



January 9, 2013

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), during the 2012 legislative session, was asked to submit a report of its outreach efforts to work with community rehabilitation program providers for job placement and retention services for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities.

SF 2321 states: *For purposes of optimizing the job placement of individuals with disabilities, the division shall make its best efforts to work with community rehabilitation program providers for job placement and retention services for individuals with significant disabilities and most significant disabilities. By January 15, 2013, the division shall submit a written report to the general assembly on the division's outreach efforts with community rehabilitation program providers.*

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services has continued efforts to establish, create and maintain partnerships with Iowa Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) in 2012. IVRS continued efforts to promote and encourage collaboration by reaching out to Community Rehabilitation Programs, external vendors and other service providers. The result of this focus has contributed positively to enhancing partnerships, in addition to expanding employment-related options for Iowans with disabilities.

*Examples of IVRS efforts in 2012 include:*

• **January – March 2012**

- ✓ IVRS spoke at the Iowa Association of Community Provider meeting to inform 80+ participants about IVRS initiatives and anticipated opportunities to expand partnerships.
- ✓ IVRS met in Atlantic with two new CRP partners to establish service contracts (VoDec and Career Solutions).
- ✓ IVRS field staff met in Jefferson to review procedural information for Genesis CRP staff.
- ✓ IVRS traveled to Dubuque to review contracting processes, roles and responsibilities with local CRP, Department of Human Services (DHS), service providers and IVRS staff.

- ✓ IVRS provided information to 46 CRP partners about opportunities to serve as Employment Networks (EN) for the Ticket to Work Program.
  - ✓ IVRS initiated inquiries with DHS about restructuring service rates.
  - ✓ IVRS approved Passageways as a service provider for mental health services in Des Moines.
  - ✓ IVRS connected CRPs with an interest in EN opportunities with Social Security/Maximus.
  - ✓ IVRS State Plan was amended to request waiver to initiate Project Search in Des Moines.
- **April – June 2012**
    - ✓ IVRS hosted rate restructuring discussion (facilitated by SELN) with community partners.
    - ✓ IVRS participated in Iowa Association of Community Provider (IACP) meeting with 80+ CRP representatives to review current initiatives and communicate progress.
    - ✓ IVRS approved paying skills training at Van Buren Job Opportunities CRP in Burlington.
    - ✓ IVRS amended Systems Unlimited contract to increase rates.
    - ✓ IVRS initiated training for staff and invited CRPs to send representatives for Benefit Planning.
    - ✓ IVRS signed EN contract with Frank Varvaris to provide services under Partnership Plus.
    - ✓ IVRS approved three new CRPs as options to deliver employment services (Krysilis, Horizons, Echo Plus).
- **July – September 2012**
    - ✓ IVRS extended an invitation to service providers to provide Benefit Planning services.
    - ✓ IVRS participated in local and national discussion to contribute to Walgreens launch of Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI), which directly involved use of CRPs.
    - ✓ IVRS added two CRPs as service providers in Decorah and Sioux City (Creative Solutions and Opportunities Unlimited).
    - ✓ IVRS spoke at IACP with update on initiatives and new opportunities for collaboration.
    - ✓ IVRS traveled to Sioux City to meet new Goodwill Director (Nate Vander Plaats) and discuss IVRS partnership with staff.
    - ✓ IVRS met with staff from Goodwill Central in Des Moines to explore opportunities to collaborate with IVRS in REDI project.
    - ✓ IVRS traveled to Iowa City to meet new Goodwill Director (Pat Airy) and discuss partnership with staff.
    - ✓ Information was mailed to all 46 CRPs by IVRS administrator, reflecting outcome information about service provision, recidivism rates, and cost(s).

- ✓ IVRS participated in IACP to gather input, review initiatives and encourage ongoing participation and communication.
  - ✓ IVRS approved higher service rates for Hope Haven CRP in Rock Valley.
  - ✓ IVRS approved higher rates for Genesis CRP to expand services to seventeen counties.
  - ✓ IVRS added CRP in Ankeny as new provider for services (Candeo).
  - ✓ IVRS participated in ongoing discussions related to service rates with DHS.
  - ✓ IVRS approved new rates for REACH program at University of Iowa (Iowa City).
- **October – December 2012**
    - ✓ IVRS approved extensions for 44 CRPs based on their submitted cost rates to deliver services.
    - ✓ IVRS helped coordinate/facilitate Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) conference.
    - ✓ IVRS executed contract with Goodwill Wall Street Mission (Sioux City) to provide EN services under Partnership Plus.
    - ✓ IVRS participated in *Money Follows the Person* meeting to help develop/refine processes.
    - ✓ IVRS attended meeting with CRP staff in Indianola at Christian Opportunity Center to share information, review initiatives and refine processes.
    - ✓ IVRS initiated continued discussions about service rates with DHS.
    - ✓ IVRS approved contracts to secure Benefit Planning services from five external vendors.
    - ✓ IVRS participated in Disabilities Employment Initiative (DEI) planning meeting hosted by Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) at IVRS.

