



Iowa Workforce Development Strategic and Operational Plan

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

To Stakeholders, Team Members, and Fellow Iowans:



Iowa Workforce Development is our state's premier workforce agency, serving both employers and job seekers to fulfill a mission that everyone shares – to unlock the possibilities in today's workforce and build our way toward the workforce Iowa will need for the future.

Building both for the present and longer term is a formidable challenge, but we believe Iowa has the expertise and the tools to make it happen. The teams that encompass Iowa Workforce Development are laser-focused on advancing the career and business goals of our fellow Iowans. We exist to help everyone else achieve their needs.

Toward this end, our agency has taken a number of bold actions in recent years:

- We've **revamped the process** for Iowans who need our services most, refocusing our unemployment system to make it a reemployment system that truly focuses on finding that next career.
- We've **aligned our workforce programs** to work much more closely together and in much more efficient ways for the Iowans who rely on them for that boost to their career.
- We've **created new divisions and offices** that more directly support the workforce needs of employers and help match them with the job seekers being trained or prepared in state programs.

Moving forward, we're committed to identifying those areas of our workforce that need our help the most – and who the people in them with untapped potential to help us increase the overall participation in our labor force.

I'm incredibly proud to lead the hardworking and talented team at IWD, and I invite you to join us in our efforts to make this work a reality each and every day across Iowa.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Townsend". The script is fluid and cursive.

Beth Townsend
Executive Director

ABOUT IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATE'S WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Governor Reynold's Workforce Priorities

Building a Strong, Competitive Iowa

Mission

We power Iowa's possibilities by connecting workers to opportunities and employers to workforce solutions.

Vision

To create, enable and sustain the most future ready workforce in the nation.

About

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) is a state agency committed to providing employment services for individual job seekers and to serving employers by helping them find the skilled workforce they need. Both groups can connect with each other through iowaWorks.gov, the state's largest job bank.

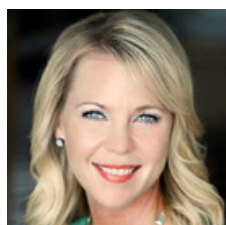
Job seekers can find a variety of career counseling and workshop services by visiting iowaWorks.gov or one of the [**iowaWORKS centers located around the state**](#). IWD supports employers through its Business Engagement Division and provides a variety of resources and one-on-one support. This includes helping employers to post jobs, recruit veterans, apply for qualifying federal tax credits, and connect with workforce training programs available through several state programs.

IWD continually strives to improve processes and align the organization in such a way that it provides effective, demand-driven products and services. In July 2023, the [**state centralized Iowa's workforce-related programs and services within IWD**](#), adding Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and the Adult Education and Literacy programs to the agency. VRS will continue to work with Iowans who have a disability to help them prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in employment. The alignment of these programs and additions to IWD are expected to streamline the resources and services available to all Iowans seeking new careers.

