



December 22, 2015

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), during the 2015 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, 2016, 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 2015. 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 competitive, community employment-related options for Iowans with disabilities.

During 2015, IVRS expenditures paid to Community Rehabilitation Providers totaled \$2.953 million; this is an increase of over \$1 million from 2014 and over \$1.5 million from 2013. This also involved an increased number of authorized services and collaborative partner services.

Occupational Skill Training Programs continue to increase providing options for individuals with disabilities across the state to access meaningful opportunities to improve employment skills. Our CRPs are integral to the success of these training efforts to meet the business skill gap. IVRS provided financial support to 24 different Occupational Skills training programs which included 12 Walgreens REDI trainings and six Project Search programs. IVRS increased Employment Network partners from nine to fifteen this year.

IVRS remains the lead agency with the State of Iowa's Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program and continues to work with CRPs to expand training opportunities to meet local business needs through the technical assistance of the grant. This particular initiative is sponsored through the Department of Labor's Office of Disability and Employment Policy.

IVRS made a variety of in-service, webinar, on-site and video conference training opportunities available to CRPs throughout the year, as well as data specific to each partner. Vendor data is shared annually by IVRS with providers to stimulate conversations with partners, ensure consistent business practices, promote transparency for purchased services, and provide a statewide basis for comparisons. This year IVRS also reported specific outcomes from the Occupational Skill Training Programs being provided by the Community Rehabilitation partners.

IVRS will continue to partner and proactively respond to the demands of an ever-changing job market to fulfill our mission and effectively provide the necessary services to help individuals with disabilities achieve full integration into community employment. Towards this end, IVRS has put forth a dedicated effort to expand opportunities to collaborate, innovate and network with entities and leverage resources with community partners.

Data confirms that IVRS is continuing to expend more funds to CRP partners. Our ability to expand service options is linked to our ability to partner with CRPs.

*Examples of IVRS efforts in 2015 include:*

**Jan. – March 2015**

- ✓ Explored Partnership Plus agreement between IVRS and Mason City Workforce offices
- ✓ Went to Battle Creek (IA) to meet with over 20 providers, case managers and IVRS staff to discuss roles and responsibilities for employment services
- ✓ Approved G & G community provider for Discovery services in Clayton and Delaware counties
- ✓ Approved Ida Services Inc. for employment services in Sioux City
- ✓ Met with services providers from Iowa City and Cedar Rapids to refine processes and discuss capacity issues
- ✓ Executed Partnership Plus agreement with Inclusion Connection in Waverly
- ✓ Hosted a meeting with IVRS Benefit Planning members and included representatives from Disability Rights Iowa and WIPA
- ✓ Approved Howard Center as an employment provider in Sac City
- ✓ Met with IVRS staff and Genesis CRP to discuss a new training option to serve several areas of the state, and launch initial pilot program in Ames
- ✓ Approved G & G community provider to add additional employment services beyond Discovery
- ✓ Approved Opportunity Village for all employment services and explore expansion into new territories
- ✓ Attended quarterly Mental Health Planning Council Meetings and participated in Mental Health Disability Services Commission meetings bi-annually

### **April – June 2015:**

- ✓ Executed Partnership Plus agreement with Handicapped Development Center in Davenport
- ✓ Added Customized Employment services as part of employment options available at To the Rescue
- ✓ Discussed employment service options with Mid-Step in Sioux City
- ✓ Expanded employment training offered by Genesis to Pocahontas and Storm Lake
- ✓ Executed Partnership Plus agreement with American Dream Employment Network (ADEN)
- ✓ Approved higher service rate for Goodwill Industries for Iowa county
- ✓ Represented IVRS at the Iowa Association of Community Providers two-day meeting
- ✓ Presented at the Money Follows the Person June meeting
- ✓ Approved Wesco as an employment provider in Denison
- ✓ Approved Bridgeway for employment services in Lee and Des Moines counties
- ✓ Approved additional employment services at Optima
- ✓ Approved Project Search program for Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa at area Hy-Vee's
- ✓ Assumed responsibility for six Independent Living state and federal contracts and expanding relationships between IVRS and Centers for Independent Living
- ✓ Provided overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act at the Money Follows the Person spring gathering

### **July – September 2015**

- ✓ Participated in two national Social Security webinars to encourage provider participation in IVRS Partnership Plus activities
- ✓ Approved Goodwill of the Heartland for Employment Services Training
- ✓ Executed Partnership Plus agreement with Opportunities Unlimited in Sioux City
- ✓ Attended ceremony of the first class of Project Search graduates in Cedar Rapids with representatives from St. Luke's Hospital, the Arc of East Central Iowa and Goodwill of the Heartland
- ✓ Participated in State Planning for Independent Living with IL Council members
- ✓ Attended exploration meeting for Project Search in Waterloo
- ✓ Added additional employment services to service agreement with Ida Services Inc.
- ✓ Increased employment services at Mid-Step
- ✓ Attended exploration meeting for Project Search in Ames
- ✓ Spoke to a group of Iowa Veterans to provide information about IVRS employment options at the request of WF Disability Employment Initiative staff
- ✓ Participated in celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act with various community agencies, staff, personnel and legislators and featured speakers
- ✓ Attended meetings with stakeholders to discuss Iowa's Unified State Plan
- ✓ Participated in Iowa's Association of Persons Supporting Employment First conference –