Summary:

**Communication, Partnership and Outreach Activities**

IVRS resource and central management staff made on-site visits to programs located in Altoona, Ankeny, Atlantic, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Dubuque, Indianola, Iowa City, Jefferson, Keosauqua, Mason City, Rock Valley, Sioux City, Urbandale, Waterloo and West Des Moines.

IVRS staff helped with programming for 138 attendees at the statewide Association of Persons in Supported Employment Conference, as well as participating in several Iowa Association of Community Provider meetings. Forty-four community rehabilitation contract extensions were approved with five additional amendments also being processed. Twenty-two new Community Rehabilitation Program contacts were initiated, resulting in ten new community programs who have received standard authorizations for service delivery. Four additional community programs were added as Employment Networks under the Partnership Plus program and five new benefit planning contracts were approved.

IVRS has partnered with North Iowa Vocational Center (NIVC) in the implementation of their Project Search model in Mason City, Iowa. This is a national model to promote competitive, integrated community employment for youth with significant disabilities in a transitional employment experience. Typically, students are placed in their senior year in three-month rotational training sites at a local business. In Mason City the partnership is led by NIVC, the Mason City School District, Mercy Hospital and IVRS. Students receive academic training related to their job site experiences and receive job coaching to develop and maintain employability skills in an area of vocational interest. IVRS initiated expanded Project Search programs with the Des Moines School District, Mercy Hospital (Des Moines) and Easter Seals during this past year.

IVRS is the lead agency of a \$100,000 contract grant received by the Department of Labor, Office of Disability and Employment Policy. We are one of three states participating in the Employment First effort to improve employment opportunities in integrated, competitive, community-based jobs. A collaborative effort among ten Iowa state department agencies and community partners across the state is being implemented. Six pilot projects were developed involving seven community providers: Candeo (Des Moines area), CASS, Inc. (Atlantic), Nishna (Red Oak), Hope Haven (Rock Valley), Story County Community Life (Ames), North Iowa Vocational Center (Mason City) and Job Opportunities of Van Buren County (Keosauqua). These projects were selected through feedback from the Iowa Coalition of Integrated Employment and the Iowa Association of Community Providers. These projects will be reporting on successful strategies to advance employment options for individuals who have not typically been involved in competitive community employment. Projects will be developing, implementing and influencing public policy with hopes of gathering information to influence alignment of funding and rate restructuring. The Employment First effort also included the completion of a Memorandum of Agreement among the state departments, integrating the employment first philosophy into service delivery.

IVRS also is the lead agency with the Walgreens REDI Project, which is a national effort initiated by Walgreens. Four Community Rehabilitation Programs were involved to pilot the Walgreens REDI Project. The CRPs will provide a job coach at five Iowa Walgreens stores to provide training to job candidates referred by IVRS. CRPs will train up to three individuals per store, at any one time, as Service Clerks using IVRS funds to offset training costs. The potential target is six to nine per year at the participating stores. The CRPs involved are Candeo, Goodwill of Central Iowa, Goodwill of the Heartland and Goodwill of Northeast Iowa. IVRS funds the CRP job coach for participation in the training. Once this training is piloted successfully, the opportunity for additional REDI training will be made available statewide at all Walgreens stores by the end of 2013. Walgreens commitment in this partnership is to hire approximately 5,000 individuals with disabilities into their workforce through the 2013 calendar year.

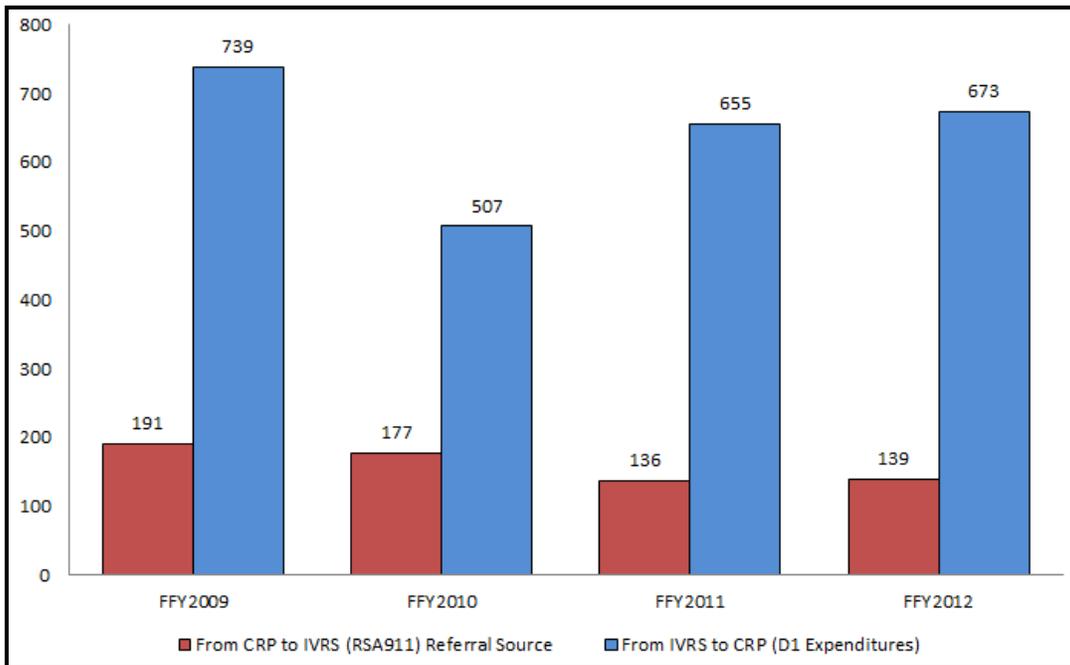
IVRS has currently approved eleven different Occupational Skills training programs provided through CRPs. These include the following training options: Administrative Assistant, Basic Computer Keyboarding and Intermediate Computer, retail, janitorial, food service, health care, forklift and warehouse training.

