their service. If the customer is a spouse, the customer is thanked for their support.
- During an initial "triage" conversation to determine the reason for their visit, the veteran is provided a folder with veteran-related resource information, including information regarding Priority of Service. If it is determined that the veteran or eligible spouse needs assistance beyond self-service, priority of service is applied to ensure the veteran or eligible spouse is given precedence in services compared to other job seekers.
- All AJCs have Priority of Service posters in several locations throughout the center.
- Iowa has a 24-hour hold on all job orders so that veterans receive priority over non-veterans. Additionally, when AJCs hosts large job fairs, veterans, service members, and spouses are invited to attend earlier than the general public.
- Each AJC has at least one designated computer for veteran customers in the Exploratory (resource) area. This area has a plethora of information displayed regarding veteran programs, Priority of Service, and Home Base Iowa.
- To monitor and ensure Veterans are aware of all services, AJC operations managers run a monthly report that displays all registered individuals which allows them to identify Veterans that may have registered outside of the center. Non-JVSG Career Planners then contact those veterans, share information regarding programs and services, and invite them into the Center.
- Core partner programs refer customers to JVSG and DVOP services, and DVOP's often refer customers to core partner programs, ensuring Veterans receive the services they need.
- During times of high center traffic when customers are waiting to be served, veterans will be served before non-veterans.

## ASSURANCES

### Local Plan Question:

22. Assurances

a. By submitting this local plan, the Local Workforce Development Board assures it has established all local policies and procedures required by State WIOA policy and federal legislation and that all local policies are made available on the local area website.

By submitting this local plan, the Northeast Iowa Workforce Development Board assures it has established all local policies and procedures required by State WIOA policy and federal legislation and that all local policies are made available on the local area website.

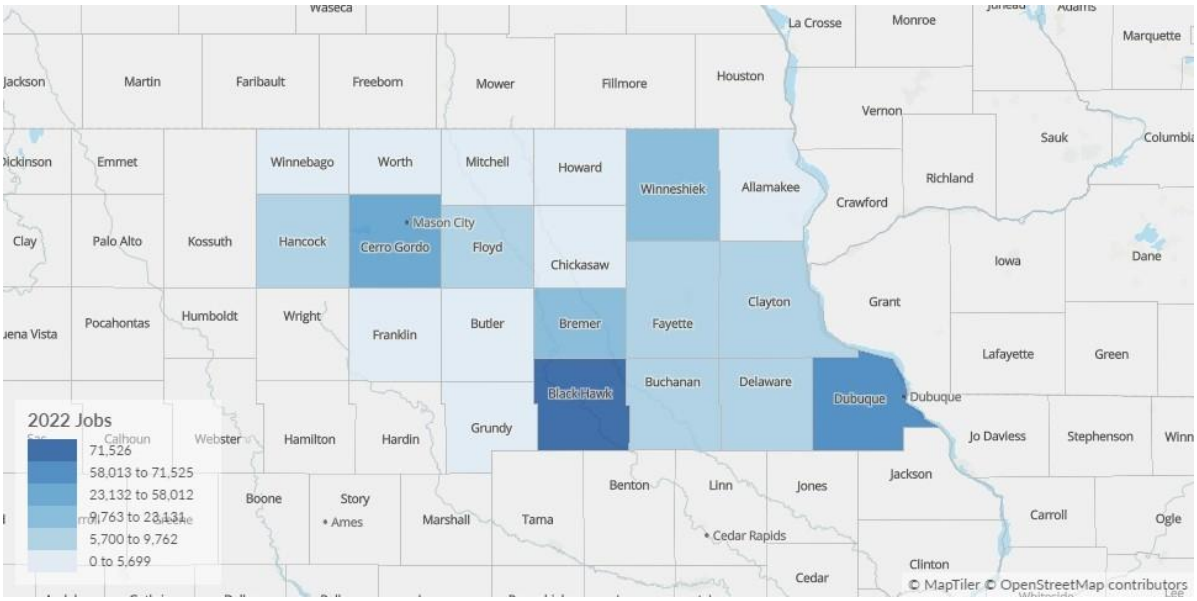
## PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FEEDBACK

*Comments submitted during the public comment period will be submitted with the plan, along with any actions taken to resolve or respond to the comments.*

***Northeast Iowa Public Comment Period (Original Plan): February 1, 2024- March 1, 2024***
*No comments were received during the Public Comment Period.*

***Northeast Iowa Public Comment Period (Plan Modification): April 2, 2026-April 29, 2026***
*No comments were received during the Public Comment Period.*

## APPENDIX A – INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT (LIGHTCAST DATA AND CHARTS)

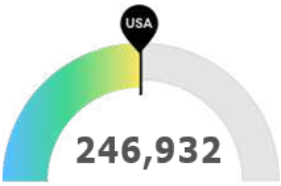



*OpenStreetMap, licensed under the Open Data Commons Database License (ODbL) by the OpenStreetMap Foundation (OSMF). Provided by Lightcast.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Hancock | 6,097 |
| Winnebago | 4,134 |
| Worth | 2,194 |
| Cerro Gordo | 23,132 |
| Mitchell | 3,962 |
| Floyd | 5,700 |
| Franklin | 3,846 |
| Butler | 3,848 |
| Grundy | 4,118 |
| Howard | 4,242 |
| Chickasaw | 5,006 |
| Bremer | 9,763 |
| Black Hawk | 71,526 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Winneshiek | 10,111 |
| Fayette | 6,908 |
| Buchanan | 6,656 |
| Allamakee | 4,850 |
| Clayton | 6,256 |
| Delaware | 6,571 |
| Dubuque | 58,013 |

## Light Hiring Competition Over an Average Supply of Regional Talent

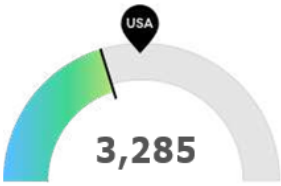



**Supply (Jobs)**

Your area is about average for this kind of talent. The national average for an area this size is 246,932* employees, while there are 246,932 here.

**Earnings Per Job**

Earnings per job are below the national average. The national average salary for your industries in an area this size is $85,034, while in your area it is $65,732. Earnings per jobs is the total industry earnings divided by the number of jobs in the industry.




**Demand (Job Postings)**

Competition from online job postings is low in your area. The national average for an area this size is 4,401* job postings/mo. while there are 3,285 here.

*National average values are derived by taking the national value for your industries and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

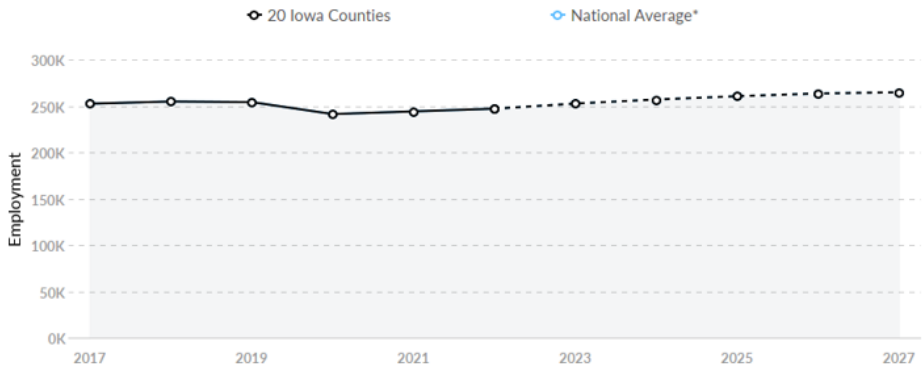
| | |
|---|---|
| 2024 | 256,869 |
| 2025 | 260,423 |
| 2026 | 263,362 |
| 2027 | 264,627 |

## Supply (Jobs)

### Supply Is About Equal to the National Average

The regional vs. national average employment helps you understand if the supply of your industries is a strength or weakness for your area, and how it is changing relative to the nation. An average area of this size would have 246,932* employees, while there are 246,932 here. The gap between expected and actual employment is expected to remain roughly the same over thenext 5 years.

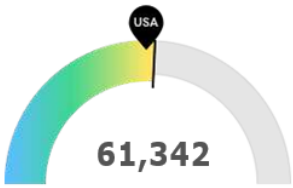
-2% Past Growth (2017 - 2022)  7% Projected Growth (2022 - 2027)




*National average values are derived by taking the national value for your industries and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

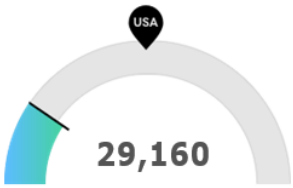
*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

### Retirement Risk Is About Average, While Overall Diversity Is Low



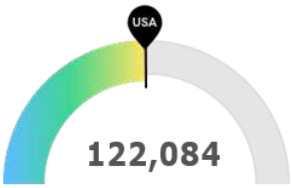

**Retiring Soon**

Retirement risk is about average in your area. The national average for an area this size is 58,441* employees 55 or older, while there are 61,342 here.




**Racial Diversity**

Racial diversity is low in your area. The national average for an area this size is 95,680* racially diverse employees, while there are 29,160 here.




**Gender Diversity**

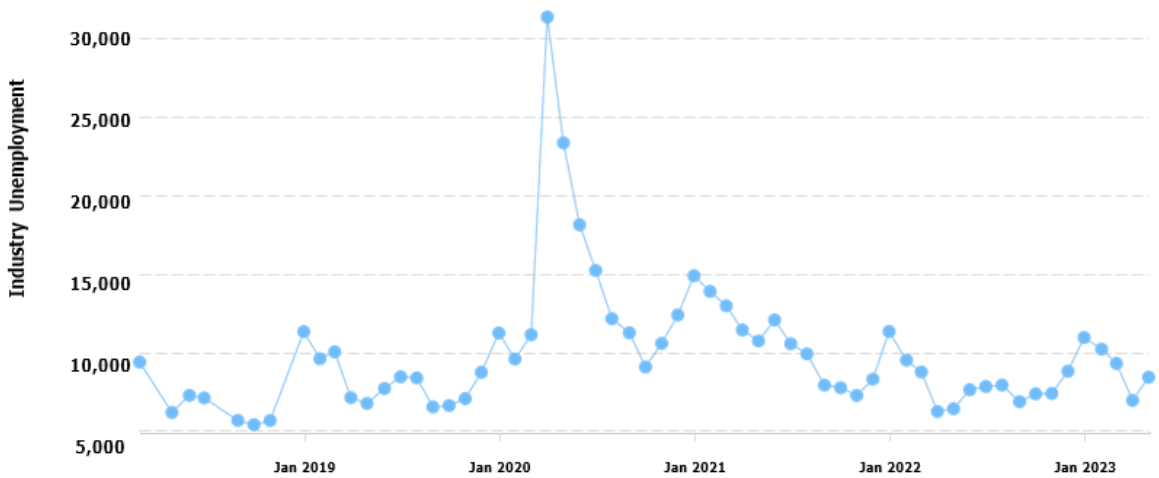
Gender diversity is about average in your area. The national average for an area this size is 122,666* female employees, while there are 122,084 here.

*National average values are derived by taking the national value for your industries and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

## Unemployment Rate Trends

Unemployment shown at the 2-digit sectors level.




*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

## Most Jobs are Found in the Office and Administrative Support Occupations Industry Sector

| Occupation | % of Industry in Occupation (2022) |
|---|---|
| Office and Administrative Support Occupations | 11.3% |
| Production Occupations | 10.7% |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | 9.9% |
| Sales and Related Occupations | 9.1% |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations | 7.6% |
| Management Occupations | 6.6% |
| Other | 44.7% |

*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

## Demand

**2571 Employers Competing**

All employers in the region who posted for this job over the last 12 months.

**39,424 Unique Job Postings**

The number of unique postings for this job over the last 12 months.

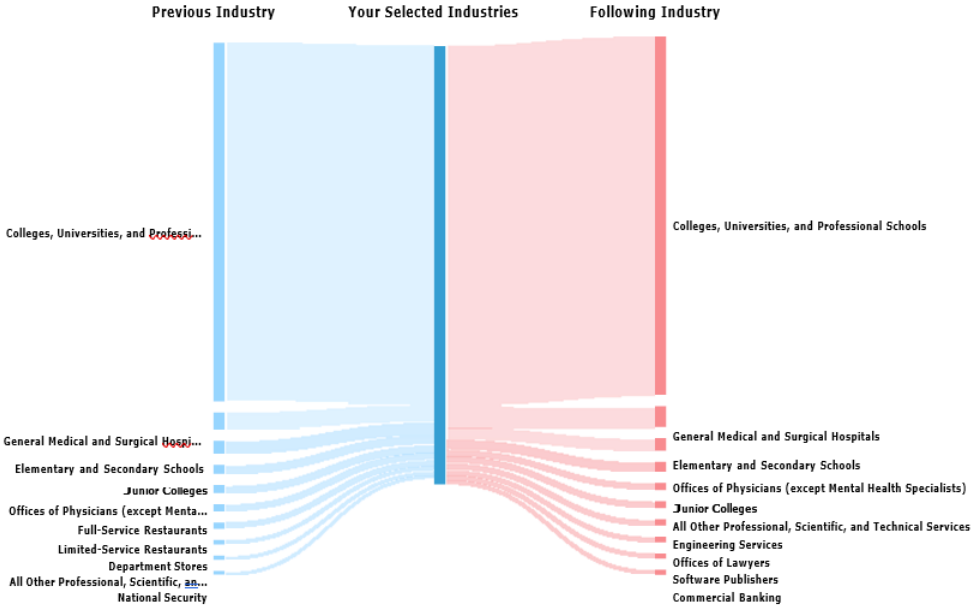
**28 Day Median Duration**

Posting duration is the same as what's typical in the region.

| Top Companies | Unique Postings |
|---|---|
| Trinity Health | 1,385 |
| MercyOne | 1,213 |
| Hy-Vee | 885 |
| Kwik Trip | 823 |
| John Deere | 819 |

| Top Job Titles | Unique Postings |
|---|---|
| CDL-A Truck Drivers | 407 |
| Certified Nursing Assistants | 242 |
| Licensed Practical Nurses | 235 |
| Registered Nurses | 219 |
| Delivery Drivers | 218 |

## Industry Gain and Drain




*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

| Previous Industries | Transitions |
|---|---|
| Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools | 1,513,840 |
| General Medical and Surgical Hospitals | 72,424 |
| Elementary and Secondary Schools | 54,480 |
| Junior Colleges | 37,442 |
| Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists) | 34,206 |
| Full-Service Restaurants | 30,291 |
| Limited-Service Restaurants | 27,160 |
| Department Stores | 18,998 |
| All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 17,356 |
| National Security | 15,958 |
| Offices of Lawyers | 15,287 |
| Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (except Convenience Retailers) | 15,083 |
| Educational Support Services | 13,858 |
| Other General Government Support | 12,856 |
| Commercial Banking | 12,751 |
| Child and Youth Services | 12,731 |
| Religious Organizations | 12,220 |
| Civic and Social Organizations | 11,492 |
| Custom Computer Programming Services | 10,627 |

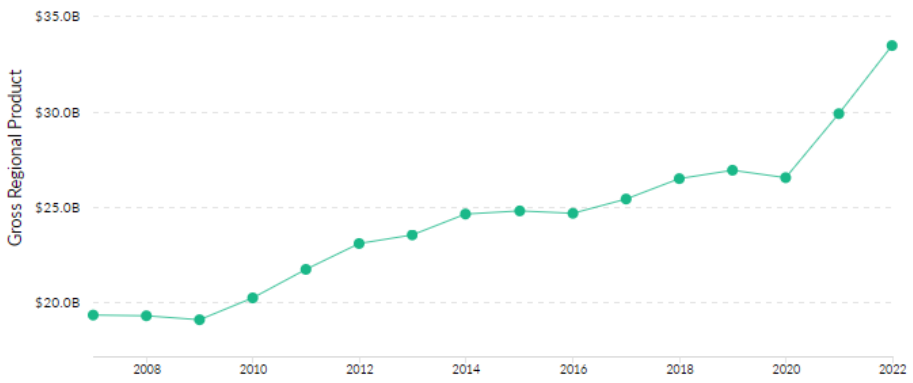
| Following Industries | Transitions |
|---|---|
| Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools | 1,513,840 |
| General Medical and Surgical Hospitals | 88,547 |
| Elementary and Secondary Schools | 52,506 |
| Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists) | 42,539 |
| Junior Colleges | 29,810 |
| All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 29,469 |
| Engineering Services | 27,005 |
| Offices of Lawyers | 23,925 |
| Software Publishers | 22,187 |
| Commercial Banking | 20,312 |
| Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services | 20,276 |
| Offices of Certified Public Accountants | 19,941 |
| Custom Computer Programming Services | 19,292 |
| Full-Service Restaurants | 18,285 |
| Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology) | 18,023 |
| Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing | 17,858 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Computer Systems Design Services | 10,579 |
| Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services | 10,253 |
| Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology) | 10,128 |
| Child Care Services | 9,688 |
| Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers | 9,518 |
| Software Publishers | 9,376 |
| Engineering Services | 9,159 |
| Family Clothing Stores | 8,827 |
| Other Individual and Family Services | 8,740 |
| Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels | 8,157 |
| Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses | 7,662 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Other General Government Support | 16,837 |
| Computer Systems Design Services | 14,863 |
| Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses | 14,766 |
| Educational Support Services | 14,697 |
| Department Stores | 14,350 |
| Limited-Service Restaurants | 13,927 |
| Insurance Agencies and Brokerages | 11,689 |
| Civic and Social Organizations | 11,635 |
| National Security | 11,142 |
| Other Computer Related Services | 11,120 |
| Religious Organizations | 10,877 |
| Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology) | 10,750 |
| Other Individual and Family Services | 10,600 |
| Semiconductor and Related Device Manufacturing | 10,195 |