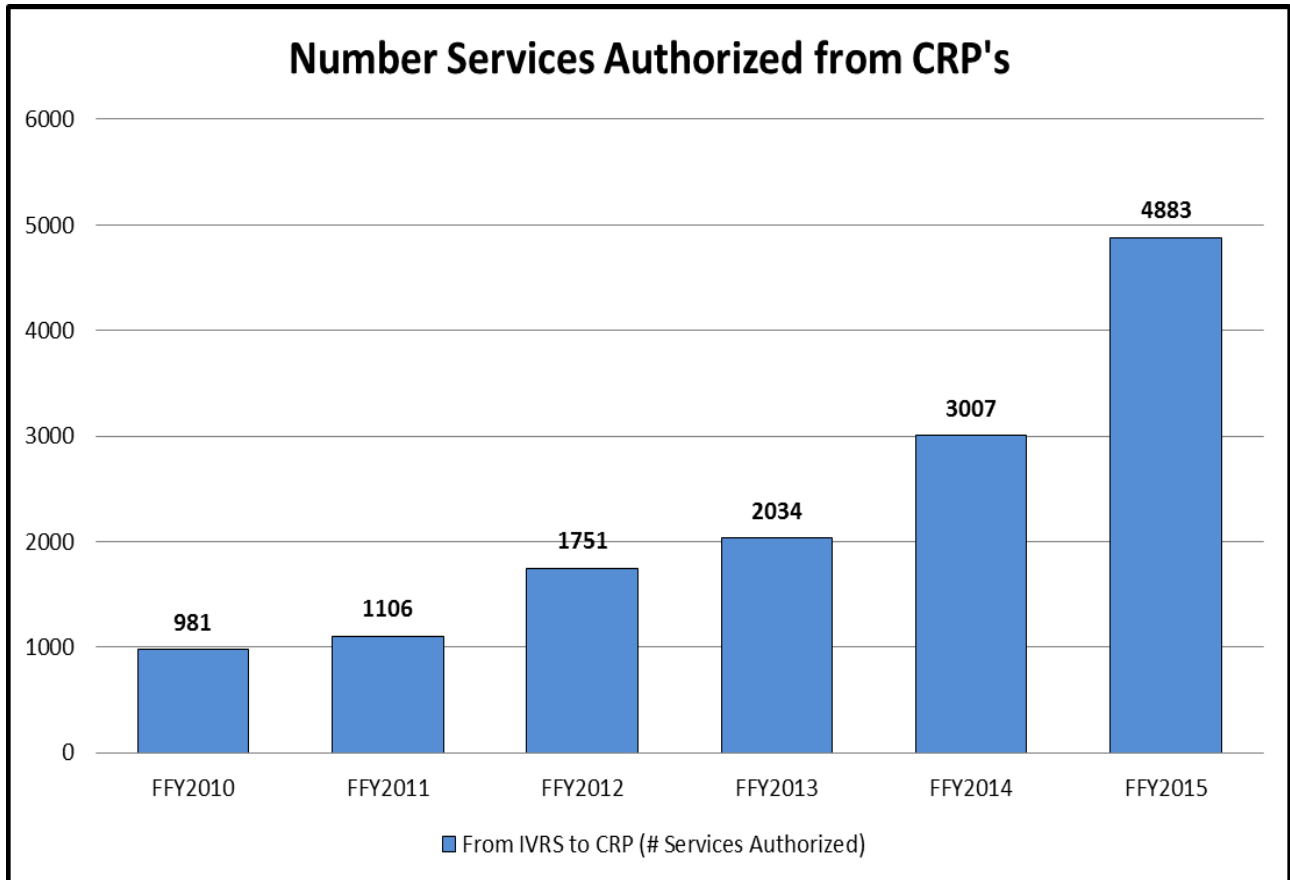
## October – December 2015

- ✓ Approved H.O.P.E. as provider for employment services in Des Moines
- ✓ Hosted follow-up meeting between IVRS, the Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment, DHS/Iowa Medicaid Enterprise and case management staff
- ✓ Approved Lifeskills Training, Inc. in Sioux City
- ✓ Approved the Walgreens Retail for Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) training with VODEC in Council Bluffs
- ✓ Represented IVRS at Money Follows the Person meeting
- ✓ Executed Partnership Plus agreement with Workforce Region 2 in Mason City
- ✓ Approved Home Care Options as new provider in Carroll area
- ✓ Participated in Statewide Independent Living Council meeting
- ✓ Provided overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act at the statewide Parent Educator Connection meeting
- ✓ Attended meetings between IVRS and Community partners to discuss new contracting processes, service rates, roles, expectations, etc.
  - Burlington – Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>
  - Cedar Rapids/Iowa City – Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>
  - Davenport – Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>
  - Dubuque – Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>
  - Mason City – Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - North Central/Ames – Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>
  - Ottumwa – Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>
  - Sioux City – Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>
  - Spencer, Storm Lake – Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>
  - Waterloo – Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>