Senior Leadership



Beth Townsend
Executive Director



Georgia Van Gundy
Deputy Director

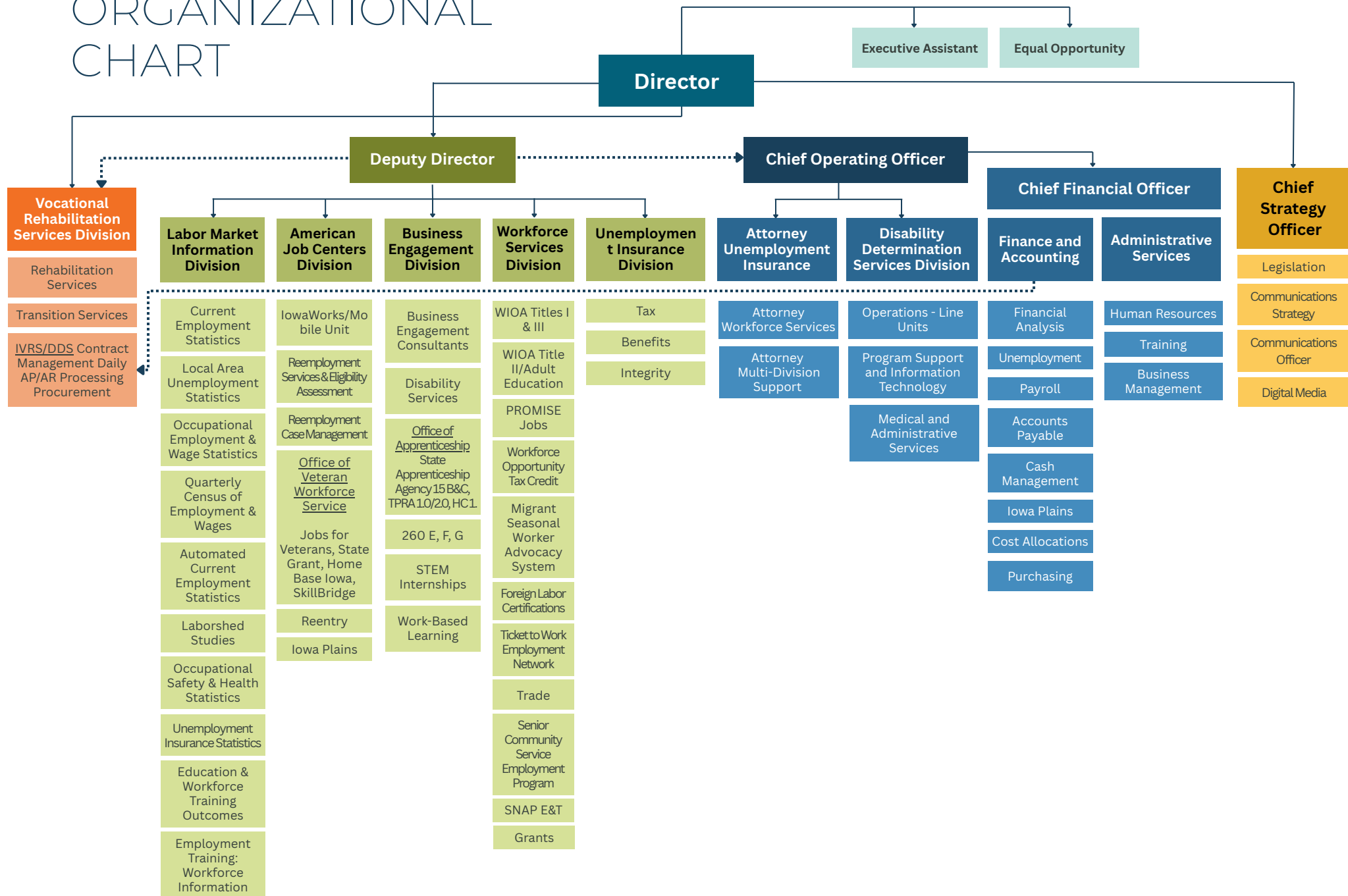


Jon Peppetti
Chief Operating Officer



Tim Goodwin
Chief Strategy Officer

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



HOW THIS PLAN IS STRUCTURED

To provide simplicity and transparency to our constituents, we have created one plan which distinguishes the main strategic initiatives for Iowa Workforce Development. The document also identifies key goals and tactics for FY 2026 that need an intentional focus to move our initiatives forward.

The information laid out in this strategic plan will help our constituents understand the priority Governor Reynolds has placed on workforce and how our employees will focus their time and resources to operationalize the plan and meet the needs of our customers. It is important that Iowans understand our strategic initiatives and how we are measuring the impact that we are making as we meet the workforce needs of individuals, business and communities.

The strategies will be led and supported by IWD leadership with the tactics and metrics developed through a coordinated effort across the divisions in the department and statewide workforce infrastructure. The plan aligns department goals and strategies with the Governor's priorities, as well as customer needs.