Gross Regional Product (GRP)

| $20.0B | $11.6B | $1.8B | $33.5B |
|---|---|---|---|
| Earnings (2022) | Property Income (2022) | Taxes (2022) | Total GRP (2022) |




*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

Industry Requirements

| Purchases from | In-region Purchases | Imported Purchases | Total Purchases |
|---|---|---|---|
| Animal Production | $745,335,715 | $2,058,166,188 | $2,803,501,903 |
| Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices | $343,798,468 | $834,886,066 | $1,178,684,534 |
| Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government) | $742,279,021 | $23,323,809 | $765,602,831 |
| Insurance Agencies and Brokerages | $728,000,526 | $10,001,943 | $738,002,469 |
| Crop Production | $219,548,517 | $476,666,437 | $696,214,954 |

| NAICS | Description | 2022 Jobs | 2025 Jobs | 2022 - 2025 Change | 2022 - 2025 % Change | Avg. Earnings Per Job |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 333120 | Construction Machinery Manufacturing | 6,246 | 7,925 | 1,679 | 27% | $122,416 |
| 493110 | General Warehousing and Storage | 4,405 | 5,076 | 671 | 15% | $57,795 |

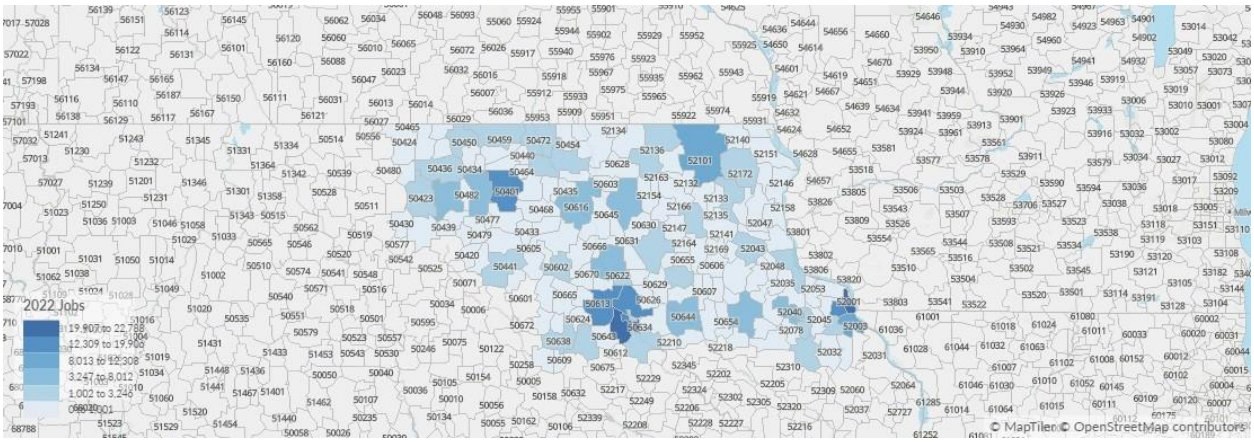
| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 311611 | Animal (except Poultry) Slaughtering | 5,335 | 5,956 | 621 | 12% | $65,690 |
| 326199 | All Other Plastics Product Manufacturing | 1,240 | 1,600 | 360 | 29% | $66,810 |
| 611310 | Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools | 3,111 | 3,465 | 354 | 11% | $56,071 |
| 903611 | Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government) | 14,012 | 14,349 | 337 | 2% | $61,320 |
| 624120 | Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities | 2,082 | 2,401 | 319 | 15% | $25,085 |
| 455211 | Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters | 3,397 | 3,712 | 315 | 9% | $35,478 |
| 561320 | Temporary Help Services | 2,967 | 3,281 | 314 | 11% | $52,259 |
| 524292 | Pharmacy Benefit Management and Other Third Party Administration of Insurance and Pension Funds | 1,493 | 1,795 | 302 | 20% | $62,812 |
| 325414 | Biological Product (except Diagnostic) Manufacturing | 927 | 1,224 | 297 | 32% | $110,107 |
| 311111 | Dog and Cat Food Manufacturing | 925 | 1,220 | 295 | 32% | $85,931 |
| 333415 | Air-Conditioning and Warm Air Heating Equipment and Commercial and Industrial Refrigeration Equipment Manufacturing | 801 | 1,093 | 292 | 36% | $88,717 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 903622 | Hospitals (Local Government) | 4,498 | 4,758 | 260 | 6% | $80,456 |
| 623110 | Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities) | 6,379 | 6,604 | 225 | 4% | $45,828 |
| 722515 | Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars | 1,047 | 1,264 | 217 | 21% | $15,688 |
| 311612 | Meat Processed from Carcasses | 1,181 | 1,389 | 209 | 18% | $68,010 |
| 333922 | Conveyor and Conveying Equipment Manufacturing | 653 | 856 | 203 | 31% | $101,031 |
| 457110 | Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores | 4,521 | 4,714 | 193 | 4% | $28,389 |
| 621111 | Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists) | 3,846 | 4,035 | 188 | 5% | $127,122 |
| 311942 | Spice and Extract Manufacturing | 417 | 588 | 171 | 41% | $61,566 |
| 624310 | Vocational Rehabilitation Services | 923 | 1,090 | 167 | 18% | $40,583 |
| 321911 | Wood Window and Door Manufacturing | 1,753 | 1,919 | 166 | 9% | $66,760 |
| 333413 | Industrial and Commercial Fan and Blower and Air Purification Equipment Manufacturing | 477 | 637 | 161 | 34% | $80,255 |
| 551114 | Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices | 2,647 | 2,803 | 156 | 6% | $108,202 |
| 333511 | Industrial Mold Manufacturing | 409 | 547 | 138 | 34% | $73,235 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 332311 | Prefabricated Metal Building and Component Manufacturing | 439 | 575 | 136 | 31% | $70,649 |
| 236220 | Commercial and Institutional Building Construction | 1,690 | 1,825 | 135 | 8% | $88,073 |
| 621340 | Offices of Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists, and Audiologists | 759 | 893 | 134 | 18% | $56,661 |
| 623220 | Residential Mental Health and Substance Abuse Facilities | 438 | 569 | 131 | 30% | $46,670 |
| 721110 | Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels | 2,061 | 2,183 | 122 | 6% | $27,080 |
| 335910 | Battery Manufacturing | 621 | 739 | 118 | 19% | $88,560 |
| 332710 | Machine Shops | 1,506 | 1,620 | 115 | 8% | $72,092 |
| 112000 | Animal Production | 2,607 | 2,722 | 115 | 4% | $55,688 |
| 903999 | Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals | 9,182 | 9,293 | 111 | 1% | $65,216 |
| 311999 | All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing | 794 | 904 | 110 | 14% | $76,491 |
| 323113 | Commercial Screen Printing | 406 | 516 | 110 | 27% | $52,465 |
| 325193 | Ethyl Alcohol Manufacturing | 599 | 705 | 106 | 18% | $109,352 |
| 541511 | Custom Computer Programming Services | 613 | 715 | 102 | 17% | $101,959 |
| 492110 | Couriers and Express Delivery Services | 910 | 1,012 | 102 | 11% | $47,852 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 623311 | Continuing Care Retirement Communities | 1,864 | 1,963 | 99 | 5% | $43,762 |
| 713940 | Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers | 706 | 805 | 99 | 14% | $16,510 |
| 336211 | Motor Vehicle Body Manufacturing | 920 | 1,016 | 95 | 10% | $72,439 |
| 325311 | Nitrogenous Fertilizer Manufacturing | 266 | 359 | 93 | 35% | $118,045 |
| 311119 | Other Animal Food Manufacturing | 366 | 457 | 92 | 25% | $82,113 |
| 522210 | Credit Card Issuing | 238 | 327 | 89 | 37% | $108,232 |
| 812990 | All Other Personal Services | 855 | 943 | 89 | 10% | $85,441 |
| 513110 | Newspaper Publishers | 528 | 615 | 87 | 16% | $56,280 |
| 336212 | Truck Trailer Manufacturing | 482 | 568 | 86 | 18% | $71,678 |
| 811310 | Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment (except Automotive and Electronic) Repair and Maintenance | 653 | 737 | 84 | 13% | $72,020 |
| 333924 | Industrial Truck, Tractor, Trailer, and Stacker Machinery Manufacturing | 320 | 399 | 80 | 25% | $73,740 |
| 524126 | Direct Property and Casualty Insurance Carriers | 266 | 346 | 79 | 30% | $89,796 |
| 236118 | Residential Remodelers | 498 | 577 | 78 | 16% | $58,726 |
| 111000 | Crop Production | 795 | 872 | 77 | 10% | $55,775 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 332322 | Sheet Metal Work Manufacturing | 515 | 592 | 77 | 15% | $69,288 |
| 331524 | Aluminum Foundries (except Die-Casting) | 263 | 339 | 76 | 29% | $64,994 |
| 337212 | Custom Architectural Woodwork and Millwork Manufacturing | 212 | 288 | 76 | 36% | $64,099 |
| 812910 | Pet Care (except Veterinary) Services | 243 | 319 | 76 | 31% | $23,413 |
| 541330 | Engineering Services | 666 | 741 | 76 | 11% | $100,023 |
| 311514 | Dry, Condensed, and Evaporated Dairy Product Manufacturing | 209 | 280 | 71 | 34% | $84,216 |
| 325412 | Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing | 164 | 232 | 67 | 41% | $84,381 |

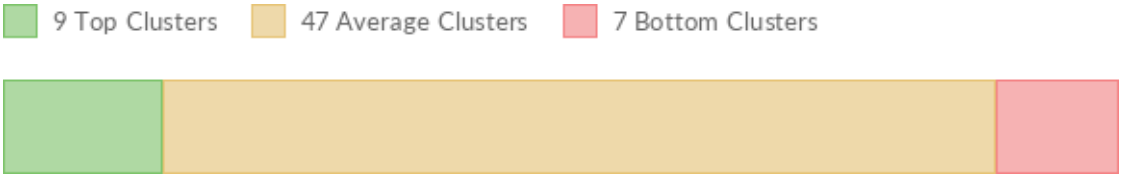


| ZIP | ZIP Name | 2022 Jobs | 2025 Jobs | 2022 - 2025 Change | 2022 - 2025 % Change | Avg. Earnings Per Job | COL Index | COL Adjusted Total Current Earnings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 52001 | Dubuque, IA | 22,788 | 23,749 | 961 | 4% | $71,357 | 95.6 | $74,641 |
| 50701 | Waterloo, IA | 19,907 | 21,702 | 1,795 | 9% | $82,635 | 92.4 | $89,432 |
| 50613 | Cedar Falls, IA | 17,474 | 17,603 | 129 | 1% | $60,581 | 92.4 | $65,564 |
| 50401 | Mason City, IA | 16,471 | 17,223 | 752 | 5% | $64,256 | 98.4 | $65,301 |
| 50703 | Waterloo, IA | 15,267 | 16,101 | 834 | 5% | $74,000 | 92.4 | $80,087 |
| 52002 | Dubuque, IA | 13,560 | 14,112 | 552 | 4% | $58,786 | 95.6 | $61,492 |
| 50702 | Waterloo, IA | 12,309 | 12,298 | -11 | 0% | $60,154 | 92.4 | $65,102 |
| 52003 | Dubuque, IA | 8,023 | 8,436 | 413 | 5% | $67,399 | 95.6 | $70,501 |
| 52101 | Decorah, IA | 8,013 | 8,554 | 541 | 7% | $60,839 | 98.6 | $61,703 |
| 50428 | Clear Lake, IA | 5,540 | 5,565 | 25 | 0% | $60,394 | 98.4 | $61,376 |
| 50677 | Waverly, IA | 5,512 | 5,968 | 456 | 8% | $61,621 | 97.8 | $63,008 |
| 52040 | Dyersville, IA | 5,314 | 5,720 | 406 | 8% | $78,449 | 95.6 | $82,060 |
| 52057 | Manchester, IA | 4,601 | 4,973 | 372 | 8% | $63,682 | 98.3 | $64,783 |
| 50616 | Charles City, IA | 4,113 | 4,626 | 513 | 12% | $69,747 | 97.0 | $71,904 |
| 50644 | Independence, IA | 3,534 | 3,802 | 268 | 8% | $56,267 | 97.0 | $58,007 |
| 50438 | Garner, IA | 3,501 | 3,678 | 177 | 5% | $67,939 | 100.4 | $67,668 |
| 50659 | New Hampton, IA | 3,247 | 3,728 | 481 | 15% | $65,535 | 102.3 | $64,062 |
| 52136 | Cresco, IA | 2,616 | 2,781 | 165 | 6% | $55,806 | 98.1 | $56,887 |
| 52172 | Waukon, IA | 2,550 | 2,754 | 204 | 8% | $52,759 | 96.1 | $54,900 |
| 52068 | Peosta, IA | 2,437 | 2,680 | 243 | 10% | $68,786 | 95.6 | $71,952 |
| | | 247,049 | 260,717 | 13,668 | 6% | $65,715 | | $68,644 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 50662 | Oelwein, IA | 2,415 | 2,666 | 251 | 10% | $51,914 | 94.6 | $54,877 |
| 50441 | Hampton, IA | 2,406 | 2,605 | 199 | 8% | $60,535 | 99.3 | $60,962 |
| 50614 | Cedar Falls, IA | 2,394 | 2,357 | -37 | -2% | $78,401 | 92.4 | $84,849 |
| 52033 | Cascade, IA | 2,388 | 2,471 | 83 | 3% | $66,898 | 95.6 | $69,977 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50461 | Osage, IA | 1,914 | 2,067 | 153 | 8% | $60,166 | 102.0 | $58,986 |
| 50436 | Forest City, IA | 1,878 | 1,973 | 95 | 5% | $54,528 | 95.0 | $57,398 |
| 50674 | Sumner, IA | 1,594 | 1,807 | 213 | 13% | $65,034 | 97.8 | $66,497 |
| 50707 | Evansdale, IA | 1,522 | 1,582 | 60 | 4% | $65,415 | 92.4 | $70,796 |
| 52175 | West Union, IA | 1,415 | 1,482 | 67 | 5% | $56,235 | 94.6 | $59,445 |
| 50472 | Saint Ansgar, IA | 1,388 | 1,442 | 54 | 4% | $73,387 | 102.0 | $71,948 |
| 50459 | Northwood, IA | 1,375 | 1,432 | 57 | 4% | $53,737 | 98.6 | $54,500 |
| 50423 | Britt, IA | 1,357 | 1,372 | 15 | 1% | $68,093 | 100.4 | $67,821 |
| 52162 | Postville, IA | 1,324 | 1,387 | 63 | 5% | $58,337 | 96.1 | $60,704 |
| 52046 | Farley, IA | 1,248 | 1,323 | 75 | 6% | $71,288 | 95.6 | $74,569 |
| 52052 | Guttenberg, IA | 1,233 | 1,254 | 21 | 2% | $60,976 | 97.6 | $62,476 |
| 50450 | Lake Mills, IA | 1,221 | 1,281 | 60 | 5% | $57,000 | 95.0 | $60,000 |
| 50669 | Reinbeck, IA | 1,197 | 1,296 | 99 | 8% | $77,488 | 101.3 | $76,494 |
| 50638 | Grundy Center, IA | 1,147 | 1,201 | 54 | 5% | $60,411 | 101.3 | $59,635 |
| 52043 | Elkader, IA | 1,144 | 1,204 | 60 | 5% | $71,900 | 97.6 | $73,668 |
| 50651 | La Porte City, IA | 1,068 | 1,091 | 23 | 2% | $67,379 | 92.4 | $72,921 |
| 50602 | Allison, IA | 1,027 | 1,190 | 163 | 16% | $60,026 | 97.8 | $61,377 |
| 50622 | Denver, IA | 1,002 | 1,086 | 84 | 8% | $57,555 | 97.8 | $58,849 |
| 52159 | Monona, IA | 911 | 971 | 60 | 7% | $53,136 | 97.6 | $54,443 |
| 52142 | Fayette, IA | 890 | 1,000 | 110 | 12% | $55,488 | 94.6 | $58,656 |
| 50648 | Jesup, IA | 866 | 921 | 55 | 6% | $61,111 | 97.0 | $63,001 |
| 50629 | Fairbank, IA | 812 | 921 | 109 | 13% | $59,063 | 97.0 | $60,890 |
| 52132 | Calmar, IA | 733 | 735 | 2 | 0% | $56,449 | 98.6 | $57,251 |
| 50643 | Hudson, IA | 699 | 703 | 4 | 1% | $67,957 | 92.4 | $73,547 |
| 50458 | Nora Springs, IA | 697 | 801 | 104 | 15% | $60,311 | 97.0 | $62,176 |
| | | 247,049 | 260,717 | 13,668 | 6% | $65,715 | | $68,644 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 52041 | Earlville, IA | 676 | 836 | 160 | 24% | $63,892 | 98.3 | $64,997 |
| 50475 | Sheffield, IA | 668 | 759 | 91 | 14% | $65,655 | 99.3 | $66,118 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50621 | Conrad, IA | 618 | 672 | 54 | 9% | $65,717 | 101.3 | $64,874 |
| 52161 | Ossian, IA | 611 | 624 | 13 | 2% | $60,035 | 98.6 | $60,888 |
| 50658 | Nashua, IA | 609 | 651 | 42 | 7% | $60,313 | 102.3 | $58,957 |
| 52049 | Garnavillo, IA | 588 | 621 | 33 | 6% | $69,577 | 97.6 | $71,288 |
| 52141 | Elgin, IA | 578 | 606 | 28 | 5% | $57,436 | 94.6 | $60,714 |
| 50670 | Shell Rock, IA | 575 | 691 | 116 | 20% | $67,707 | 97.8 | $69,230 |
| 52042 | Edgewood, IA | 569 | 576 | 7 | 1% | $53,990 | 97.6 | $55,318 |
| 52039 | Durango, IA | 569 | 628 | 59 | 10% | $67,692 | 95.6 | $70,808 |
| 50447 | Kanawha, IA | 563 | 581 | 18 | 3% | $62,368 | 100.4 | $62,119 |
| 50676 | Tripoli, IA | 562 | 564 | 2 | 0% | $59,028 | 97.8 | $60,356 |
| 50424 | Buffalo Center, IA | 549 | 560 | 11 | 2% | $57,515 | 95.0 | $60,542 |
| 50628 | Elma, IA | 533 | 604 | 71 | 13% | $63,496 | 98.1 | $64,726 |
| 50466 | Riceville, IA | 512 | 547 | 35 | 7% | $60,904 | 98.1 | $62,083 |
| 50682 | Winthrop, IA | 497 | 527 | 30 | 6% | $64,327 | 97.0 | $66,317 |
| 52045 | Epworth, IA | 495 | 500 | 5 | 1% | $65,546 | 95.6 | $68,562 |
| 50665 | Parkersburg, IA | 482 | 537 | 55 | 11% | $61,050 | 97.8 | $62,423 |
| 50619 | Clarksville, IA | 457 | 402 | -55 | -12% | $57,590 | 97.8 | $58,886 |
| 50636 | Greene, IA | 452 | 526 | 74 | 16% | $69,081 | 97.8 | $70,635 |
| 50630 | Fredericksburg, IA | 450 | 493 | 43 | 10% | $63,890 | 102.3 | $62,453 |
| 52076 | Strawberry Point, IA | 449 | 444 | -5 | -1% | $56,345 | 97.6 | $57,730 |
| 50668 | Readlyn, IA | 448 | 526 | 78 | 17% | $64,677 | 97.8 | $66,132 |
| 50680 | Wellsburg, IA | 445 | 492 | 47 | 11% | $74,408 | 101.3 | $73,453 |
| 52151 | Lansing, IA | 441 | 434 | -7 | -2% | $52,205 | 96.1 | $54,324 |
| 52223 | Delhi, IA | 437 | 494 | 57 | 13% | $65,363 | 98.3 | $66,493 |
| 52171 | Waucoma, IA | 423 | 457 | 34 | 8% | $61,075 | 94.6 | $64,562 |
| 52154 | Lawler, IA | 404 | 418 | 14 | 3% | $64,732 | 102.3 | $63,277 |
| 52158 | Marquette, IA | 402 | 339 | -63 | -16% | $41,508 | 97.6 | $42,529 |
| | | 247,049 | 260,717 | 13,668 | 6% | $65,715 | | $68,644 |

