

**Interwork Institute  
San Diego State University**

**State of Iowa  
Iowa Department for the Blind  
and  
The Board of Commissioners  
Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report**

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**Prepared by:  
Chaz Compton, Ed.D., CRC  
Melissa Kronberger, M.S., CRC**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Interwork Institute at San Diego State University would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance in conducting the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) on behalf of the State of Iowa's Department for the Blind (IDB) and the Board of Commissioners. These individuals were instrumental in helping to ensure the research activities associated with this needs assessment were completed successfully:

- Keri Osterhaus, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Administrator
- Lynette Biermann, Secretary 2

In addition, the project team would like to thank IDB Director Emily Wharton and the Board of Commissioners for their support and commitment to the CSNA process.

The project team would like to express their appreciation to each individual who took the time to share their thoughts by completing a survey, taking part in an interview and/or participating in the focus group research.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB), the Board of Commissioners and the Interwork Institute at San Diego District University jointly conducted an assessment of the Vocational Rehabilitation needs of persons with blindness and low vision residing in the State of Iowa. A triennial needs assessment is required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is intended to help inform the Unified State Plan developed by the core partners in Iowa's Workforce Development System. The data was gathered, analyzed, and grouped into the sections listed below. A summary of key findings in each section is contained here. The full results are found in the body of the report.

**Please Note:** The summary of findings here and throughout the report primarily identify the rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa. When a need is identified, it is not intended to imply that the need is not being met by IDB or other service providers unless explicitly stated.

### **Section One: Overall performance of IDB**

Recurring themes in this area include the following:

- IDB staff are characterized as caring and committed to their jobs and their clients;
- IDB needs to improve responsiveness to their clients and partners. The response to emails and phone calls was frequently described as taking too long, which is a source of frustration for clients.
- The number of employment outcomes for IDB clients has decreased in recent years and there are several reasons cited for this decline.
- IDB was given praise for their support of individuals pursuing higher education, often supporting individuals at the graduate level.
- IDB needs to increase community awareness of their services.
- IDB needs more Rehabilitation Teachers to provide services to individuals that are unable to attend the Orientation Center.

### **Section Two: The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment**

Recurring themes in this area include the following:

- The skills learned at the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center and from Rehabilitation Teachers are essential for individuals with blindness and low vision to live and work independently. The acquisition of the skills learned fosters self-confidence and helps to overcome misconceptions that employers and the general public have about the capabilities of individuals with blindness and low vision.
- Transportation was a common need cited by participants. There are many parts of the State where transportation options are limited, and this limits the opportunities for individuals with blindness and low vision.

- The need for self-confidence of individuals with blindness and low vision was a recurring theme. This lack of confidence was directly related to the pursuit of employment and the tenacity needed to overcome employer misconceptions about the abilities of people with blindness.
- The acquisition and training in the use of assistive technology is a significant need of individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa. This need is important for success in academic and vocational training, as well as employment.
- IDB is serving an increasing number of individuals with mental health impairments and other disabilities in addition to blindness and low vision.
- There are a number of individuals, especially among youth, that are on the Autism spectrum, and need supported employment services.

### **Section Three: The needs of individuals with blindness or low vision from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program**

Recurring themes in this area include the following:

- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision that are minorities did not differ from the needs of other individuals with blindness and low vision with the exception of language interpreter needs.
- Individuals that are Deaf-Blind were identified as potentially underserved by IDB. They were the only disability group that was identified with any frequency in this area.
- Although there were no specific racial or ethnic groups identified as underserved by IDB, there were participants that indicated any race where English is a second language may have difficulty finding culturally competent staff at IDB.
- The very rural areas of Iowa were identified as potentially underserved by IDB primarily due to the lack of transportation, which restricts access to IDB offices, and makes travel times lengthy and time consuming for Rehabilitation Teachers.

### **Section Four: The needs of youth and students with blindness or low vision in transition**

Recurring themes in this area include the following:

- The relationship and communication between IESBVI and IDB was repeatedly referred to as critical in the transition process for students and youth with blindness and low vision.
- It was clear from the participants in all of the groups in this study that the five required pre-employment transition services represent significant needs of students with blindness and low vision in Iowa. Work experience and soft skill development were noted as the most important services that prepare students for the world of work, but all of the five required services were repeatedly mentioned as important and meaningful.
- Many of the students and youth served by IDB are individuals with multiple disabilities in addition to blindness or low vision. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that staff

and service providers are trained and capable of addressing the multiple needs presented by these youth as they prepare for postsecondary education and/or employment.