IVRS developed contracts with Iowa vendors who have the expertise needed to provide complex benefit planning services for individuals receiving Social Security disability benefits. Five contracts have been issued to allow purchased services from these programs where there are certified benefit planners.

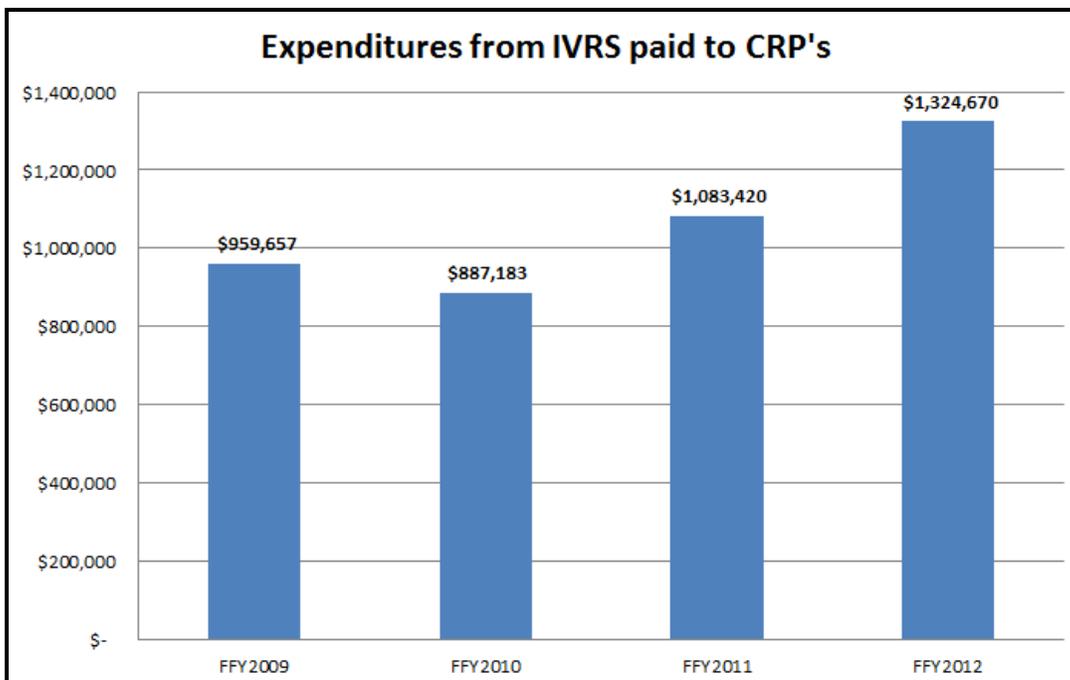
IVRS plans to continue to focus on exploring opportunities to collaborate, innovate and network with external vendors and service providers. We are committed to leveraging viable resources with our community partners.

Partnerships play a critical role and help to contribute to the likelihood of a person's success when systems work together effectively. To remain an effective change agent, IVRS is committed to exploring opportunities and making connections with other individuals or groups in support of principles that contribute to the optimal level of employment for individuals with disabilities. Current goals relate to improved service delivery, defined by quality-driven, measurable and demonstrated results. Data has been shared with all community providers and this has also helped streamline their reports back to the agency. The sharing of outcome data promotes transparency in IVRS data and will provide baselines for future comparisons.

## Working Relationship between Iowa Vocation Rehabilitation Services and Community Rehabilitation Providers



The above graph reflects the number of referrals from the Community Rehabilitation Provider to IVRS as well as the number of service referrals from IVRS to the Community Rehabilitation Provider.



The above graph presents the dollar amounts IVRS has expended for services purchased through our Community Rehabilitation Providers during the past four years.