## APPENDIX B – INDUSTRY CLUSTERS (LIGHTCAST DATA AND CHARTS)




*Source: U.S. Cluster Mapping*

Cluster Rankings

| | |
|---|---|
| Production Technology and Heavy Machinery | 59 |
| Livestock Processing | 42 |
| Upstream Chemical Products | 42 |
| Biopharmaceuticals | 35 |
| Footwear | 35 |
| Agricultural Inputs and Services | 34 |
| Trailers, Motor Homes, and Appliances | 31 |
| Wood Products | 31 |
| Food Processing and Manufacturing | 28 |

**Production Technology and Heavy Machinery** **59**

**You have 13 industries in this cluster:**

| NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| 311611 | Animal (except Poultry) Slaughtering | 5,335 | 47 |
| 311612 | Meat Processed from Carcasses | 1,181 | 23 |
| 311615 | Poultry Processing | 87 | 18 |
| 424520 | Livestock Machinery Wholesalers | 256 | 24 |
| 333120 | Construction Machinery Manufacturing | 6,246 | 100 |
| 333241 | Food Product Machinery Manufacturing | 11 | 18 |
| 333248 | All Other Industrial Machinery Manufacturing | 65 | 19 |
| 333415 | Air-Conditioning and Warm Air Heating Equipment and Commercial and Industrial Refrigeration Equipment Manufacturing | 801 | 29 |
| 333612 | Speed Changer, Industrial High-Speed Drive, and Gear Manufacturing | 64 | 22 |
| 333618 | Other Engine Equipment Manufacturing | 1,171 | 32 |
| 333914 | Measuring, Dispensing, and Other Pumping Equipment Manufacturing | 55 | 20 |
| 333922 | Conveyor and Conveying Equipment Manufacturing | 653 | 32 |
| 333924 | Industrial Truck, Tractor, Trailer, and Stacker Machinery Manufacturing | 320 | 24 |
| 333995 | Fluid Power Cylinder and Actuator Manufacturing | 171 | 23 |
| 333998 | All Other Miscellaneous General Purpose Machinery Manufacturing | 759 | 26 |

**Livestock Processing** **42**

You have 4 industries in this cluster:

**Agricultural Inputs and Services** **34**

| NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Score |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 111000 | Crop Production | 795 | 25 |
| 112000 | Animal Production | 2,607 | 39 |
| 115112 | Soil Preparation, Planting, and Cultivating | 202 | 21 |
| 115114 | Postharvest Crop Activities (except Cotton Ginning) | 199 | 19 |
| 115116 | Farm Management Services | 62 | 20 |

**You have 7 industries in this cluster:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 115210 | Support Activities for Animal Production | 127 | 19 |
| 325311 | Nitrogenous Fertilizer Manufacturing | 266 | 35 |

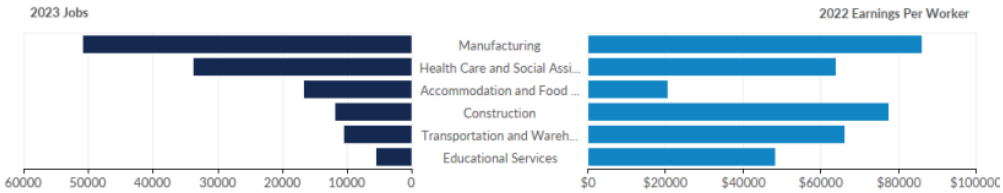
## Food Processing and Manufacturing 28

**You have 15 industries in this cluster:**

| NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| 311111 | Dog and Cat Food Manufacturing | 925 | 38 |
| 311119 | Other Animal Food Manufacturing | 366 | 24 |
| 311224 | Soybean and Other Oilseed Processing | 41 | 20 |
| 311230 | Breakfast Cereal Manufacturing | 194 | 25 |
| 311412 | Frozen Specialty Food Manufacturing | 99 | 17 |
| 311513 | Cheese Manufacturing | 108 | 17 |
| 311514 | Dry, Condensed, and Evaporated Dairy Product Manufacturing | 209 | 23 |
| 311941 | Mayonnaise, Dressing, and Other Prepared Sauce Manufacturing | 253 | 24 |
| 311991 | Perishable Prepared Food Manufacturing | 227 | 20 |
| 311999 | All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing | 794 | 22 |

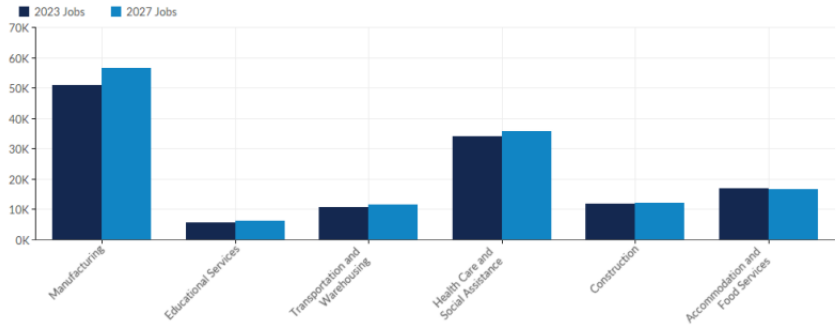
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 312111 | Soft Drink Manufacturing | 110 | 17 |
| 312113 | Ice Manufacturing | 33 | 19 |
| 312120 | Breweries | 181 | 18 |
| 312130 | Wineries | 181 | 19 |
| 424510 | Grain and Field Bean Merchant Wholesalers | 1,359 | 33 |

## Industry Group Jobs and Earnings Comparison



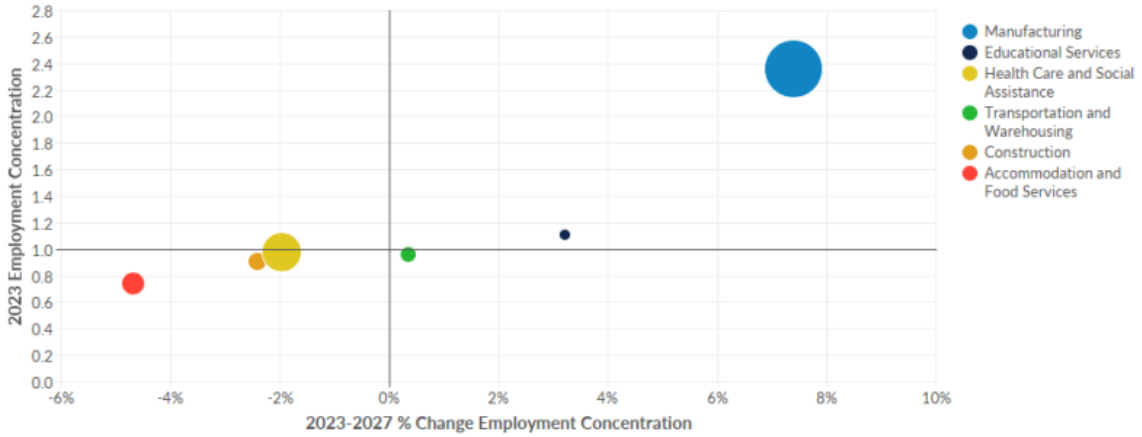

| Group | 2023 Jobs | 2027 Jobs | Earnings Per Worker | Payrolled Business Locations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manufacturing | 50,911 | 56,496 | $86,151 | 887 |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 33,876 | 35,738 | $63,958 | 2,117 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 16,739 | 16,669 | $20,751 | 1,155 |
| Construction | 11,879 | 12,089 | $77,459 | 1,570 |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 10,562 | 11,424 | $66,307 | 727 |
| Educational Services | 5,622 | 6,127 | $48,400 | 170 |

## Industry Group Growth Comparison




| Group | 2023 Jobs | 2027 Jobs | Change | % Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manufacturing | 50,911 | 56,496 | 5,585 | 11% |
| Educational Services | 5,622 | 6,127 | 505 | 9% |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 10,562 | 11,424 | 861 | 8% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 33,876 | 35,738 | 1,862 | 5% |
| Construction | 11,879 | 12,089 | 210 | 2% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 16,739 | 16,669 | -70 | 0% |

## Industry Group Employment Concentration Comparison




| Group | 2023 Jobs | 2023 Employment Concentration | 2027 Employment Concentration | Percent Change Employment Concentration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manufacturing | 50,911 | 2.37 | 2.54 | 7% |
| Educational Services | 5,622 | 1.11 | 1.15 | 3% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 33,876 | 0.98 | 0.96 | -2% |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 10,562 | 0.96 | 0.96 | 0% |
| Construction | 11,879 | 0.91 | 0.89 | -2% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 16,739 | 0.74 | 0.71 | -5% |

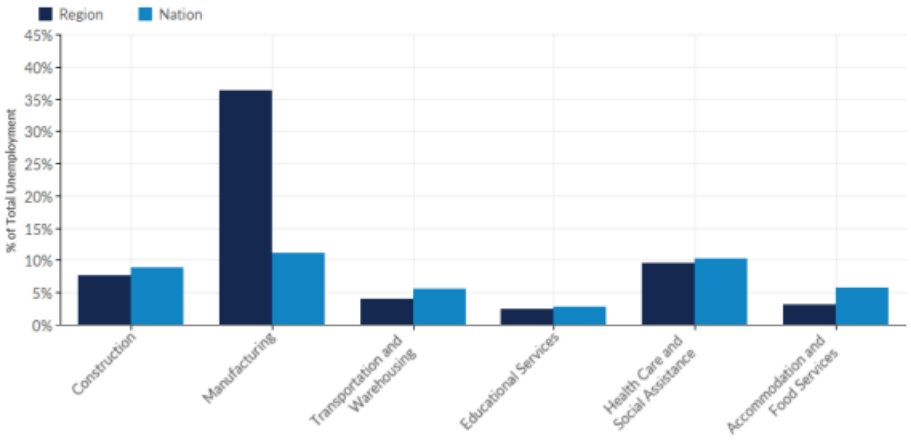
*The above reports from Lightcast uses state data from Iowa Workforce Development*

## APPENDIX C – INDUSTRY UNEMPLOYMENT OVERVIEW

### Unemployment by Industry

8,076

Total Unemployment (9/2023)




| NAICS | Industry | Unemployed (9/2023) | % of Regional Unemployment | % of National Unemployment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Construction | 624 | 8% | 9% |
| 31 | Manufacturing | 2,932 | 36% | 11% |
| 48 | Transportation and Warehousing | 325 | 4% | 6% |
| 61 | Educational Services | 195 | 2% | 3% |
| 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance | 770 | 10% | 10% |
| 72 | Accommodation and Food Services | 256 | 3% | 6% |

*The unemployment data in this report comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics and the Department of Labor's Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed. This report uses state data that comes from Iowa Workforce Development*.

| SOC | Description | Employed in Industry Group (2022) | Employed in Industry Group (2023) | Employed in Industry Group (2027) | Change (2023 - 2027) | % Change (2023 - 2027) | % of Total Jobs in Industry Group (2022) | Median Hourly Earnings | Typical Entry Level Education | Work Experience Required | Typical On-The-Job Training |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 51-2098 | Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators | 3,255 | 3,420 | 3,689 | 269 | 8% | 6.8% | $18.88 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training |
| 51-1011 | First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers | 2,197 | 2,314 | 2,560 | 246 | 11% | 4.6% | $30.56 | High school diploma or equivalent | Less than 5 years | None |
| 53-7062 | Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand | 2,260 | 2,376 | 2,622 | 246 | 10% | 4.7% | $18.91 | No formal educational credential | None | Short-term on-the-job training |
| 17-2141 | Mechanical Engineers | 1,755 | 1,853 | 2,075 | 222 | 12% | 3.6% | $47.67 | Bachelor's degree | None | None |
| 17-2112 | Industrial Engineers | 1,454 | 1,535 | 1,720 | 185 | 12% | 3.0% | $45.36 | Bachelor's degree | None | None |
| 51-9111 | Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders | 790 | 864 | 1,035 | 171 | 20% | 1.6% | $17.34 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training |
| 51-4121 | Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers | 1,858 | 1,942 | 2,100 | 158 | 8% | 3.9% | $21.96 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training |
| 49-9041 | Industrial Machinery Mechanics | 674 | 733 | 886 | 153 | 21% | 1.4% | $26.55 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Long-term on-the-job training |
| 51-4041 | Machinists | 618 | 676 | 814 | 138 | 20% | 1.3% | $22.90 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Long-term on-the-job training |
| 51-9061 | Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers | 976 | 1,038 | 1,169 | 131 | 13% | 2.0% | $20.52 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training |
| 41-4012 | Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products | 1,041 | 1,104 | 1,232 | 128 | 12% | 2.2% | $29.82 | High school diploma or equivalent | None | Moderate-term on-the-job training |

*Sources:*
*US: Primarily the national OES staffing pattern, combined with projections from the National Industry-Occupation Employment Matrix and Lightcast's proprietary employment data.*

*CA: Primarily the industry by occupation percentages from the Census at the provincial level and Lightcast's proprietary employment data.*

**Year**
2023

**Quarter**
1

**Detail**
Sector

**Sector Level**
All

**County**
Multiple values

*Please note: sectors without data are non-disclosable.*

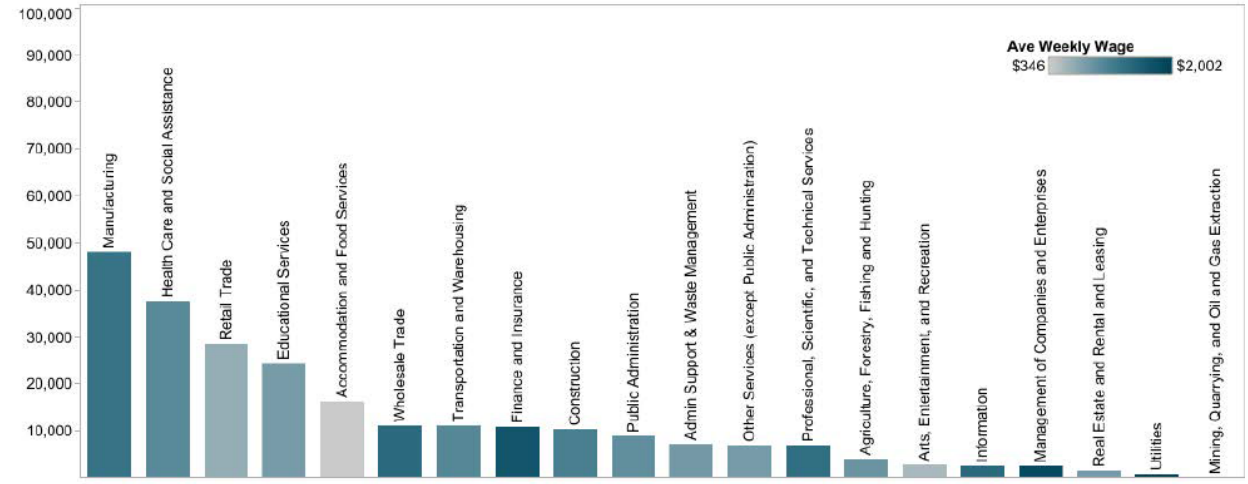
*Polk County Selected by Default.*

*Grand totals for all sectors and counties will not necessarily equal the state total due to data suppression for certain areas and sectors that don't pass confidentiality restrictions.*

## Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer and 17 more County, 2023 Quarter 1

| Sector/Subsector | Total Locations | Employment Month 1 | Employment Month 2 | Employment Month 3 | Average Emp | Ave Weekly Wage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grand Total** | 17,485 | 240,861 | 241,374 | 241,904 | 241,388 | $1,035 |
| Manufacturing | 889 | 48,123 | 47,905 | 47,851 | 47,958 | $1,307 |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 2,182 | 37,541 | 37,562 | 37,672 | 37,590 | $1,039 |
| Retail Trade | 2,004 | 28,478 | 28,410 | 28,360 | 28,416 | $650 |
| Educational Services | 432 | 24,033 | 24,597 | 24,535 | 24,388 | $824 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 1,133 | 16,131 | 16,294 | 16,393 | 16,275 | $346 |
| Wholesale Trade | 1,189 | 11,053 | 11,050 | 11,143 | 11,084 | $1,434 |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 896 | 11,082 | 10,943 | 10,808 | 10,947 | $1,065 |
| Finance and Insurance | 1,184 | 10,822 | 10,881 | 10,852 | 10,851 | $1,712 |
| Construction | 1,579 | 10,163 | 9,960 | 10,514 | 10,211 | $1,163 |
| Public Administration | 565 | 8,825 | 8,939 | 9,025 | 8,930 | $985 |
| Admin Support & Waste Management | 833 | 7,165 | 7,244 | 7,247 | 7,219 | $860 |
| Other Services (except Public Administr.. | 1,212 | 6,869 | 6,926 | 6,933 | 6,910 | $839 |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical S.. | 1,465 | 6,822 | 6,956 | 6,922 | 6,901 | $1,373 |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunti.. | 560 | 3,820 | 3,792 | 3,854 | 3,824 | $916 |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 242 | 2,751 | 2,795 | 2,676 | 2,739 | $518 |
| Information | 349 | 2,513 | 2,469 | 2,463 | 2,484 | $1,439 |
| Management of Companies and Enterpr.. | 176 | 2,406 | 2,388 | 2,397 | 2,398 | $1,873 |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 535 | 1,545 | 1,534 | 1,535 | 1,539 | $834 |
| Utilities | 53 | 702 | 711 | 705 | 706 | $2,002 |
| Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extr.. | 7 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 18 | $883 |

**Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer and 17 more County Employment, 2023 Quarter 1 (Shade is Determined by the Average Quarterly Wage)**

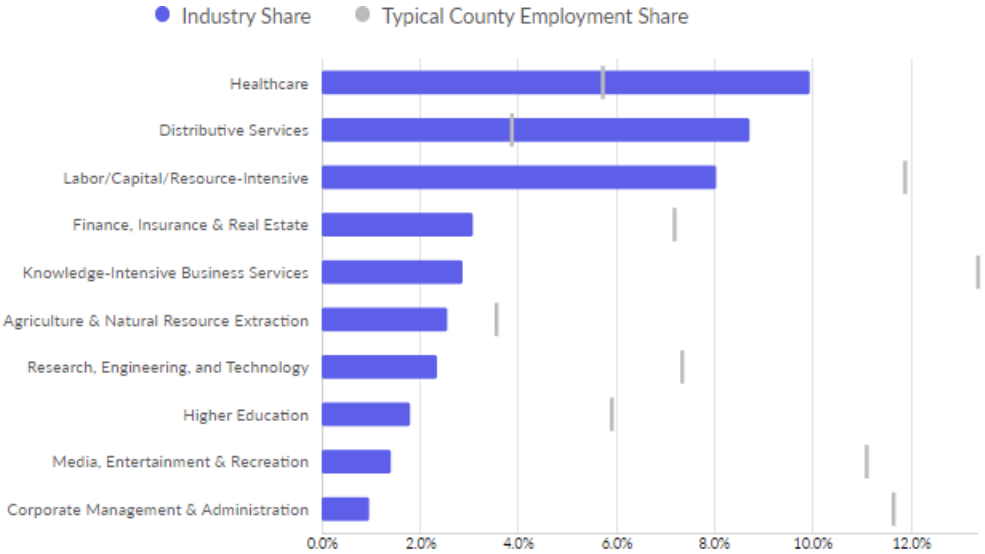



Iowa Workforce Development, Labor Market Information Division, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program (QCEW).

*Source: Iowa Workforce Development, Labor Market Information Division, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*

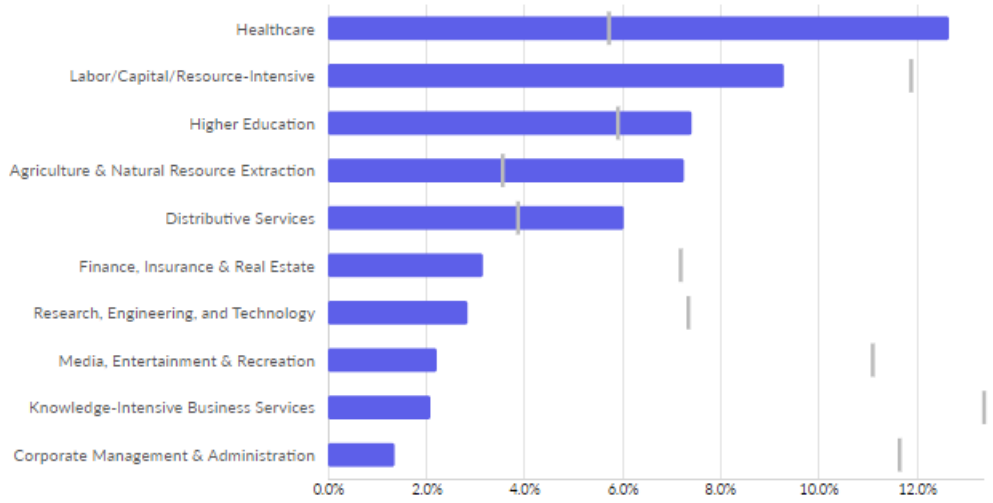
## APPENDIX D – INDUSTRY DIVERSITY SNAPSHOT

Cerro Gordo



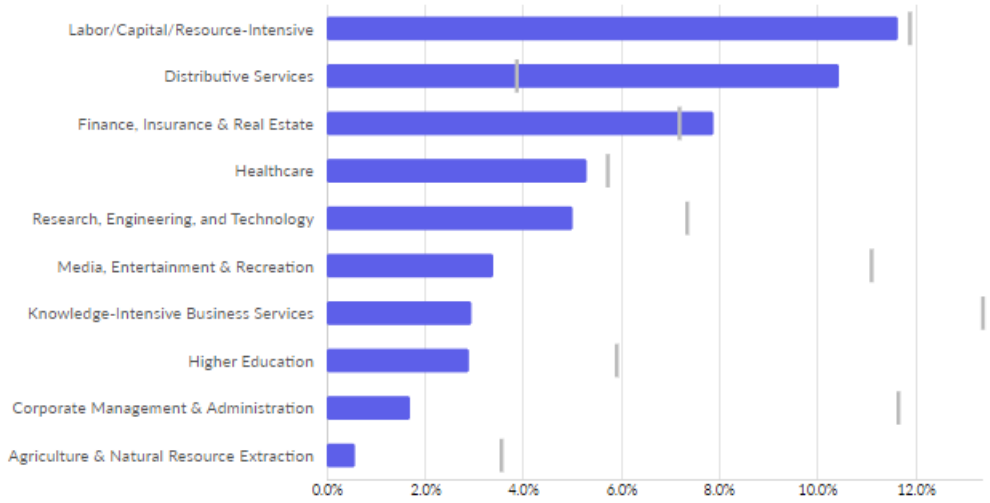

| Industry Cluster | 2022 Jobs | % of Total Employment | % of Typical County Employment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Non-Function Employment | 14,967 | 58.3% | 18.7% |
| Healthcare | 2,553 | 9.9% | 5.7% |
| Distributive Services | 2,240 | 8.7% | 3.8% |
| Labor/Capital/Resource-Intensive | 2,064 | 8.0% | 11.8% |
| Finance, Insurance & Real Estate | 794 | 3.1% | 7.1% |
| Knowledge-Intensive Business Services | 738 | 2.9% | 13.3% |
| Agriculture & Natural Resource Extraction | 655 | 2.6% | 3.5% |
| Research, Engineering, and Technology | 602 | 2.3% | 7.3% |
| Higher Education | 461 | 1.8% | 5.9% |

Winneshiek



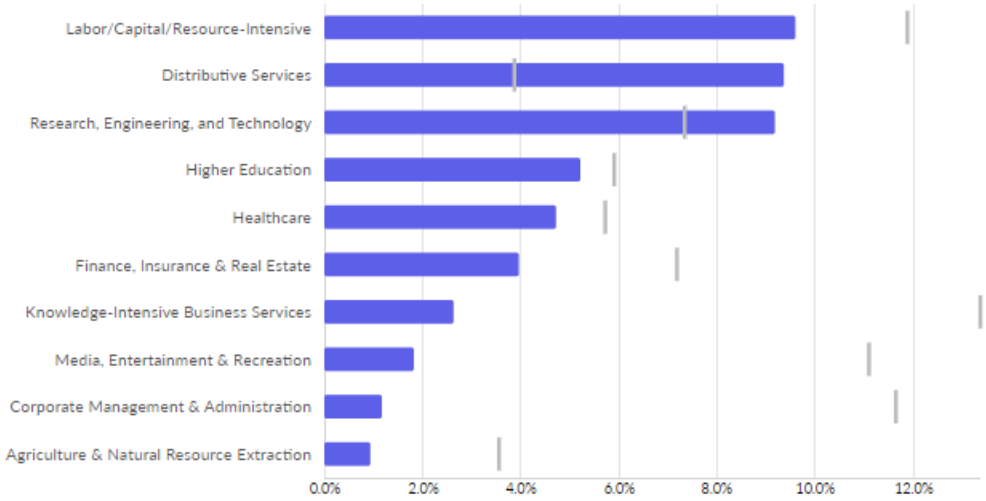

| Industry Cluster | 2022 Jobs | % of Total Employment | % of Typical County Employment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Non-Function Employment | 5,588 | 45.7% | 18.7% |
| Healthcare | 1,548 | 12.7% | 5.7% |
| Labor/Capital/Resource-Intensive | 1,136 | 9.3% | 11.8% |
| Higher Education | 906 | 7.4% | 5.9% |
| Agriculture & Natural Resource Extraction | 886 | 7.2% | 3.5% |
| Distributive Services | 737 | 6.0% | 3.8% |
| Finance, Insurance & Real Estate | 386 | 3.2% | 7.1% |
| Research, Engineering, and Technology | 348 | 2.8% | 7.3% |
| Media, Entertainment & Recreation | 272 | 2.2% | 11.1% |
| Knowledge-Intensive Business Services | 256 | 2.1% | 13.3% |

Dubuque



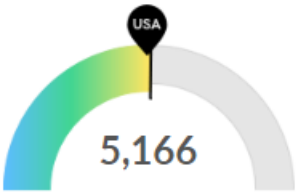

| Industry Cluster | 2022 Jobs | % of Total Employment | % of Typical County Employment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Non-Function Employment | 30,652 | 48.2% | 18.7% |
| Labor/Capital/Resource-Intensive | 7,394 | 11.6% | 11.8% |
| Distributive Services | 6,630 | 10.4% | 3.8% |
| Finance, Insurance & Real Estate | 5,012 | 7.9% | 7.1% |
| Healthcare | 3,371 | 5.3% | 5.7% |
| Research, Engineering, and Technology | 3,178 | 5.0% | 7.3% |
| Media, Entertainment & Recreation | 2,154 | 3.4% | 11.1% |
| Knowledge-Intensive Business Services | 1,875 | 3.0% | 13.3% |
| Higher Education | 1,841 | 2.9% | 5.9% |
| Corporate Management & Administration | 1,081 | 1.7% | 11.6% |

Black Hawk



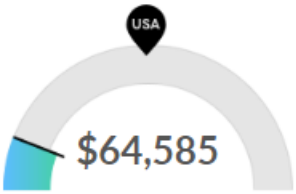

| Industry Cluster | 2022 Jobs | % of Total Employment | % of Typical County Employment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Non-Function Employment | 40,632 | 51.3% | 18.7% |
| Labor/Capital/Resource-Intensive | 7,594 | 9.6% | 11.8% |
| Distributive Services | 7,424 | 9.4% | 3.8% |
| Research, Engineering, and Technology | 7,278 | 9.2% | 7.3% |
| Higher Education | 4,125 | 5.2% | 5.9% |
| Healthcare | 3,741 | 4.7% | 5.7% |
| Finance, Insurance & Real Estate | 3,138 | 4.0% | 7.1% |
| Knowledge-Intensive Business Services | 2,079 | 2.6% | 13.3% |
| Media, Entertainment & Recreation | 1,452 | 1.8% | 11.1% |

## APPENDIX E – OCCUPATION SNAPSHOT




Supply (Jobs)

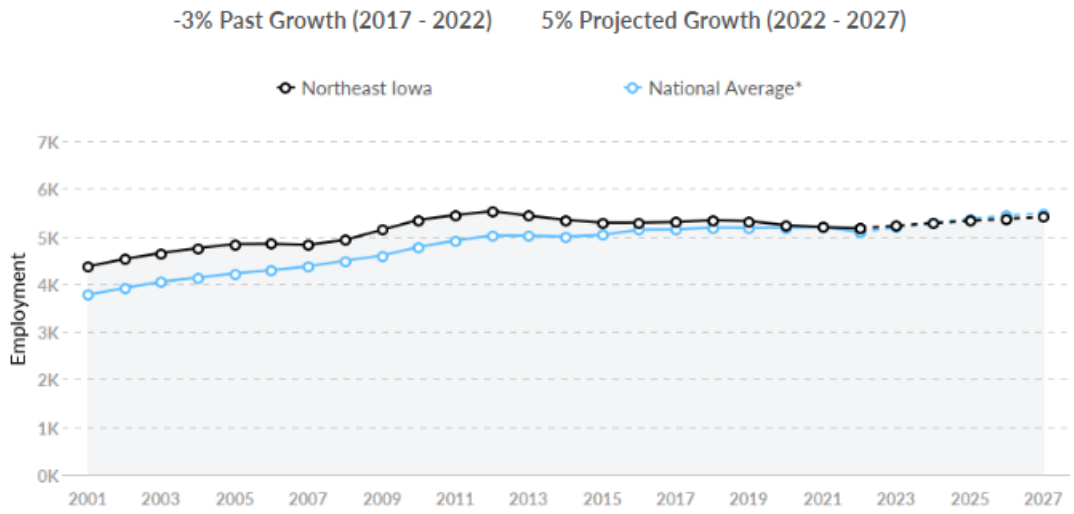
Your area is about average for this kind of talent. The national average for an area this size is 5,087* employees, while there are 5,166 here.



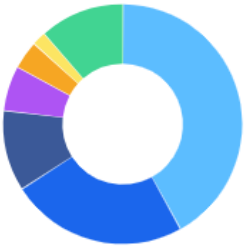

Compensation

The cost for talent is low in your area. The national median salary for Registered Nurses is $81,224, while you'll pay $64,585 here.

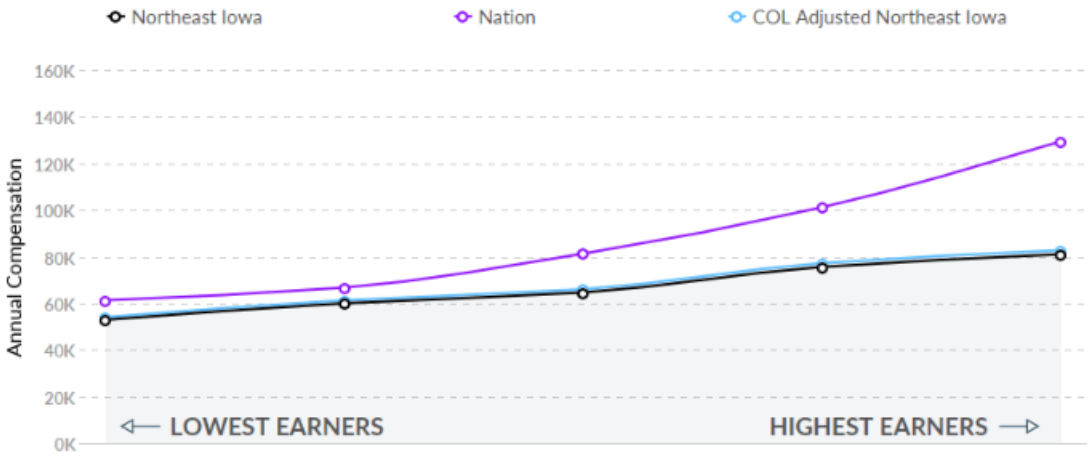
*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Registered Nurses and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.