- There is a need to develop high expectations for students and youth with blindness and low vision in Iowa.
- Transportation to and from school, work experiences, and full-time work is a significant barrier to employment for youth with blindness and low vision. This is especially true in the rural areas.
- Because of the number of youth that are being served by IDB with multiple and complex disabilities, there is a need to enhance the development of supported employment, including the development of customized employment as a service option for youth.

### **Section Five: The needs of individuals with blindness or low vision served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System**

Recurring themes in this area include the following:

- The Iowa *WORKS* Centers are not effectively meeting the service needs of individuals with blindness and low vision throughout the State.
- The relationship between IDB and the Iowa *WORKS* Centers remains primarily one of referral.
- There is a need to effectively track and report co-enrollment of IDB and other core partner clients.
- The Iowa *WORKS* need to improve programmatic accessibility.

### **Section Six: The need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in Iowa**

Recurring themes in this area include the following:

- There is a need to develop supported employment providers that are experienced in working with individuals with blindness and low vision.
- Interview and survey participants indicated that there is a need for more providers in the rural areas of Iowa.
- Interview participants indicated that there is a need for more employment services providers in the State.

### **Section Seven: The needs of businesses**

This category captures the needs of businesses in Iowa as it relates to recruiting, hiring, retaining and accommodating individuals with blindness or low vision. It includes an analysis of how IDB serves business and tries to meet their needs in each of these areas.

Recurring themes in this area include the following:

- Employer bias and misconceptions about hiring individuals with blindness and low vision is a key barrier to IDB clients obtaining employment.
- Employers need more education and awareness regarding individuals with blindness and low vision and the supports available to employers.

- There is a strong need to market IDB to the business community.

The project team provides recommendations associated with some of the needs identified in each of the categories. It is understood that many of the recommendations require the collaboration and partnership of multiple agencies over an extended period of time. Some of the recommendations may be much easier to adopt and implement than others. The project team offers the recommendations with this awareness and hopes that IDB and other stakeholders will find these recommendations helpful.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	7
IMPETUS FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT .....	8
PURPOSE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND UTILIZATION OF RESULTS .....	8
METHODOLOGY .....	9
<b>FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>SECTION ONE: OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>SECTION TWO: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT     DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT ...</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>SECTION THREE: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH BLINDNESS OR LOW     VISION FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF     INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY IDB.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>SECTION FOUR: NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH BLINDNESS AND VISUAL     IMPAIRMENTS IN TRANSITION .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>SECTION FIVE: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH BLINDNESS AND L; SERVED     THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE     DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>SECTION SIX: NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY     REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN IOWA .....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>SECTION SEVEN: NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING     EMPLOYERS .....</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>145</b>

## **IMPETUS FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contains the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and requires all state vocational rehabilitation agencies to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities within the respective State and relate the planning of programs and services and the establishment of goals and priorities to those needs. According to Section 102 of WIOA and Section 412 of the Rehabilitation Act, each participating State shall submit a Unified or Combined State Plan every four years, with a biannual modification as needed. Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 361.29 indicates that the State Plan must include the “results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the Iowa Rehabilitation Council for the Blind every three years describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State.”

In response to this mandate, and to ensure that adequate efforts are being made to serve the diverse needs of individuals with blindness or low vision in the State, the Iowa Department for the Blind, in partnership with the Board of Commissioners, entered into a contract with the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University for the purpose of jointly developing and implementing a comprehensive statewide needs assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision residing in Iowa.

## **PURPOSE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND UTILIZATION OF RESULTS**

The purpose of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) is to identify and describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision residing within Iowa. In particular, the CSNA seeks to provide information on the following:

- The overall performance of IDB as it relates to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision in the State;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision who are minorities, and those who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
- The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with blindness and low vision in transition, including their need for pre-employment transition services;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision served through other components of the statewide workforce development system;
- The need to establish, develop and/or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and
- The needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating and retaining individuals with blindness and low vision.

It is expected that data from the needs assessment effort will provide IDB and the Board of Commissioners with direction when creating the VR portion of the Unified State Plan and when planning for future program development, outreach and resource allocation. This CSNA covers



quantitative data for Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2016 through 2018 and qualitative data through August 2019.

## METHODOLOGY

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. The specific methods for gathering the data used in this assessment are detailed below.