DIVISION OVERVIEW

Department of Workforce

American Job Centers	Comprised of one-stop centers and offices that provide a variety of services to meet the workforce and workplace needs of job seekers, dislocated workers, unemployed persons, and Iowa businesses
Business Engagement	Provides support and outreach to businesses across the State of Iowa
Disability Determination Services	Makes disability determinations for Iowans who apply for and receive Social Security Administration
Labor Market Information	Gathers, analyzes, and publishes information on the economy, workforce, and occupations
Unemployment Insurance	Collects unemployment insurance taxes, maintains the Iowa Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, and makes payments to eligible jobless Iowans
Vocational Rehabilitation	Provides services to individuals who experience a disability with preparing for, obtaining, retaining, and advancing in employment
Workforce Services	Administers state and federally funded employment and training programs delivered by agency and partner program staff at regional one-stop centers and offices.
Financial Management	Responsible for monitoring, controlling, protecting, and reporting on IWD's financial resources

IWD STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

In order for Iowa's economy to be competitive, grow and thrive, we must have a skilled workforce that can meet the needs of our employers. IWD has three primary customers:

- 1 **Iowans** pursuing employment
- 2 **Businesses** seeking a skilled workforce
- 3 **Communities** looking for solutions to meet their local workforce needs

With our customers in mind and including the Governor's workforce priority of Building a Strong and Competitive Iowa, the department has developed seven strategic initiatives aligned with her priority for the state fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Priorities



**Develop a
Trained
Workforce to
Meet Employers'
Needs**



**Build Our Next
Generation of
Workforce Through
Work-Based
Learning**



**Assist Individuals
and Businesses in
Breaking Down
Barriers to
Employment**



**Support
Employer
Growth and
Sustainability**



**Provide
Innovative
Solutions to
Build Workforce
Solutions**



**Break Down
Barriers to
Employment
in Our
Communities**



**Improve
Overall Service
to Our
Customers**

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1: DEVELOP A TRAINED WORKFORCE TO MEET EMPLOYER'S NEEDS



GOAL 1: Provide Targeted Reemployment activities to customers working with our American Job Centers (AJC's)

Tactics

- Implement Utilization of My Career Plan statewide
- Promote the opportunity for AJC customers to schedule one-on-one resume assistance and participation in mock interviews
- Identify targeted populations that need individualized employment services and align them with services (Veterans, Justice Involved Citizens, individuals with disabilities and individuals nearing unemployment insurance exhaustion)

Measures of Success

- ✓ Percentage of job seekers expanding their portfolio of services that they leverage at the AJC's
- ✓ Percentage of jobs developed or filled due to a connection between employers and targeted populations
- ✓ Continuous improvement of classes, services and workshops offered to job seekers through the AJC's
- ✓ Percent of unemployed Iowan's enrolled in our reemployment case management program leveraging other services offered through the AJC's to find employment

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1: DEVELOP A TRAINED WORKFORCE TO MEET EMPLOYER'S NEEDS



GOAL 2: Leverage data to create awareness around current labor market demands

Tactic

➤ Improve outreach to career counselors, students, and jobseekers related to occupational needs

Measure of Success



Percent of external audiences leveraging career exploration tools and data produced by the Labor Market Division



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2: BUILD OUR NEXT GENERATION OF WORKFORCE THROUGH WORK-BASED LEARNING (WBL)



GOAL 1: Increase the number of Registered Apprenticeship completers and technical assistance provided to sponsors

Tactics

- Identify key barriers to apprenticeship completion
- Provide technical assistance for paths to completion

Measure of Success

- ✓ Number of registered apprenticeship completers



GOAL 2: Create a sustainable local infrastructure that will continually engage businesses to offer WBL programs and make connections to the future workforce