*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Registered Nurses and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.



| Industry | % of Occupation in Industry (2022) |
|---|---|
| General Medical and Surgical Hospitals | 41.9% |
| Education and Hospitals (Local Government) | 24.0% |
| Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities) | 10.9% |
| Offices of Physicians | 6.1% |
| Outpatient Care Centers | 3.8% |
| Employment Services | 1.9% |
| Other | 11.5% |



## Graduate Pipeline

**11 Programs**

24 programs can train for this job, while only 11 programs have produced completers in this region.

**608 Completions (2022)**

The completions from all regional institutions for all degree types.

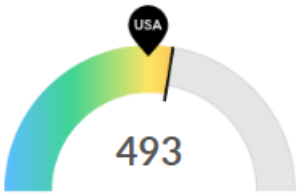
**403 Openings (2022)**

The average number of openings for an occupation in the region is 49.

| Top Programs | Completions (2022) |
|---|---|
| Registered Nursing/Regist... | 523 |
| Family Practice Nurse/Nur... | 49 |
| Psychiatric/Mental Health... | 17 |
| Health/Medical Preparato... | 12 |
| Nursing Administration | 3 |

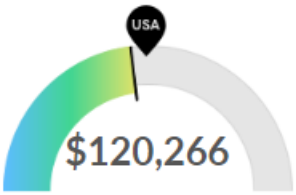
| Top Schools | Completions (2022) |
|---|---|
| Allen College | 179 |
| Upper Iowa University | 115 |
| Northeast Iowa Communit... | 93 |
| Hawkeye Community Coll... | 71 |
| North Iowa Area Commun... | 49 |

*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Nurse Practitioners and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.



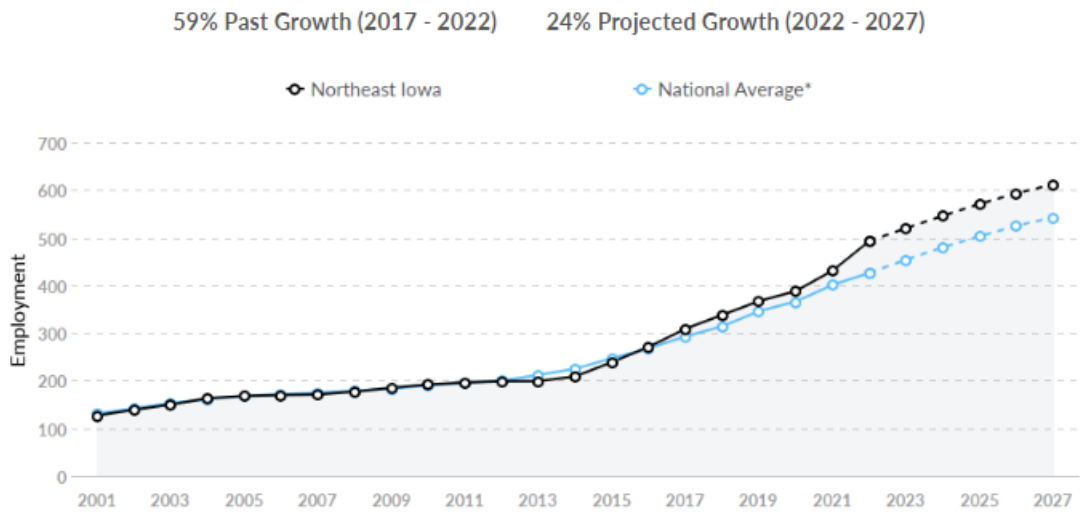

**Supply (Jobs)**

Your area is a hotspot for this kind of talent. The national average for an area this size is 426* employees, while there are 493 here.



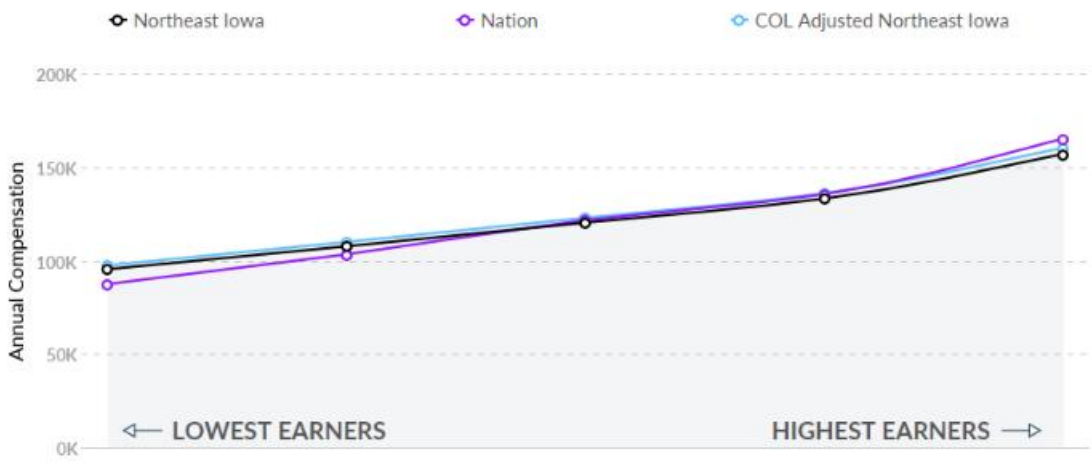

**Compensation**

The cost for talent is about average in your area. The national median salary for Nurse Practitioners is $121,618, while you'll pay $120,266 here.




*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Nurse Practitioners and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

| Industry | % of Occupation in Industry (2022) |
|---|---|
| Offices of Physicians | 51.1% |
| General Medical and Surgical Hospitals | 16.4% |
| Education and Hospitals (Local Government) | 12.1% |
| Outpatient Care Centers | 6.5% |
| Offices of Other Health Practitioners | 3.7% |
| Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools | 2.0% |
| Other | 8.1% |




## Graduate Pipeline

**8 Programs**

67 programs can train for this job, while only 8 programs have produced completers in this region.

**593 Completions (2022)**

The completions from all regional institutions for all degree types.

**49 Openings (2022)**

The average number of openings for an occupation in the region is 49.

| Top Programs | Completions (2022) |
|---|---|
| Registered Nursing/Regist... | 523 |
| Family Practice Nurse/Nur... | 49 |
| Psychiatric/Mental Health... | 17 |
| Critical Care Nursing | 3 |
| Nursing Practice | 1 |

| Top Schools | Completions (2022) |
|---|---|
| Allen College | 176 |
| Upper Iowa University | 115 |
| Northeast Iowa Communit... | 93 |
| Hawkeye Community Coll... | 71 |
| North Iowa Area Commun... | 49 |

## Occupational Programs

| 427 | 10,165 | 34,852 |
|---|---|---|
| Programs (2022) | Completions (2022) | Openings (2022) |

| CIP Code | Program | Completions (2022) |
|---|---|---|
| 24.0101 | Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies | 748 |
| 52.0201 | Business Administration and Management, General | 658 |
| 51.3801 | Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse | 523 |
| 13.1202 | Elementary Education and Teaching | 520 |
| 42.0101 | Psychology, General | 411 |

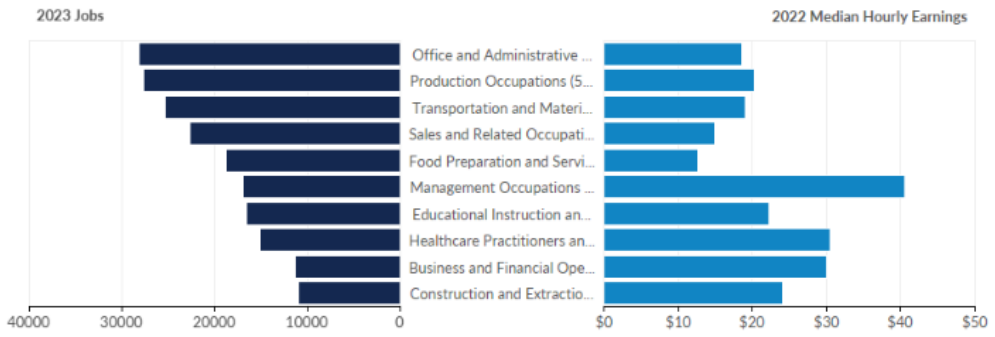
## Industries Employing 798 Occupations

Jump to Inverse Staffing Patterns

| Industry | Occupation Group Jobs in Industry (2022) | % of Occupation Group in Industry (2022) | % of Total Jobs in Industry (2022) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government) | 14,012 | 5.7% | 100.0% |
| Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals | 9,182 | 3.7% | 100.0% |
| General Medical and Surgical Hospitals | 6,882 | 2.8% | 100.0% |
| Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities) | 6,379 | 2.6% | 100.0% |
| Construction Machinery Manufacturing | 6,246 | 2.5% | 100.0% |

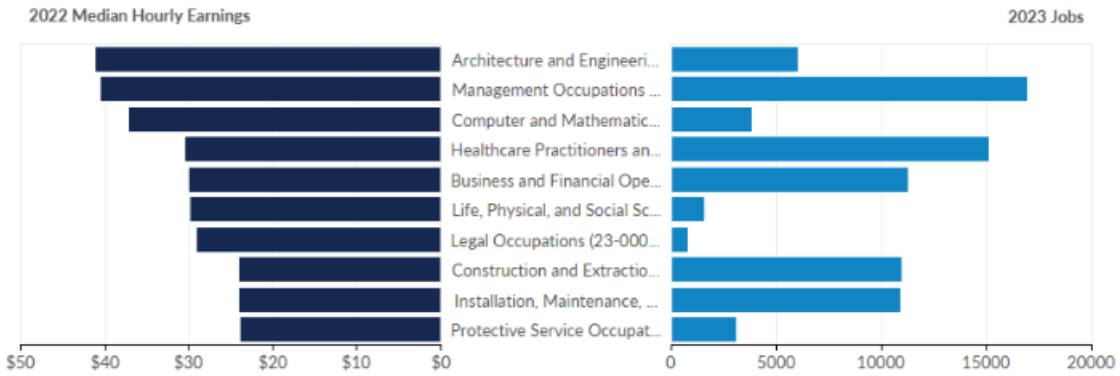
# APPENDIX F – OCCUPATIONS PROJECTIONS

Largest Occupations



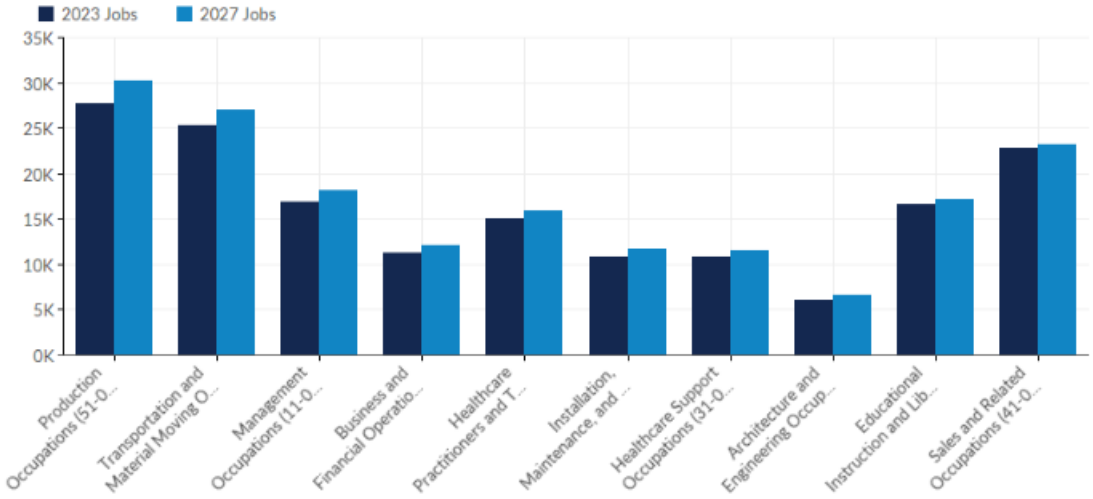

| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | 2027 Jobs | Change in Jobs (2023-2027) | % Change | 2022 Median Hourly Earnings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Office and Administrative Support Occupations | 28,162 | 28,524 | 362 | 1% | $18.65 |
| Production Occupations | 27,712 | 30,218 | 2,506 | 9% | $20.33 |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | 25,349 | 26,956 | 1,607 | 6% | $19.09 |
| Sales and Related Occupations | 22,742 | 23,184 | 442 | 2% | $14.87 |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations | 18,819 | 18,861 | 42 | 0% | $12.68 |
| Management Occupations | 16,936 | 18,081 | 1,145 | 7% | $40.60 |
| Educational Instruction and Library Occupations | 16,602 | 17,200 | 598 | 4% | $22.32 |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | 15,102 | 15,885 | 783 | 5% | $30.55 |
| Business and Financial Operations Occupations | 11,301 | 12,149 | 848 | 8% | $30.10 |
| Construction and Extraction Occupations | 11,003 | 11,294 | 291 | 3% | $24.04 |

## Highest Paying Occupations




| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | 2027 Jobs | Change in Jobs (2023-2027) | % Change | 2022 Median Hourly Earnings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Architecture and Engineering Occupations | 6,029 | 6,666 | 637 | 11% | $41.14 |
| Management Occupations | 16,936 | 18,081 | 1,145 | 7% | $40.60 |
| Computer and Mathematical Occupations | 3,811 | 4,216 | 405 | 11% | $37.14 |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | 15,102 | 15,885 | 783 | 5% | $30.55 |
| Business and Financial Operations Occupations | 11,301 | 12,149 | 848 | 8% | $30.10 |
| Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations | 1,598 | 1,741 | 143 | 9% | $29.87 |
| Legal Occupations | 788 | 817 | 29 | 4% | $29.11 |
| Construction and Extraction Occupations | 11,003 | 11,294 | 291 | 3% | $24.04 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | 10,894 | 11,633 | 739 | 7% | $24.02 |
| Protective Service Occupations | 3,106 | 3,188 | 82 | 3% | $23.87 |

## Fastest Growing Occupations




| Occupation | 2023 Jobs | 2027 Jobs | Change in Jobs (2023-2027) | % Change | 2022 Median Hourly Earnings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Production Occupations | 27,712 | 30,218 | 2,506 | 9% | $20.33 |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | 25,349 | 26,956 | 1,607 | 6% | $19.09 |
| Management Occupations | 16,936 | 18,081 | 1,145 | 7% | $40.60 |
| Business and Financial Operations Occupations | 11,301 | 12,149 | 848 | 8% | $30.10 |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | 15,102 | 15,885 | 783 | 5% | $30.55 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | 10,894 | 11,633 | 739 | 7% | $24.02 |
| Healthcare Support Occupations | 10,816 | 11,475 | 659 | 6% | $16.51 |
| Architecture and Engineering Occupations | 6,029 | 6,666 | 637 | 11% | $41.14 |
| Educational Instruction and Library Occupations | 16,602 | 17,200 | 598 | 4% | $22.32 |

| 2022-2032 NORTHEAST IOWA LWDA OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Occupation[1] | | Occupational Employment[3] | | | | Annual Job Separations/Openings[4] | | | |
| SOC | Occupational Group/Title | 2022 Estimated | 2032 Projected | Numeric Change | Annual Growth Rate (%) | Exits [a] | Transfers [b] | New (Growth) [c] | Total [a+b+c] |
| **00-0000** | **Total, All Occupations** | **278,395** | **296,260** | **17,865** | **0.6** | **14,345** | **14,345** | **1,785** | **33,675** |
| **11-0000** | **Management Occupations** | **25,230** | **26,760** | **1,530** | **0.6** | **1,180** | **1,180** | **155** | **2,400** |
| 11-1011 | Chief Executives | 545 | 505 | -45 | -0.8 | 15 | 15 | -5 | 30 |
| 11-1021 | General and Operations Managers | 3,965 | 4,260 | 295 | 0.7 | 100 | 100 | 30 | 355 |
| 11-1031 | Legislators | 200 | 220 | 20 | 1.0 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 11-2021 | Marketing Managers | 455 | 500 | 45 | 1.0 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 40 |
| 11-2022 | Sales Managers | 335 | 355 | 20 | 0.6 | 10 | 10 | * | 25 |
| 11-2032 | Public Relations Managers | 150 | 170 | 15 | 1.0 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 11-3012 | Administrative Services Managers | 160 | 175 | 10 | 0.6 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 11-3013 | Facilities Managers | 285 | 310 | 30 | 1.1 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 25 |
| 11-3021 | Computer and Information Systems Managers | 460 | 545 | 85 | 1.8 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 |
| 11-3031 | Financial Managers | 815 | 1,000 | 185 | 2.3 | 25 | 25 | 20 | 80 |
| 11-3051 | Industrial Production Managers | 765 | 825 | 60 | 0.8 | 20 | 20 | 5 | 60 |
| 11-3061 | Purchasing Managers | 120 | 125 | 5 | 0.4 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 11-3071 | Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers | 415 | 455 | 45 | 1.1 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 40 |
| 11-3121 | Human Resources Managers | 215 | 235 | 20 | 0.9 | 5 | 5 | * | 20 |
| 11-9013 | Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers | 11,155 | 11,135 | -25 | 0.0 | 780 | 780 | * | 1,150 |
| 11-9021 | Construction Managers | 330 | 370 | 40 | 1.2 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 30 |
| 11-9031 | Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare | 235 | 245 | 10 | 0.4 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 11-9032 | Education Administrators, Kindergarten through Secondary | 525 | 560 | 35 | 0.7 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 40 |