### Analysis of Existing Data Sources

The project team at SDSU reviewed a variety of existing data sources for the purposes of identifying and describing demographic data within Iowa, including the total possible target population and sub-populations potentially served by IDB. Data relevant to the population of Iowa, the population of persons with blindness or low vision in Iowa, ethnicity of individuals, income level, educational levels and other relevant population characteristics were utilized in this analysis. Sources analyzed include the following:

- The 2017 American Community Survey, 1- and 5-Year Estimates;
- U.S. Census Annual Estimates of Resident Population, 2017;
- 2018 Social Security Administration SSI/SSDI Data;
- The Iowa Department of Education;
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- Cornell University's [disabilitystatistics.org](http://disabilitystatistics.org);
- IDB case service data compiled at the request of the project team; and
- The Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA-911 data for IDB and data submitted and entered into RSA's Management Information System (MIS).

### Key Informant and Focus Group Interviews

**Instrument:** The instruments used for the key informant and focus group interviews (Appendix A) were developed by the researchers at SDSU and reviewed, revised and approved by IDB.

**Interview population:** The key informant and focus group population consisted of IDB staff, community partners, individuals with blindness or low vision and businesses. A total of 15 people were interviewed individually for this assessment and 93 were interviewed as part of focus groups. The interviews occurred in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids during the week of June 24-28, 2019. Table 1 identifies the interview totals by type and group.

Table 1  
*IDB Interview Totals*

<b>Interview totals by type and group - all groups IDB 2019 CSNA</b>					
<b>Research Method</b>	<b>Research Group and Count</b>				
	<b>Client</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Individual Interview</b>	5	7	3	0	15
<b>Focus Group</b>					
<b>Number of groups</b>	6	4	4	1	15
<b>Number of participants</b>	43	19	28	3	93
<b>Total participants</b>	48	26	31	3	108

*Data collection.* All of the individual and focus group interviews were conducted face-to-face. The general format of the interviews was consistent between participants regardless of their group. First, participants were asked questions to ascertain their personal and professional experience with or knowledge of IDB. Participants were then asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of the needs of individuals with disabilities in Iowa. Finally, participants were asked to share their perceptions of how IDB could improve their ability to help meet these needs, especially as it relates to helping clients obtain and retain employment.

*Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity.* Names and other identifying characteristics were not shared with anyone by the interviewers. Participants were informed that their responses would be treated as anonymous information, would not be reported with information that could be used to identify them, and were consolidated with information from other respondents before results were reported.

*Data analysis.* The interviewers took notes on the discussions as they occurred. The notes were transcribed and analyzed by researchers at SDSU. Themes or concerns that surfaced with consistency across interviews were identified and are reported as common themes in the report narrative. In order to be identified as a recurring theme, it had to occur at least three different times and it had to occur across groups if it applied to the different populations participating in the study. For instance, for transportation to be identified as a rehabilitation need, it would have had to have been identified as a need in at least three individual interviews or focus groups, and would need to have been identified by individuals with disabilities, staff and/or partners.

## **Surveys**

*Instruments.* The instruments used for the electronic surveys of individuals with disabilities, community partners, IDB staff and businesses were developed by the project team and reviewed and revised by IDB. These surveys are contained in Appendices B-E.

*Survey population.* Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as individuals with blindness and low vision who are potential, current or former clients of IDB. Community partners include representatives of organizations that provide services, coordinate services, or serve an advocacy role for individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa. IDB

staff members include those working for the organization in the period of April 1, 2019, through August 31, 2019. Businesses include employers for which IDB had a valid email address during the survey period.

*Data collection.* Data was gathered from the different populations through the use of an internet-based survey. IDB and community programs serving individuals with disabilities broadly dispersed the electronic survey via an e-mail invitation. IDB identified individuals with disabilities, partners, staff and businesses and invited them to participate in the electronic survey effort via e-mail. Once the survey was active, IDB sent an invitation and link to the survey by e-mail. Approximately two weeks after the distribution of the initial invitation, another electronic notice was sent as both a “thank you” to those who had completed the survey and a reminder to those who had not. Survey responses collected through the electronic survey approach were analyzed using Qualtrics.

*Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity.* Respondents to the individual survey were not asked to identify themselves when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results, which served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents.

*Accessibility.* The electronic survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were provided with the name and contact information of the Project Director at SDSU in order to place requests for alternate survey formats.

*Data analysis.* Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

*Number of completed surveys.* A total of 230 valid surveys were submitted by the different groups. A survey was considered valid if an individual completed the survey, even if they did not answer all of the questions. If an individual started a survey and did not complete it, it was considered invalid. It is difficult to gauge the exact return rate of the surveys as many of the e-mail notices and invitations to take the survey could have come from forwarded email invitations. However, Table 2 identifies the number of surveys sent by IDB to each group, the number returned and the return rate without computing for any forwarded surveys.