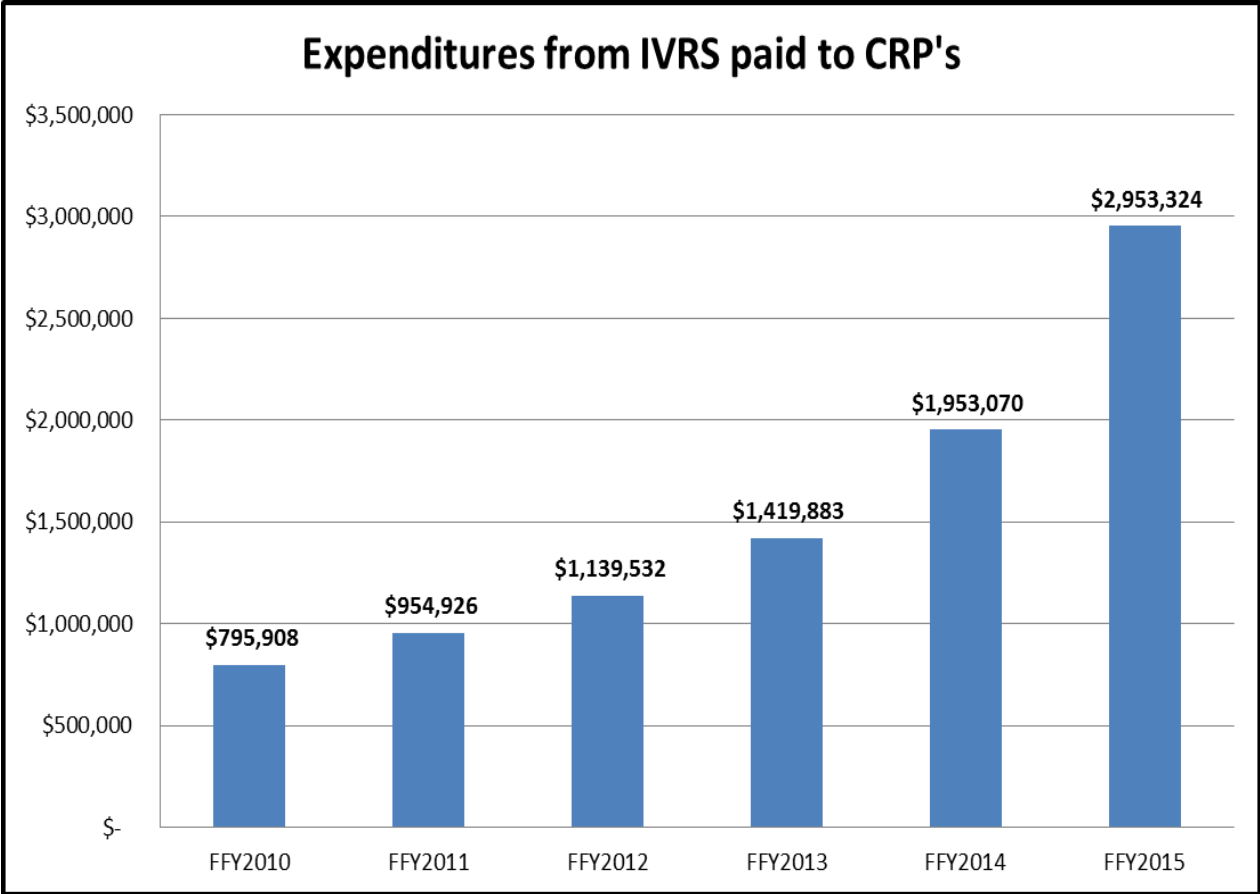
### Other activities also included

- Presentation at the Iowa Association of Community Providers
- Presentation at the Iowa State Association of Counties
- Facilitated monthly Employment First meetings
- Coordinated monthly Iowa Community of Practice webinars for staff and partners
- Participated in the Iowa Rehabilitation Association Annual Conference

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



The above graph reflects the number of services authorized from 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 five years.

Respectfully Submitted,

*David L. Mitchell*  
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 IVRS Administrator