Tactics

- Establish working partnerships with community organizations and leaders to support implementation of local/regional WBL strategies and plans
- Determine annual outcomes and collect relevant data to improve programs and processes
- Share and support the development of WBL models that can serve as high demand sector entry points in urban and rural areas of the state

Measures of Success

- ✓ Number of engaged partners and regions that develop strategies and plans
- ✓ Development of a WBL cohort program

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3: ASSIST INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES IN BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT



GOAL 1: Prepare incarcerated individuals for reentry into the workforce and facilitate community connections

Tactics

- Educate businesses and community partners of the challenges that incarcerated individuals face as they reenter the workforce
- Provide individualized employment services to incarcerated individuals
- Inform Community-based corrections staff and core partners of the employment services IWD/IowaWORKS provides

Measures of Success

- ✓ Percent of incarcerated individuals participating in IWD/IowaWORKS employment services
- ✓ Number of community partners participating in the Returning Citizen program



GOAL 2: Reduce barriers to individuals seeking unemployment insurance benefits

Tactics

- Modernize the unemployment benefits system to streamline filing of weekly claims
- Educate business and community partners related to the changes in and benefits of the new system

Measure of Success

- ✓ Reduce the number of one-party fact-finding interviews

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3: ASSIST INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES IN BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT



GOAL 3: Support Employers as they hire individuals with disabilities

Tactics

- Business Engagement disability team will conduct employer retention visits to ensure employees and employers needs are met
- Connect employers to ADA assessment tools
- Showcase success stories and best practices to encourage employers hiring

Measure of Success

- ✓ Increased labor force participation of individuals with disabilities



GOAL 4: Increase employment and job retention among Vocational Rehabilitation job candidates (IVRS)

Tactics

- Reallocate and refocus available resources to accelerate the process of finding employment for IVRS job candidates
- Focus on following and expanding the Core4 process to improve job placement and retention

Measures of Success

- ✓ Percentage increase in job retention rate
- ✓ Average length of time between when rehabilitation services have concluded and job placement

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4: SUPPORT EMPLOYER GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY



GOAL 1: Connect our Business Engagement team with employers as they navigate state, federal and local workforce programs

Tactics

- Build relationships with local employers to understand workforce challenges and needs
- Proactively work with local businesses to understand business challenges and align programs
- Identify workforce programs that can best meet the employers needs
- Provide key data and information from our LMI team to assist employers with hiring and retaining their workforce

Measures of Success

- ✓ Number of engagements with businesses
- ✓ Percent of businesses leveraging assistance with business engagement



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4: SUPPORT EMPLOYER GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY



GOAL 2: Increase the connection between job seekers at the American Job Centers and local employers who are hiring

Tactics

- Work with employers to help them navigate and use the IowaWORKS system to post job opportunities and find qualified candidates
- Gather employer feedback regarding the key skillsets they expect in candidates and work with the AJC team to update trainings to provide stronger job candidates
- Business Engagement Consultants actively working with employers to connect them with IowaWORKS job seekers

Measure of Success

- ✓ Number of new businesses using IowaWORKS for job placement & hiring



GOAL 3: Provide employers with current labor market and trends data to assist them in the recruitment and retention of a skilled workforce

Tactics

- Create a data tool that provides the highest employer valued labor market data in one easy to use location on the IWD LMI page
- Proactively meet with businesses, economic developers, chambers and other business associations to educate and provide them with key data from LMI

Measure of Success

- ✓ Number of visits to the LMI page related to specific data promoted

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4: SUPPORT EMPLOYER GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY



GOAL 4: Increase Communications to promote IWD/IowaWORKS as a One-Stop for job seekers and employers

Tactic

- Establish new social media, podcast and innovative marketing strategies to promote the services of the AJC's

Measures of Success

- ✓ Develop and implement new strategies
- ✓ Collect data to establish baseline data and determine metrics



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 5: PROVIDE INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES TO BUILD WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS



GOAL 1: Assist employers to recruit workforce by tapping into different pools of job seekers