Table 2  
*Survey Totals for All Groups*

<b>Survey Totals by Group for IDB</b>			
<b>Group</b>	<b>Number of Surveys Sent</b>	<b>Number of Surveys Completed</b>	<b>Return Rate</b>
Individual	518	118	<b>22.8%</b>
Partners	118	64	<b>54.2%</b>
Staff	66	40	<b>60.6%</b>
Business	266	8	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>23.8%</b>

Table 3 summarizes the totals for all of the research types for the different groups that participated in this assessment.

Table 3  
*Totals for all Research Methods*

<b>Data Collection Totals by Type and Group for 2019 IDB CSNA</b>					
<b>Research Method</b>	<b>Research Group and Count</b>				
	<b>Client</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Electronic Survey</b>	118	64	40	8	230
<b>Individual Interview</b>	5	7	3	0	15
<b>Focus Group</b>	43	19	28	3	93
<b>Total participants</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>338</b>

There were 338 individuals that participated in this CSNA in some form. The project team is confident that the information was gathered accurately and thoroughly and captures the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa.

### **Analysis and Triangulation of Data**

The data gathered from the national and agency-specific data sets, key informant interviews, surveys and focus groups were analyzed by the researchers on the project team. The common themes that emerged regarding needs of individuals with blindness and low vision from each data source were identified and compared to each other to validate the existence of needs, especially as they pertained to the target populations of this assessment. These common themes are identified and discussed in the Findings section.

### **Dissemination Plans**

The CSNA report is delivered to IDB and the Board of Commissioners. We recommend that IDB publish the report on their website for public access.

### **Study Limitations**

Inherent in any type of research effort are limitations that may constrain the utility of the data that is generated. Therefore, it is important to highlight the most significant issues that may limit

the ability to generalize the needs assessment findings to larger populations. Inherent in the methods used to collect data is the potential for bias in the selection of participants. The findings that are reported reflect only the responses of those who could be reached and who were willing to participate. The information gathered from respondents may not accurately represent the broader opinions or concerns of all potential constituents and stakeholders. Data gathered from clients, for example, may reflect only the needs of individuals who are already recipients of services, to the exclusion of those who are not presently served. Although efforts were made to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process, it would be imprudent to conclude with certainty that those who contributed to the focus groups and the key informant interviews constitute a fully representative sample of all of the potential stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process in Iowa.

## FINDINGS

- Section One: Overall agency performance**
- Section Two: Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment**
- Section Three: Needs of individuals with blindness or low vision who are minorities, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program**
- Section Four: Needs of youth and students with blindness or low vision in transition**
- Section Five: Needs of individuals with blindness or low vision served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System**
- Section Six: Need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in Iowa**
- Section Seven: Needs of businesses and effectiveness in serving employers**

## **SECTION ONE: OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE**

The first section of the CSNA reports on areas of general performance by IDB. General performance refers to how well IDB is fulfilling its mission of assisting people with blindness and low vision to increase their independence and employment. The area of general performance also refers to how effectively IDB performs the processes that facilitate case movement through the stages of the rehabilitation process, how well IDB adheres to the timelines for this case movement identified in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, and IDB policies and procedures. Finally, overall performance also refers to how successfully IDB achieves their common performance measures and the quantity and quality of employment outcomes achieved by their clients.

The structure of this section, as well as the following sections, will include the following:

1. Data that pertains to the section in question, including observations based on the data;
2. Electronic and hard copy survey results pertaining to the section;
3. Recurring/consensual themes that emerged during the individual interviews and focus groups; and
4. Recommendations to address the findings in each area of the assessment.

The time period covered by the data in this comprehensive statewide needs assessment is the three-year period from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2018. The qualitative data also begins with October 1, 2016, and goes through August 2019. The data on agency performance included in this section comes from the case management system used by IDB and is compared to the available RSA-911 data submitted by IDB where available.

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### *Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods*

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The following recurring themes emerged in the area of Overall Agency Performance:

- IDB staff are characterized as caring and committed to their jobs and their clients;
- IDB needs to improve responsiveness to their clients and partners. The response to emails and phone calls was frequently described as taking too long, which is a source of frustration for clients;
- The number of employment outcomes for IDB clients has decreased in recent years and there are several reasons cited for this decline;
- IDB was given praise for their support of individuals pursuing higher education, often supporting individuals at the graduate level;
- IDB needs to increase community awareness of their services; and
- IDB needs more Rehabilitation Teachers to provide services to individuals that are unable to attend the Orientation Center.

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*National, State, Local and Agency-Specific Data  
Related to Overall Agency Performance*

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The project team gathered data from National and State data sets to provide information to IDB and to interested parties related to population, disability prevalence, income, poverty, educational attainment, unemployment and labor force participation in Iowa. The project team is hopeful that this information will provide IDB and their partners with data that can guide resource allocation and future planning.