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| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11-9033 | Education Administrators, Postsecondary | 535 | 585 | 50 | 0.9 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 40 |
| 11-9041 | Architectural and Engineering Managers | 425 | 445 | 20 | 0.5 | 10 | 10 | * | 30 |
| 11-9051 | Food Service Managers | 395 | 430 | 30 | 0.8 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 50 |
| 11-9072 | Entertainment And Recreation Managers, Except Gambling | 80 | 90 | 10 | 1.3 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 11-9081 | Lodging Managers | 105 | 140 | 30 | 2.9 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 |
| 11-9111 | Medical and Health Services Managers | 1,080 | 1,455 | 370 | 3.4 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 125 |
| 11-9141 | Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers | 240 | 265 | 25 | 1.0 | 10 | 10 | * | 20 |
| 11-9151 | Social and Community Service Managers | 445 | 520 | 75 | 1.7 | 15 | 15 | 10 | 45 |
| 11-9199 | Managers, All Other | 330 | 360 | 30 | 0.9 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 30 |
| **13-0000** | **Business and Financial Operations Occupations** | **11,685** | **12,805** | **1,120** | **1.0** | **375** | **375** | **110** | **1,070** |
| 13-1020 | Buyers and Purchasing Agents | 805 | 770 | -35 | -0.4 | 30 | 30 | -5 | 65 |
| 13-1031 | Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators | 310 | 330 | 15 | 0.5 | 10 | 10 | * | 25 |
| 13-1041 | Compliance Officers | 375 | 410 | 40 | 1.1 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 35 |
| 13-1051 | Cost Estimators | 425 | 425 | 0 | 0.0 | 15 | 15 | 0 | 35 |
| 13-1071 | Human Resources Specialists | 940 | 1,035 | 90 | 1.0 | 30 | 30 | 10 | 90 |
| 13-1075 | Labor Relations Specialists | 250 | 265 | 15 | 0.6 | 10 | 10 | * | 25 |
| 13-1081 | Logisticians | 425 | 490 | 65 | 1.5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 45 |
| 13-1082 | Project Management Specialists | 730 | 795 | 70 | 1.0 | 20 | 20 | 5 | 60 |
| 13-1111 | Management Analysts | 570 | 620 | 55 | 1.0 | 20 | 20 | 5 | 50 |
| 13-1121 | Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners | 125 | 145 | 20 | 1.6 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 13-1131 | Fundraisers | 110 | 125 | 15 | 1.4 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 13-1141 | Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists | 120 | 135 | 10 | 0.8 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 13-1151 | Training and Development Specialists | 575 | 635 | 55 | 1.0 | 20 | 20 | 5 | 55 |
| 13-1161 | Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists | 820 | 960 | 140 | 1.7 | 30 | 30 | 15 | 95 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13-1199 | Business Operations Specialists, All Other | 1,040 | 1,160 | 120 | 1.2 | 35 | 35 | 10 | 105 |
| 13-2011 | Accountants and Auditors | 1,765 | 1,920 | 155 | 0.9 | 55 | 55 | 15 | 155 |
| 13-2020 | Property Appraisers and Assessors | 170 | 185 | 15 | 0.9 | 10 | 10 | * | 15 |
| 13-2051 | Financial and Investment Analysts | 165 | 190 | 25 | 1.5 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 13-2052 | Personal Financial Advisors | 390 | 475 | 80 | 2.1 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 35 |
| 13-2053 | Insurance Underwriters | 115 | 120 | 5 | 0.4 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 13-2061 | Financial Examiners | 80 | 105 | 25 | 3.1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| 13-2072 | Loan Officers | 620 | 675 | 55 | 0.9 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 50 |
| 13-2082 | Tax Preparers | 120 | 130 | 10 | 0.8 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 13-2099 | Financial Specialists, All Other | 325 | 375 | 50 | 1.5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 25 |
| **15-0000** | **Computer and Mathematical Occupations** | **4,025** | **4,615** | **590** | **1.5** | **95** | **95** | **60** | **315** |
| 15-1211 | Computer Systems Analysts | 520 | 590 | 75 | 1.4 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 40 |
| 15-1212 | Information Security Analysts | 70 | 100 | 25 | 3.6 | * | * | 5 | 10 |
| 15-1231 | Computer Network Support Specialists | 200 | 225 | 25 | 1.3 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 15-1232 | Computer User Support Specialists | 790 | 830 | 40 | 0.5 | 20 | 20 | 5 | 55 |
| 15-1244 | Network and Computer Systems Administrators | 465 | 490 | 25 | 0.5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 30 |
| 15-1251 | Computer Programmers | 220 | 205 | -15 | -0.7 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 15-1252 | Software Developers | 755 | 960 | 205 | 2.7 | 15 | 15 | 20 | 65 |
| 15-1253 | Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers | 115 | 145 | 30 | 2.6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| 15-1254 | Web Developers | 80 | 100 | 20 | 2.5 | * | * | * | 10 |
| 15-1255 | Web and Digital Interface Designers | 100 | 120 | 20 | 2.0 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 15-1299 | Computer Occupations, All Other | 260 | 295 | 30 | 1.2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 20 |
| 15-2051 | Data Scientists | 165 | 225 | 60 | 3.6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 |
| **17-0000** | **Architecture and Engineering Occupations** | **4,875** | **5,340** | **465** | **1.0** | **140** | **140** | **45** | **375** |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17-2051 | Civil Engineers | 225 | 250 | 25 | 1.1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 |
| 17-2112 | Industrial Engineers | 880 | 1,020 | 140 | 1.6 | 25 | 25 | 15 | 65 |
| 17-2141 | Mechanical Engineers | 1,750 | 1,955 | 205 | 1.2 | 40 | 40 | 20 | 120 |
| 17-2199 | Engineers, All Other | 125 | 135 | 10 | 0.8 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 17-3011 | Architectural and Civil Drafters | 160 | 175 | 15 | 0.9 | 5 | 5 | * | 20 |
| 17-3013 | Mechanical Drafters | 245 | 235 | -10 | -0.4 | 10 | 10 | * | 20 |
| 17-3022 | Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians | 155 | 160 | 10 | 0.6 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 17-3023 | Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technologists and Technicians | 120 | 120 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 10 |
| 17-3026 | Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians | 250 | 265 | 10 | 0.4 | 10 | 10 | * | 25 |
| 17-3027 | Mechanical Engineering Technologists and Technicians | 170 | 165 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 15 |
| 17-3031 | Surveying and Mapping Technicians | 60 | 70 | 5 | 0.8 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| **19-0000** | **Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations** | **1,650** | **1,805** | **155** | **0.9** | **35** | **35** | **15** | **160** |
| 19-1013 | Soil and Plant Scientists | 180 | 185 | 5 | 0.3 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 19-1031 | Conservation Scientists | 175 | 190 | 15 | 0.9 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 19-4012 | Agricultural Technicians | 70 | 70 | 0 | 0.0 | * | * | 0 | 10 |
| 19-4021 | Biological Technicians | 60 | 70 | 10 | 1.7 | * | * | * | 10 |
| 19-4071 | Forest and Conservation Technicians | 75 | 80 | 5 | 0.7 | * | * | 0 | 10 |
| 19-5011 | Occupational Health and Safety Specialists | 160 | 190 | 35 | 2.2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 20 |
| **21-0000** | **Community and Social Service Occupations** | **3,810** | **4,400** | **590** | **1.5** | **150** | **150** | **60** | **405** |
| 21-1012 | Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors | 555 | 615 | 60 | 1.1 | 20 | 20 | 5 | 50 |
| 21-1015 | Rehabilitation Counselors | 405 | 445 | 45 | 1.1 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 35 |
| 21-1018 | Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors | 470 | 605 | 135 | 2.9 | 20 | 20 | 15 | 60 |
| 21-1021 | Child, Family, and School Social Workers | 590 | 660 | 70 | 1.2 | 20 | 20 | 5 | 55 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21-1022 | Healthcare Social Workers | 200 | 230 | 30 | 1.5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 20 |
| 21-1023 | Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers | 140 | 170 | 30 | 2.1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 |
| 21-1091 | Health Education Specialists | 80 | 90 | 10 | 1.3 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 21-1092 | Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists | 85 | 90 | 10 | 1.2 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 21-1093 | Social and Human Service Assistants | 775 | 900 | 125 | 1.6 | 35 | 35 | 10 | 95 |
| 21-1094 | Community Health Workers | 100 | 120 | 20 | 2.0 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 21-1099 | Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other | 195 | 220 | 30 | 1.5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 25 |
| 21-2021 | Directors, Religious Activities and Education | 70 | 75 | 10 | 1.4 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| **23-0000** | **Legal Occupations** | **920** | **1,005** | **85** | **0.9** | **30** | **30** | **10** | **75** |
| 23-1011 | Lawyers | 405 | 455 | 50 | 1.2 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 20 |
| 23-2011 | Paralegals and Legal Assistants | 255 | 280 | 25 | 1.0 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 30 |
| 23-2099 | Legal Support Workers, All Other | 115 | 120 | 5 | 0.4 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 15 |
| **25-0000** | **Educational Instruction and Library Occupations** | **19,630** | **21,055** | **1,425** | **0.7** | **930** | **930** | **140** | **1,970** |
| 25-1011 | Business Teachers, Postsecondary | 190 | 215 | 25 | 1.3 | 10 | 10 | * | 20 |
| 25-1022 | Mathematical Science Teachers, Postsecondary | 105 | 115 | 10 | 1.0 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 25-1042 | Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary | 125 | 140 | 20 | 1.6 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 25-1071 | Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary | 250 | 310 | 65 | 2.6 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 25 |
| 25-1072 | Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary | 110 | 140 | 30 | 2.7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 |
| 25-1081 | Education Teachers, Postsecondary | 260 | 285 | 25 | 1.0 | 10 | 10 | * | 25 |
| 25-1121 | Art, Drama, and Music Teachers, Postsecondary | 280 | 305 | 25 | 0.9 | 15 | 15 | * | 25 |
| 25-1122 | Communications Teachers, Postsecondary | 120 | 130 | 10 | 0.8 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 25-1123 | English Language and Literature Teachers, Postsecondary | 110 | 115 | 5 | 0.5 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 25-1126 | Philosophy and Religion Teachers, Postsecondary | 85 | 90 | 5 | 0.6 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |

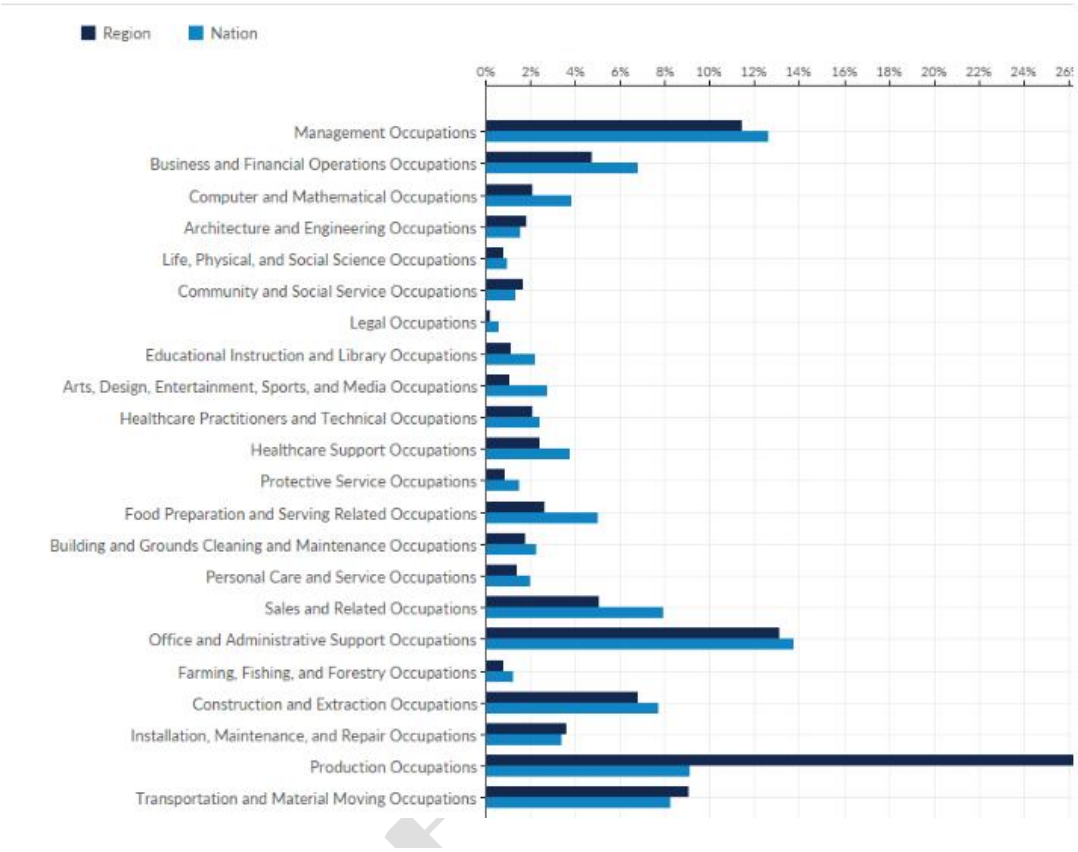
| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25-1194 | Career/Technical Education Teachers, Postsecondary | 175 | 185 | 10 | 0.6 | 10 | 10 | * | 15 |
| 25-1199 | Postsecondary Teachers, All Other | 280 | 310 | 25 | 0.9 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 25 |
| 25-2011 | Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education | 840 | 930 | 90 | 1.1 | 40 | 40 | 10 | 100 |
| 25-2012 | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | 225 | 240 | 15 | 0.7 | 10 | 10 | * | 25 |
| 25-2021 | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | 3,105 | 3,290 | 180 | 0.6 | 105 | 105 | 20 | 230 |
| 25-2022 | Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | 1,180 | 1,250 | 70 | 0.6 | 40 | 40 | 5 | 90 |
| 25-2031 | Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | 2,250 | 2,390 | 140 | 0.6 | 65 | 65 | 15 | 155 |
| 25-2032 | Career/Technical Education Teachers, Secondary School | 145 | 150 | 5 | 0.3 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 25-2051 | Special Education Teachers, Preschool | 240 | 255 | 15 | 0.6 | 10 | 10 | * | 20 |
| 25-2052 | Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School | 305 | 325 | 15 | 0.5 | 10 | 10 | * | 20 |
| 25-2057 | Special Education Teachers, Middle School | 135 | 140 | 5 | 0.4 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 25-2058 | Special Education Teachers, Secondary School | 320 | 335 | 20 | 0.6 | 10 | 10 | * | 25 |
| 25-3021 | Self-Enrichment Teachers | 245 | 265 | 20 | 0.8 | 15 | 15 | * | 30 |
| 25-3031 | Substitute Teachers, Short-Term | 1,465 | 1,615 | 150 | 1.0 | 95 | 95 | 15 | 200 |
| 25-3041 | Tutors | 170 | 185 | 15 | 0.9 | 15 | 15 | * | 30 |
| 25-3099 | Teachers and Instructors, All Other | 130 | 140 | 10 | 0.8 | 10 | 10 | * | 15 |
| 25-4022 | Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | 305 | 330 | 25 | 0.8 | 15 | 15 | * | 30 |
| 25-4031 | Library Technicians | 265 | 260 | -5 | -0.2 | 25 | 25 | 0 | 45 |
| 25-9031 | Instructional Coordinators | 335 | 365 | 25 | 0.7 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 35 |
| 25-9044 | Teaching Assistants, Postsecondary | 285 | 310 | 30 | 1.1 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 40 |
| 25-9045 | Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | 4,400 | 4,655 | 250 | 0.6 | 260 | 260 | 25 | 550 |
| 25-9099 | Educational Instruction and Library Workers, All Other | 265 | 285 | 20 | 0.8 | 15 | 15 | * | 25 |
| **27-0000** | **Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations** | **3,730** | **3,960** | **235** | **0.6** | **170** | **170** | **25** | **420** |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27-1021 | Commercial and Industrial Designers | 130 | 135 | 5 | 0.4 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 27-1023 | Floral Designers | 105 | 85 | -20 | -1.9 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 27-1024 | Graphic Designers | 345 | 370 | 25 | 0.7 | 10 | 10 | * | 30 |
| 27-1025 | Interior Designers | 90 | 100 | 10 | 1.1 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 27-1026 | Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers | 220 | 230 | 10 | 0.5 | 10 | 10 | * | 25 |
| 27-2012 | Producers and Directors | 85 | 90 | 5 | 0.6 | * | * | * | 10 |
| 27-2022 | Coaches and Scouts | 1,170 | 1,315 | 145 | 1.2 | 70 | 70 | 15 | 170 |
| 27-3023 | News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists | 120 | 115 | -5 | -0.4 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 15 |
| 27-3031 | Public Relations Specialists | 305 | 340 | 35 | 1.1 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 30 |
| 27-3041 | Editors | 110 | 110 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 10 |
| 27-3042 | Technical Writers | 110 | 120 | 10 | 0.9 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 27-3043 | Writers and Authors | 160 | 150 | -5 | -0.3 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| 27-4021 | Photographers | 160 | 145 | -15 | -0.9 | 5 | 5 | * | 15 |
| **29-0000** | **Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations** | **14,995** | **16,980** | **1,985** | **1.3** | **510** | **510** | **200** | **1,095** |
| 29-1031 | Dietitians and Nutritionists | 130 | 145 | 15 | 1.2 | 5 | 5 | * | 10 |
| 29-1051 | Pharmacists | 420 | 460 | 40 | 1.0 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 20 |
| 29-1071 | Physician Assistants | 160 | 215 | 55 | 3.4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 |
| 29-1122 | Occupational Therapists | 180 | 215 | 30 | 1.7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 |
| 29-1123 | Physical Therapists | 415 | 490 | 75 | 1.8 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 25 |