Tactics

- Each AJC will host non-traditional hiring events quarterly
- Facilitate veteran and military hiring/retention strategies
- Connect employers and justice-involved citizens through fair chance hiring/retention strategies

Measures of Success

- ✓ Number of innovative hiring events held throughout the state
- ✓ Number of employers participating in the SkillBridge Program
- ✓ Percent of businesses engaged in the Home Base Iowa Certification Program
- ✓ Number of justice-involved citizen hiring events



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 6: BREAK DOWN COMMUNITY BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT



GOAL 1: Develop workforce solutions to address low workforce participation rates

Tactics

- Use LMI data to identify barriers to increasing employment or labor force participation in the community/county
- Collaborate with other state agencies to develop solutions to increase employment or labor force participation
- Engage community partners to develop and implement local solutions

Measure of Success

- ✓ Percent of communities engaging with strategies to address low workforce participation and high unemployment



GOAL 2: Provide Communities with the most current and geographic specific labor market information available

Tactic

- Creation of a data tool that provides communities/local areas with the most valued labor market data in one easy to use location

Measure of Success

- ✓ Development of tool and collection of data to establish metrics for subsequent years

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 6: BREAK DOWN COMMUNITY BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT



GOAL 3: Facilitate veteran and military community connections across the state

Tactics

- Promote each Home Base Iowa (HBI) community and their incentives at least once a year to increase awareness of the HBI
- Develop communications strategies to attract veterans and service members to Iowa

Measure of Success

- ✓ Number of total users accessing IowaWorksforVeterans website



GOAL 4: Facilitate connections to housing, transportation, and daycare needs within communities to breakdown barriers to employment

Tactics

- Share best practices of community solutions for workforce, housing, transportation and daycare needs
- Engage Business Engagement Consultants to work with businesses to identify community barriers to attracting and retaining workers
- Facilitate conversations in the community to develop solutions to community workforce barriers

Measures of Success

- ✓ Number of solutions developed from information obtained
- ✓ Number of connections made between employers and community providers
- ✓ Development of a living resource with best practices for community partners

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 7: IMPROVE SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS



GOAL 1: Improve the alignment of Iowa's workforce programs

Tactics

- Complete full integration of Vocational Rehabilitation services into the AJC's
- Engage business and community leaders to assess current workforce programs and develop recommendations for improvements
- Coordinate workforce initiatives with key stakeholders to improve impact

Measure of Success

- ✓ Number of customers participating in CORE4 program



GOAL 2: Provide high quality workforce support to employers

Tactics

- Create a tool to measure employer satisfaction with services provided
- Identify processes/services/programs that employers feel are inefficient, ineffective and/or are overly burdensome to meet their workforce goals

Measures of Success

- ✓ Development of measuring tool and collection of data to set future benchmarks
- ✓ Annually report efficiencies made to programs and processes due to employer feedback

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 7: IMPROVE SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS



GOAL 3: Reduce the wait time for customers who contact the Benefits Call Center

Tactic

- Partner with American Job Center and Business Engagement Team during periods of high call volumes to ensure calls are answered efficiently.

Measure of Success

- ✓ Maintain an average wait time per month of 15 minutes or less for Unemployment Insurance calls



GOAL 4: Ensure customers receive their first unemployment insurance payment within 21 days of filing their initial UI claim

Tactic

- Schedule fact findings are completed and decisions issued in a timely manner

Measure of Success

- ✓ Percentage of first unemployment payments made within 21 days

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 7: IMPROVE SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS



GOAL 5: Establish new employer unemployment insurance accounts within 90 days

Tactic

- Set individuals goals for team members for account set-up

Measure of Success

- ✓ Percentage of new employer tax determinations made within 90 days



GOAL 6: Meet or exceed all Social Security Administration Case processing goals

Tactic

- Increase/improve case processing time, accuracy, clearances and aged cases

Measure of Success

- ✓ Percentage of accuracy, processing and closed cases

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 7: IMPROVE SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS



GOAL 7: Continue to provide case processing assistance to other states

Tactic

➤ Maintain case assistance to peer state Department of Disability Services

Measure of Success

✓ Number of cases processed



IWD PROGRAMS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Adjacent to the agency’s strategic initiatives and the plans to fully realize those goals, Iowa Workforce Development also tracks performance measures for the programs it administers across its divisions using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Program	Performance Measures	FY26 Target	FY25 Actual
American Job Centers	Number of individuals who registered in IowaWORKS	47,510	
	Number of individuals with disabilities who participated in Job development	200	
	Number of Outreach Services to increase awareness in targeted counties	330	
	Number of RESEA Sub Appointments for UI Claimants	3,815	
	Number of completed RCM appointments	24,500	
	Number of RCM participants who reported employment	4,300	
	Number of Veterans/Transitioning Service Members served by Jobs for Veterans State Grant and Home Base Iowa	1,645	
	Number of services provided to incarcerated individuals by our ReEntry career planners	4,915	
	Number of events that the IowaWORKS Mobile Workforce Unit participated in	170	
	Number of individuals served in the IowaWORKS Mobile Workforce Unit	1,330	
	Number of individuals enrolled in workforce programs after being served at the IowaWORKS Mobile Workforce Unit	250	
	Number of Individuals in Iowa’s Workforce	1,749,600	
Teacher/Para Apprenticeship (TPRA 1.0 and 2.0)	Total TPRA Programs	30	
Health Careers (HC1.0/2.0)	Total HC Programs	23	

Program	Performance Measures	FY26 Target	FY25 Actual
Registered Apprenticeship Program	Completers	2,100	
Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Act (84E)	Total sponsors	75	
Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Development Fund (84F)	Total new occupations	25	
Data Dissemination	Percent of State with Current Labor Availability Data	100%	
	Number of Dashboards, Web Pages, and Visualizations Completed	4	
	Number of Web Locations Created w Data for the 6 Workforce Areas	6	
Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)	Percent LMI Contract Deliverables Timely	100%	
Occupational Health & Safety Statistics	Percent LMI Contract Deliverables Timely	100%	
	Percent of interns who retain employment after their internship	60%	
The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)	Number of Unique Employers that utilized the program	1,900	
	Number of completed certifications	15,000	
PROMISE JOBS	Ensure the PROMISE-JOBS 2-parent household Work Participation Rate is met	17.1%	
WIOA Title I Adult	Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit	77.5%	
	Employment 4th Quarter after Exit	76.0%	
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$7,000	
	Measurable Skill Gains	60.5%	
	Credential Attainment Rate	71.0%	

Program	Performance Measures	FY26 Target	FY25 Actual
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker	Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit	82.5%	
	Employment 4th Quarter after Exit	84.0%	
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$10,500	
	Measurable Skill Gains	63.0%	
	Credential Attainment Rate	73.0%	
WIOA Title I Youth	Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit	75.0%	
	Employment 4th Quarter after Exit	75.0%	
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$4,100	
	Measurable Skill Gains	50.5%	
	Credential Attainment Rate	59.0%	
WIOA Title III	Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit	70.0%	
	Employment 4th Quarter after Exit	69.0%	
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$8,600	
Unemployment Insurance	New Employer Liability Determinations set up within 90 days	70%	
	Continue to exceed the required percentage of cases meeting benefit accuracy measurement standards	75%	
	Complete succession planning for all tasks and processes in the UI Division post UI Modernization- 3 people trained on each UI Division Process	3 people trained on each UI Division Process	
	Continue to exceed the required percentage of first UI claims payments that are made within 21 days of filing	87%	
	Reduce the monthly average for UI call center wait times	15 minutes or less	
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	Average number of days from Job Ready to Job Placement	120	
	Job retention rate percentage of Core4 participants	baseline year - 10% increase	