# APPENDIX G – OCCUPATION UNEMPLOYMENT OVERVIEW

8,117

Total Unemployment (9/2023)




**Data Table (Not Seasonally Adjusted)**

| Year of Date | Month of Date | Geography | Area Name | Labor Force | Employment | Unemployment | Unemployment Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2023 | September | State | Iowa | 1,729,900 | 1,679,800 | 50,100 | 2.9% |
| | | Local Workforce De.. | Northeast Iowa LWDA | 284,900 | 276,900 | 8,100 | 2.8% |
| | August | State | Iowa | 1,727,800 | 1,670,400 | 57,400 | 3.3% |
| | | Local Workforce De.. | Northeast Iowa LWDA | 283,400 | 274,200 | 9,200 | 3.2% |
| | July | State | Iowa | 1,748,100 | 1,694,200 | 53,900 | 3.1% |
| | | Local Workforce De.. | Northeast Iowa LWDA | 286,800 | 277,900 | 8,900 | 3.1% |
| | June | State | Iowa | 1,746,300 | 1,693,700 | 52,600 | 3.0% |
| | | Local Workforce De.. | Northeast Iowa LWDA | 286,500 | 277,900 | 8,600 | 3.0% |
| | May | State | Iowa | 1,737,200 | 1,691,300 | 45,900 | 2.6% |
| | | Local Workforce De.. | Northeast Iowa LWDA | 286,700 | 278,300 | 8,400 | 2.9% |
| | April | State | Iowa | 1,735,000 | 1,694,500 | 40,500 | 2.3% |
| | | Local Workforce De.. | Northeast Iowa LWDA | 285,300 | 278,300 | 7,000 | 2.4% |
| | March | State | Iowa | 1,732,400 | 1,680,400 | 51,900 | 3.0% |
| | | Local Workforce De.. | Northeast Iowa LWDA | 285,600 | 276,300 | 9,300 | 3.3% |
| | February | State | Iowa | 1,727,100 | 1,670,800 | 56,200 | 3.3% |

*Source: Iowa Workforce Development , Labor Market Division, Local Area Unemployment Statistics program*

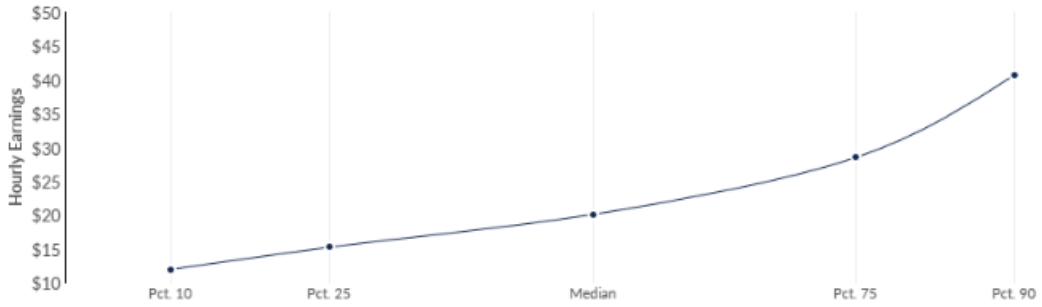
# APPENDIX H – OCCUPATION TALENT POOL

## Executive Summary

| 248,809 | 1.00 | $20.08/hr | 10,165 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jobs | Concentration | Median Earnings | Educational Completions |
| Jobs decreased by 5,184 over the last 5 years. Projected to increase by 18,193 over the next 5 years. | Regional job concentration per capita is 1.00 times the national job concentration. | Regional median earnings are $1.90/hr below the national median earnings of $21.98/hr. | Related educational completions are produced by 19 institutions in the region. |

## Earnings

| $24.66/hr | $15.22/hr | $20.08/hr | $28.52/hr |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average Earnings | 25th Percentile Earnings | Median Earnings | 75th Percentile Earnings |




| Occupation | Average Earnings | 25th Percentile Earnings | Median Earnings | 75th Percentile Earnings |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chief Executives (11-1011) | $83.27 | $34.50 | $67.85 | $104.89 |
| General and Operations Managers (11-1021) | $41.47 | $23.65 | $35.66 | $50.24 |
| Legislators (11-1031) | $25.47 | $13.78 | $17.69 | $25.89 |
| Advertising and Promotions Managers (11-2011) | $54.98 | $42.29 | $52.18 | $61.75 |
| Marketing Managers (11-2021) | $61.34 | $46.08 | $62.40 | $71.69 |
| Sales Managers (11-2022) | $60.46 | $40.76 | $54.61 | $73.27 |
| Public Relations Managers (11-2032) | $55.24 | $36.77 | $57.28 | $70.48 |
| Fundraising Managers (11-2033) | $46.44 | $30.75 | $44.83 | $64.05 |
| Administrative Services Managers (11-3012) | $48.18 | $32.75 | $42.51 | $61.12 |
| Facilities Managers (11-3013) | $43.26 | $34.27 | $39.79 | $50.01 |
| Computer and Information Systems Managers (11-3021) | $58.33 | $46.32 | $55.56 | $66.21 |

## APPENDIX I – EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS IN IN-DEMAND INDUSTRIES

**Rate, from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" regarding problems your organization has filling job openings.**

| ORGANIZATION HAS PROBLEM FILLING POSITIONS DUE TO: | DISAGREE | NEUTRAL | AGREE |
|---|---|---|---|
| General Lack of Applicants | 9.7% | 18.2% | **72.1%** |
| Lack of Qualified Applicants | 7.0% | 21.5% | **71.5%** |
| Wage Applicants are Willing to Accept | 24.6% | 34.6% | **40.8%** |
| Local Competition | 23.1% | 40.3% | **36.6%** |
| Type of Work Involved | 27.5% | 40.7% | **31.8%** |
| Benefit Package Applicants Expect | 34.3% | 39.3% | **26.4%** |
| Hours or Shifts Offered | 35.6% | 38.4% | **26.0%** |
| Lack of Telework/Hybrid Schedule Options | 35.6% | 52.4% | **12.0%** |

**Ratings of "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were summed and listed under the above "disagree" column. Ratings of "strongly agree" and "agree" were summed and listed under the above "agree" column. Table is sorted by the "agree" column, high-to-low.*

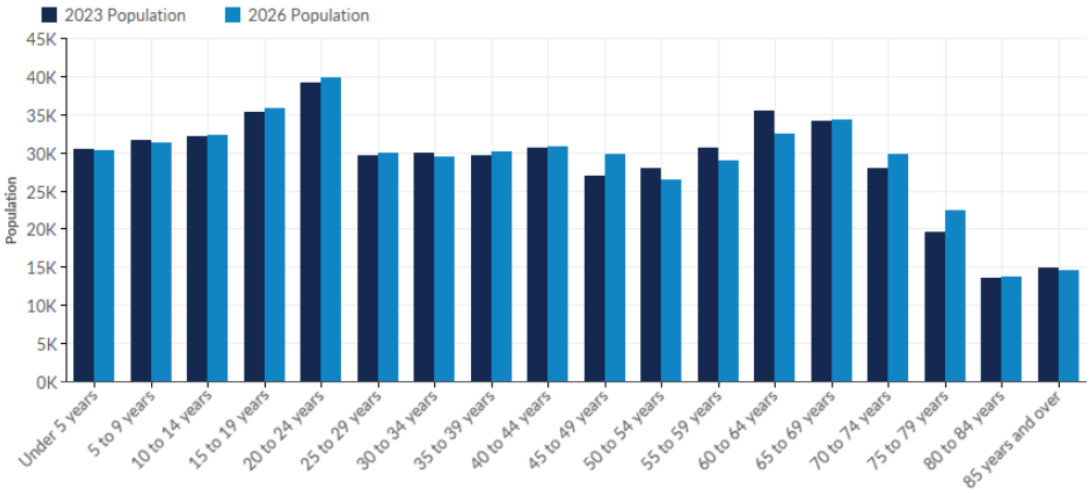
| EMPLOYER RESPONSE | % USED |
|---|---|
| Revised Pay Scale | 54.5% |
| Expanded Current Employees Responsibilities/Job Duties | 39.8% |
| Hired a Less Qualified Applicant | 37.3% |
| Increased Recruiting Efforts | 34.0% |
| Chose Not to Fill a Job Opening | 26.6% |
| Increased Overtime for Current Employees | 25.9% |
| Provided Flexible Scheduling | 23.9% |
| Revised Benefits | 17.4% |
| Outsourced Work or Used Contract Services | 14.3% |
| Increased Training | 13.7% |

# APPENDIX J – POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Cohort Totals

| Area | 2023 Population | 2026 Population | Change | % Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 Counties | 519,272 | 522,160 | 2,888 | 1% |
| State | 3,226,686 | 3,289,536 | 62,850 | 2% |
| Nation | 335,528,243 | 341,276,033 | 5,747,790 | 2% |

Population by Age Cohort




| | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65-99 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting** | 24% | 21% | 15% | 15% | 11% |
| **Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction** | 18% | 20% | 17% | 24% | 10% |
| **Utilities** | 21% | 25% | 24% | 22% | 3% |
| **Construction** | 21% | 22% | 18% | 17% | 7% |
| **Manufacturing** | 21% | 23% | 22% | 21% | 5% |
| **Wholesale Trade** | 19% | 20% | 21% | 22% | 10% |
| **Retail Trade** | 17% | 16% | 14% | 15% | 9% |
| **Transportation and Warehousing** | 21% | 21% | 18% | 18% | 8% |
| **Information** | 19% | 24% | 21% | 19% | 7% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Finance and Insurance** | 24% | 25% | 21% | 19% | 6% |
| **Real Estate and Rental and Leasing** | 16% | 21% | 16% | 22% | 14% |
| **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** | 22% | 23% | 19% | 17% | 9% |
| **Management of Companies and Enterprises** | 20% | 21% | 21% | 20% | 7% |
| **Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services** | 24% | 23% | 17% | 15% | 7% |
| **Educational Services** | 16% | 21% | 20% | 19% | 9% |
| **Health Care and Social Assistance** | 20% | 20% | 17% | 19% | 8% |
| **Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation** | 17% | 16% | 14% | 15% | 11% |
| **Accommodation and Food Services** | 19% | 15% | 11% | 9% | 4% |
| **Other Services (except Public Administration)** | 20% | 21% | 17% | 17% | 9% |
| **Public Administration** | | | | | |

*Source: QWI Explorer application, U.S. Census Bureau*

## Demographic Details

### Industry Age Breakdown

| | % of Jobs | Jobs |
|---|---|---|
| 14-18 | 4.4% | 10,762 |
| 19-24 | 11.5% | 28,358 |
| 25-34 | 20.4% | 50,344 |
| 35-44 | 20.6% | 50,917 |
| 45-54 | 18.3% | 45,209 |
| 55-64 | 18.4% | 45,346 |
| 65+ | 6.5% | 15,996 |

*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

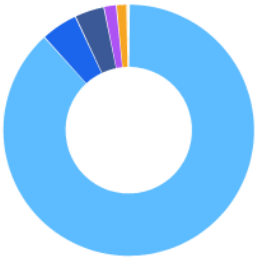
| | Not Hispanic or Latino | Hispanic or Latino |
|---|---|---|
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 81% | 19% |
| Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | 99% | |
| Utilities | 99% | |
| Construction | 94% | 6% |
| Manufacturing | 93% | 7% |
| Wholesale Trade | 98% | 2% |
| Retail Trade | 95% | 5% |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 96% | 4% |
| Information | 98% | 2% |
| Finance and Insurance | 98% | 2% |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 97% | 3% |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 98% | 2% |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises | 97% | 3% |
| Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 93% | 7% |
| Educational Services | 97% | 3% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 97% | 3% |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 97% | 3% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 93% | 7% |
| Other Services (except Public Administration) | 96% | 4% |

*Source: QWI Explorer application, U.S. Census Bureau*

| | White Alone | Black or African American Alone | American Indian or Alaska Native Alone | Asian Alone | Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone | Two or More Race Groups |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 94% | 2% | 1% | 1% | | 1% |
| Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | 99% | | | | 0% | |
| Utilities | 99% | | | | 0% | |
| Construction | 96% | 2% | 0% | 1% | | 1% |
| Manufacturing | 90% | 5% | 0% | 3% | 0% | 1% |
| Wholesale Trade | 98% | 1% | 0% | 1% | | 1% |
| Retail Trade | 92% | 4% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 2% |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 89% | 7% | 1% | 1% | | 2% |
| Information | 96% | 2% | | 1% | | 1% |
| Finance and Insurance | 97% | 2% | 0% | 1% | | 1% |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 94% | | | | | |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 95% | 2% | | 2% | | 1% |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises | 94% | 4% | | 1% | | 1% |
| Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 83% | 12% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 2% |
| Educational Services | 94% | 2% | | 2% | | 1% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 93% | 4% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 1% |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 94% | 3% | | 1% | | 2% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 86% | 7% | 1% | 2% | | 3% |
| Other Services (except Public Administration) | 94% | 3% | | 1% | | 1% |
| Public Administration | | | | | | |

*Source: QWI Explorer application, U.S. Census Bureau*

## Industry Race/Ethnicity Breakdown



| | % of Jobs | Jobs |
|---|---|---|
| White | 88.2% | 217,772 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 4.7% | 11,719 |
| Black or African American | 3.8% | 9,417 |
| Asian | 1.6% | 3,968 |
| Two or More Races | 1.3% | 3,309 |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0.2% | 373 |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 0.2% | 373 |

*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

| | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 70% | 31% |
| Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | 88% | 12% |
| Utilities | 84% | 16% |
| Construction | 87% | 13% |
| Manufacturing | 73% | 27% |
| Wholesale Trade | 73% | 27% |
| Retail Trade | 49% | 51% |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 71% | 29% |
| Information | 55% | 45% |
| Finance and Insurance | 31% | 69% |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 52% | 49% |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 46% | 54% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Management of Companies and Enterprises | 44% | 56% |
| Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 53% | 47% |
| Educational Services | 35% | 65% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 16% | 84% |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 48% | 52% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 40% | 60% |
| Other Services (except Public Administration) | 50% | 50% |
| Public Administration | | |

*Source: QWI Explorer application, U.S. Census Bureau*

**Industry Gender Breakdown**

| | % of Jobs | Jobs |
|---|---|---|
| Males | 50.6% | 124,848 |
| Females | 49.4% | 122,084 |

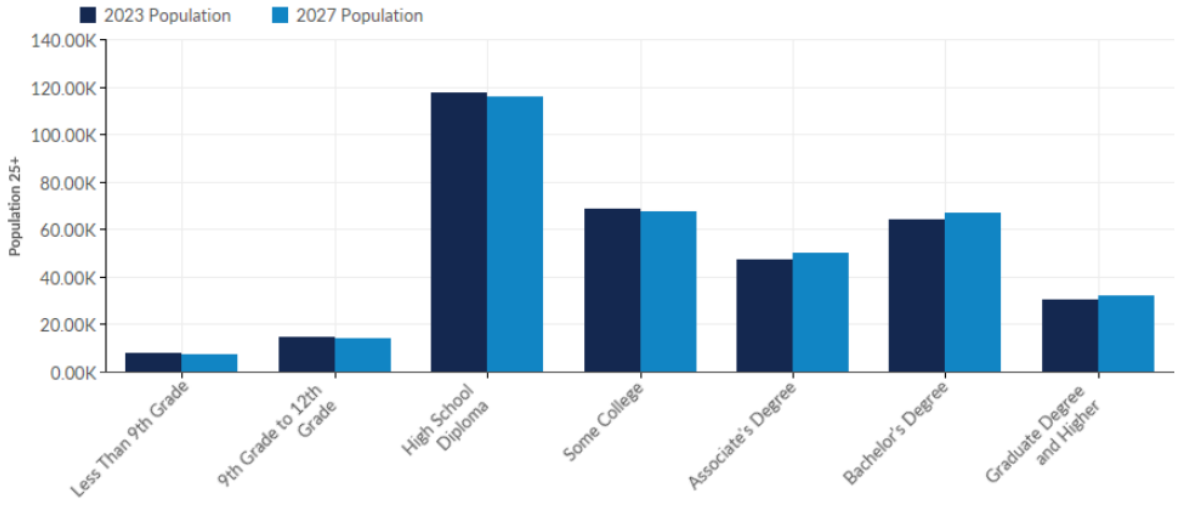
*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

## APPENDIX K – EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

| | Less than high school | High school or equivalent, no college | Some college or Associate degree | Bachelor's degree or advanced degree | Educational attainment not available (workers aged 24 or younger) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 16% | 27% | 26% | 16% | 14% |
| Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | 10% | 38% | 29% | 14% | 10% |
| Utilities | 6% | 24% | 40% | 24% | 6% |
| Construction | 12% | 31% | 29% | 13% | 16% |
| Manufacturing | 11% | 32% | 30% | 18% | 9% |
| Wholesale Trade | 8% | 31% | 34% | 19% | 9% |
| Retail Trade | 8% | 24% | 25% | 14% | 29% |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 11% | 31% | 29% | 15% | 15% |
| Information | 6% | 21% | 31% | 31% | 11% |
| Finance and Insurance | 6% | 22% | 33% | 32% | 7% |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 9% | 29% | 32% | 19% | 11% |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 6% | 21% | 30% | 33% | 11% |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises | 8% | 25% | 32% | 24% | 11% |
| Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 12% | 27% | 29% | 19% | 14% |
| Educational Services | 5% | 18% | 23% | 37% | 16% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 7% | 22% | 33% | 23% | 16% |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 7% | 22% | 25% | 18% | 27% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 9% | 19% | 19% | 11% | 42% |
| Other Services (except Public Administration) | 8% | 26% | 31% | 18% | 17% |
| Public Administration | | | | | |

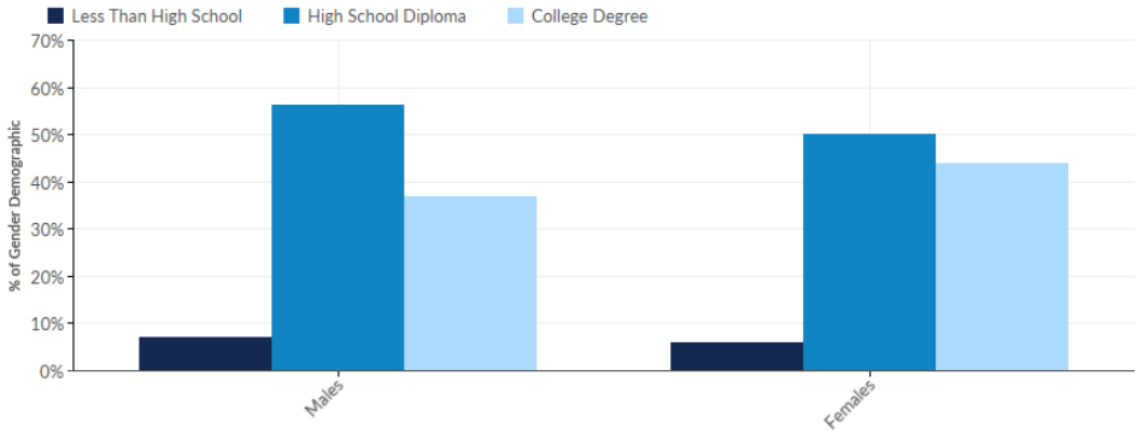
Source: QWI Explorer application, U.S. Census Bureau

Educational Attainment by Level



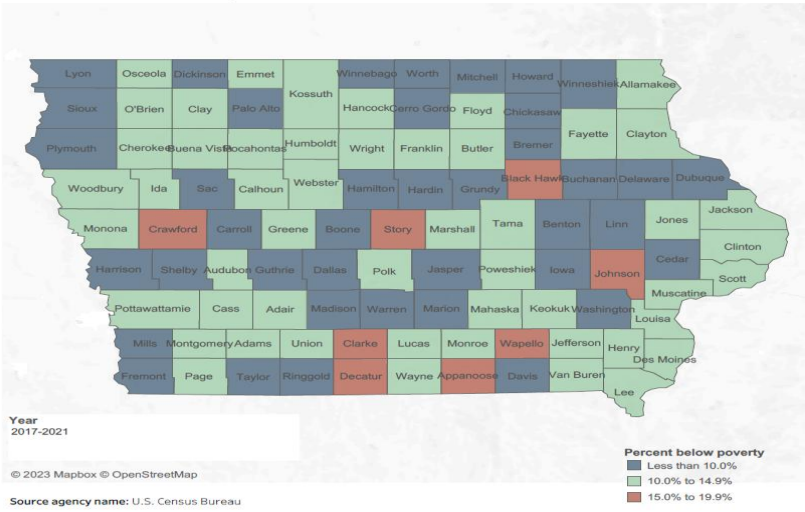

| Education Level | 2023 Population | 2027 Population | 2023 % of Population | 2023 State % Population | 2023 National % Population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less Than 9th Grade | 8,125 | 7,258 | 2% | 3% | 5% |
| 9th Grade to 12th Grade | 14,597 | 13,786 | 4% | 4% | 6% |
| High School Diploma | 117,719 | 115,600 | 34% | 30% | 26% |
| Some College | 68,665 | 67,636 | 20% | 20% | 20% |
| Associate's Degree | 47,503 | 50,019 | 14% | 12% | 9% |
| Bachelor's Degree | 63,968 | 67,066 | 18% | 21% | 21% |
| Graduate Degree and Higher | 30,229 | 31,914 | 9% | 10% | 14% |
| | 350,806 | 353,279 | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Educational Attainment by Gender

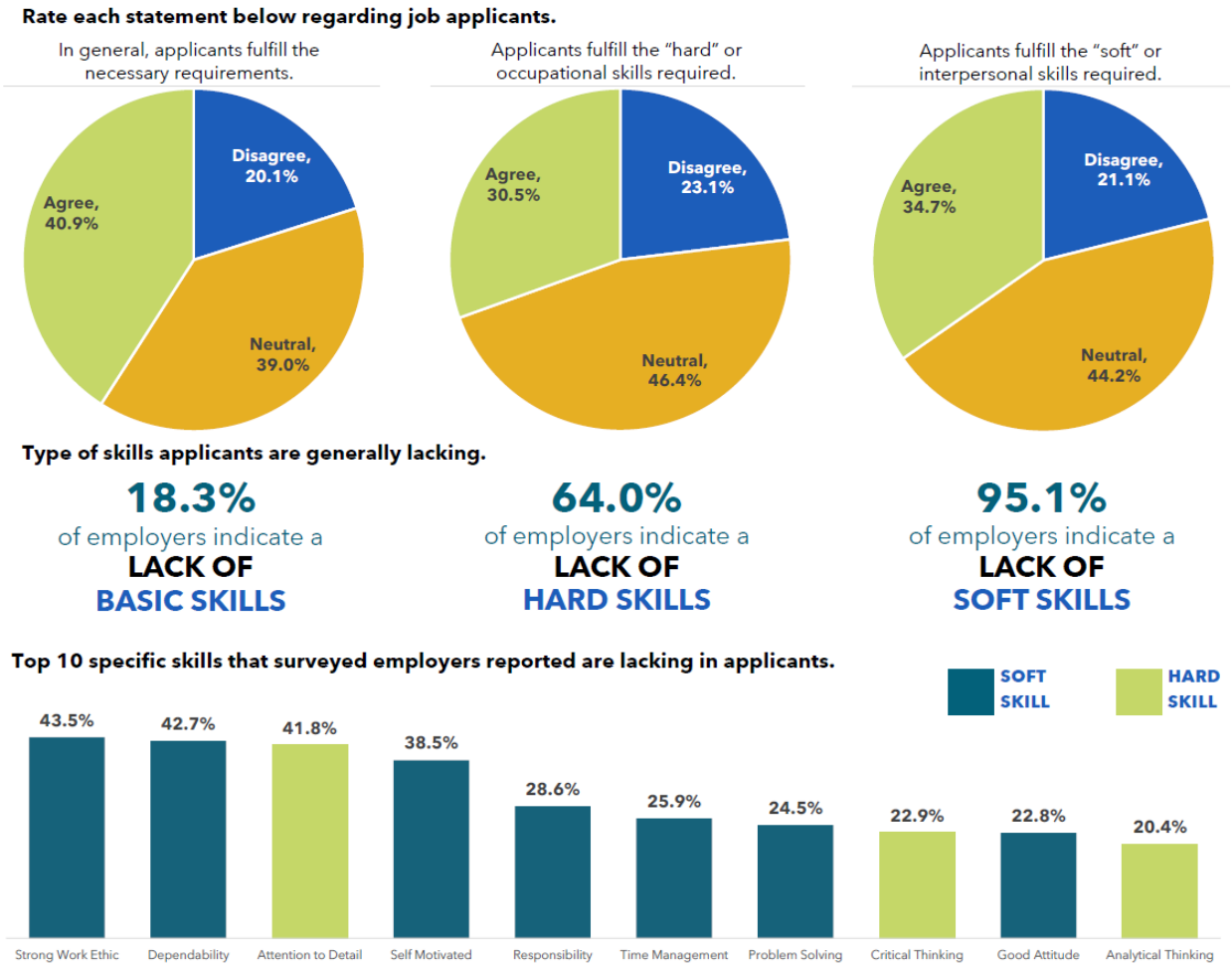



| Gender | 2023 Population | 2027 Population | 2023 Less Than High School | 2023 High School Diploma | 2023 College Degree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Males | 173,791 | 177,524 | 12,381 | 97,565 | 63,845 |
| Females | 177,015 | 175,755 | 10,341 | 88,819 | 77,855 |
| | 350,806 | 353,279 | 22,722 | 186,384 | 141,700 |

Poverty Rate in Iowa Counties: 2017-2021



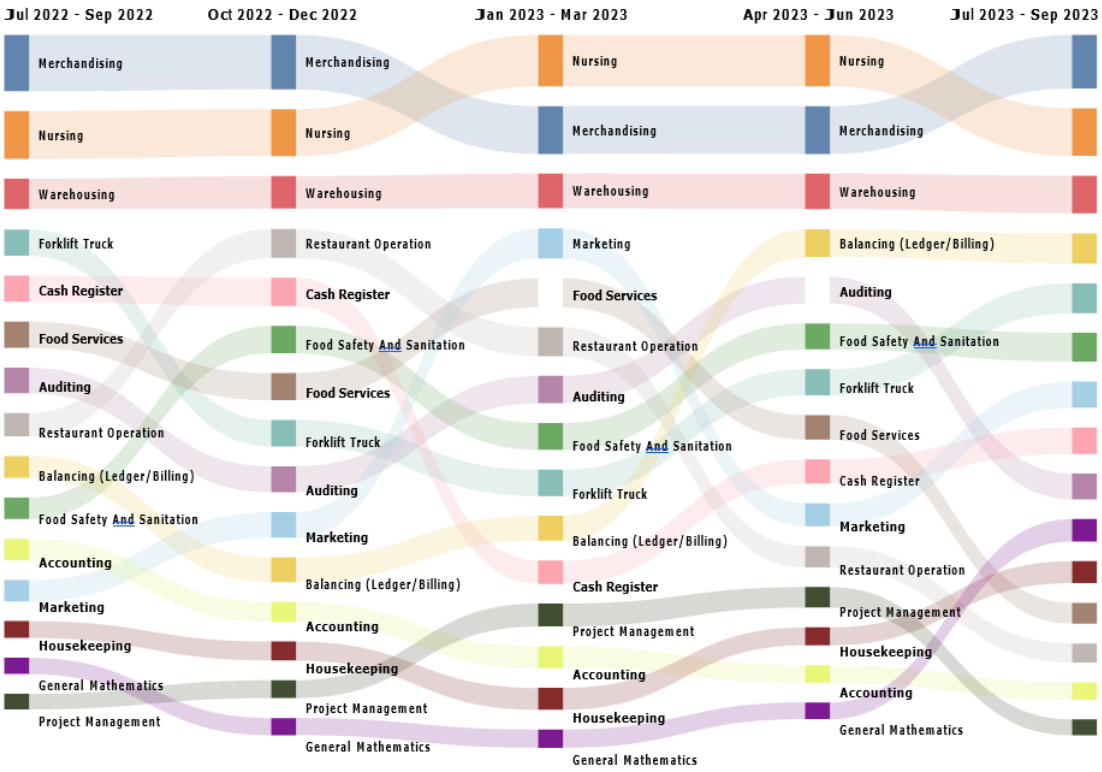

**Source agency name:** U.S. Census Bureau




## What skills are they posting for?

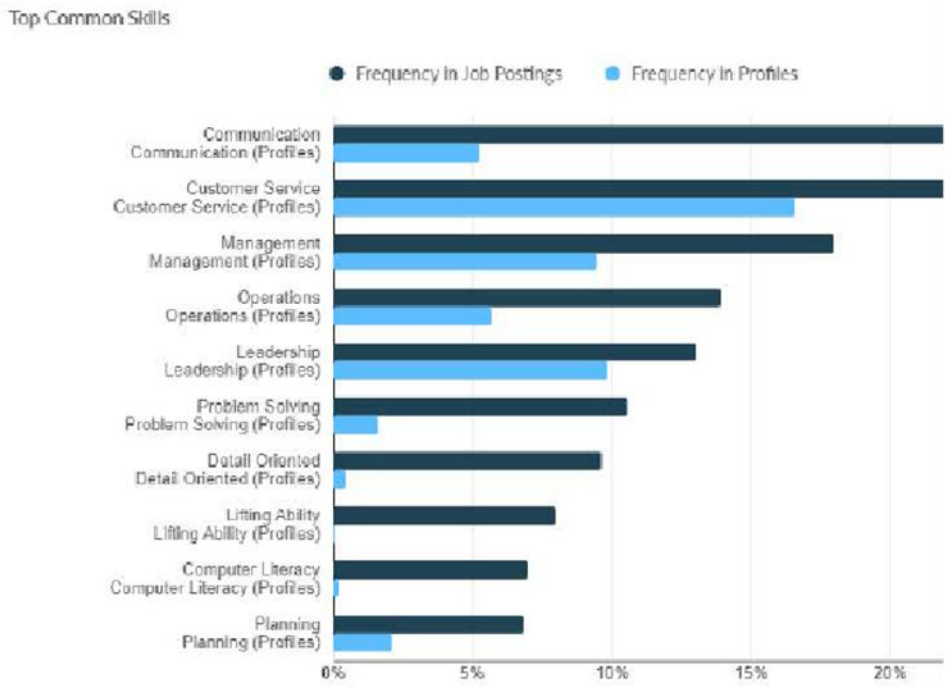
## Top 15 Skills for All Job Types by Quarter

Skills help us understand the direction an industry is headed.




*Source: Lightcast's model, incorporating data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (IBEA)*

# APPENDIX M – EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS




| Skills | Postings | % of Total Postings | Profiles |
|---|---|---|---|
| Communication | 13,743 | 28% | 3,789 |
| Customer Service | 12,942 | 27% | 11,985 |
| Management | 8,688 | 18% | 6,826 |
| Operations | 6,736 | 14% | 4,106 |
| Leadership | 6,307 | 13% | 7,145 |

## APPENDIX N – WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

| Programs | Partner | Center Location | Type of Partner |
|---|---|---|---|
| Title I Adult | North Iowa Area Community College/Northeast Iowa Community College | Waterloo, Mason City, Dubuque, Decorah | Core Partner |
| Title I Dislocated Worker | North Iowa Area Community College/Northeast Iowa Community College | Waterloo, Mason City, Dubuque, Decorah | Core Partner |
| Title I Youth | North Iowa Area Community College/Northeast Iowa Community College | Waterloo, Mason City, Dubuque, Decorah | Core Partner |
| Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy | North Iowa Area Community College | Mason City, Charles City, Garner, Hampton, Forest City | Core Partner |
| Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy | Northeast Iowa Community College | Calmar, Dubuque, Manchester, Oelwein, Waukon, Decorah | Core Partner |
| Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy | Hawkeye Community College | Waterloo | Core Partner |
| Title III Wagner-Peyser | Iowa Workforce Development | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah, Postville | Core Partner |
| Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation | Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Core Partner |
| Title IV Department for the Blind | Department for the Blind | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Core Partner |
| Career and Technical Education | North Iowa Area Community College | Mason City | Required Partner |
| Career and Technical Education | Northeast Iowa Community College | Calmar | Required Partner |
| Career and Technical Education | Hawkeye Community College | Waterloo | Required Partner |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) | AARP | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| National Farmworker Jobs Program | Proteus, Inc. | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| State Unemployment Compensation Program | Iowa Workforce Development | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) | Iowa Workforce Development | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| ReEntry Employment Opportunities (REO) Programs | Iowa Workforce Development | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) | Promise Jobs | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| RESEA | Iowa Workforce Development | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program | Iowa Workforce Development | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| Native American Programs | American Indian Council | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| Job Corps | Job Corps | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Required Partner |
| Ticket-to-Work | Iowa Workforce Development | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Additional Partner |
| Re-Employment Case Management (RCM) | Iowa Workforce Development | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Additional Partner |
| Home Base Iowa | Iowa Workforce Development | Mason City, Waterloo, Dubuque, Decorah | Additional Partner |

# APPENDIX O – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Northeast Iowa MOU/IFA (PY24-PY27) – Modified July 1, 2026 – Northeast Iowa Workforce Development

## APPENDIX P – NORTHEAST IOWA WIOA NEGOTIATED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE FOR PY26 AND PY27

Northeast Iowa WIOA Negotiated Levels of Performance for PY26 and PY27

| Adult | PY26 | PY27 |
|---|---|---|
| Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit | 78.0% | 78.0% |
| Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 76.0% | 76.0% |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit | $8,000 | $8,100 |
| Credential Attainment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 73.0% | 74.0% |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 69.0% | 70.0% |

| Dislocated Worker | PY26 | PY27 |
|---|---|---|
| Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit | 83.0% | 83.5% |
| Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 83.0% | 83.5% |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit | $10,200 | $10,300 |
| Credential Attainment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 79.5% | 80.5% |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 70.0% | 71.0% |

| Youth | PY26 | PY27 |
|---|---|---|
| Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit | 75.0% | 75.0% |
| Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 75.0% | 75.0% |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit | $4,400 | $4,400 |
| Credential Attainment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 55.0% | 55.0% |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 52.0% | 52.5% |

| Wagner Peyser (Not Negotiated with LWDBs) | PY26 | PY27 |
|---|---|---|
| Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit | 71% | 71% |
| Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 70% | 70% |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit | $9,200 | $9,200 |

Additional Indicators of Performance

| |
|---|
| None identified at this time. |