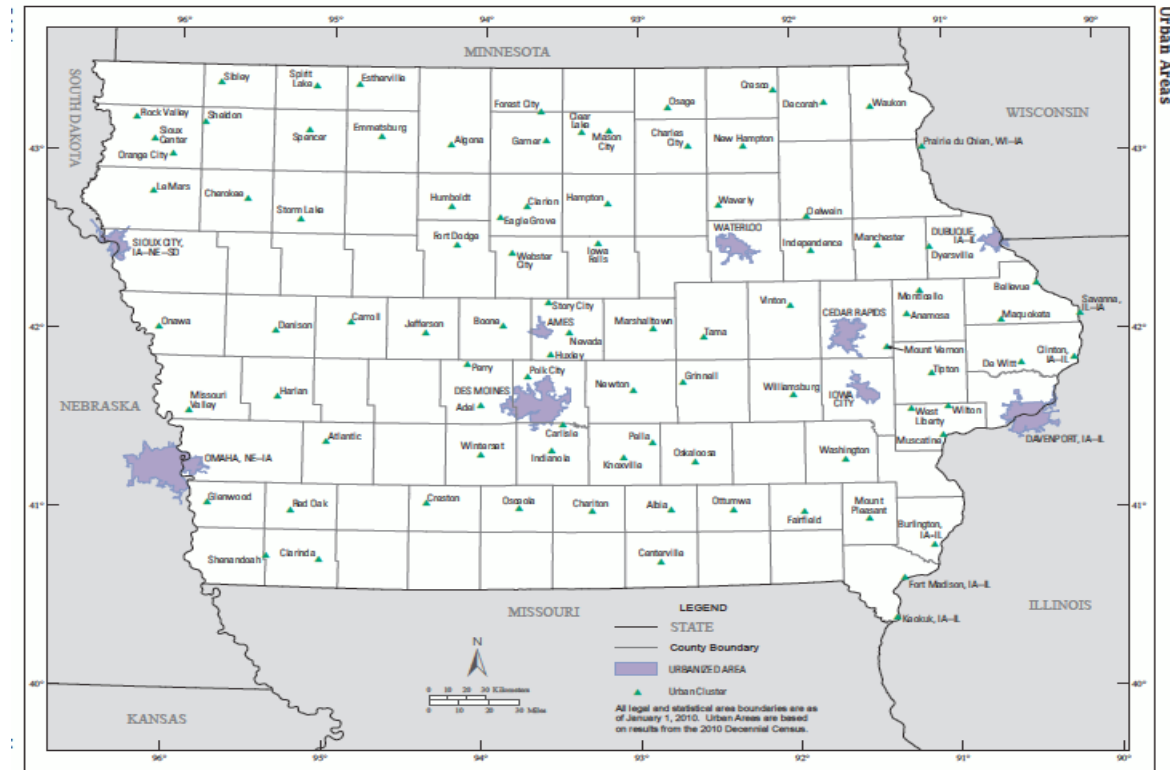
**General Trends of the VR with State and National Comparisons**

The State of Iowa is divided into 99 Counties. The US Census Bureau defines urban areas as “densely developed residential, commercial, and other non-residential areas” and defines rural areas as “areas not included in urban areas.” The total square miles for the State are approximately 56,273 with approximately 55,857 square miles of land and 416 square miles of water.

In 2012, the US Census Bureau reported that approximately 1.7% of Iowa’s total land area is classified as urban (approximately 953 square miles) and 98.3% of Iowa’s land space is comprised of rural areas (approximately 54,904 square miles). Approximately 64% of the Iowa’s total population resides in urban areas and 36% of the population resides in rural areas. In contrast, 80.7% of the Nation’s population reside in urban areas and 19.3% reside in rural areas. The Bureau defines an urbanized area having 50,000 or more people and an urban cluster as having at least 2,500 people and less than 50,000 people. Iowa has 99 urban areas. Eighty-nine of the urban areas are entirely in the state and 10 are partly in the state. Iowa’s urban areas are categorized into nine urbanized areas and 90 urban clusters. A total of 21 Counties are categorized as 100% rural. Map 1 contains the State’s urban areas and urban clusters



Map 1  
*Iowa Urban Areas and Urban Clusters*



The State is populated with an average of 54.5 people per square mile. Polk County has a population density of 750.5 people per square mile which is the highest overall population density of the State. Scott County has the second largest population density, with an average of 360.7 people per square mile and 13.5% of the residents residing in rural areas. Adams County has the lowest average number of people (9.5) per square mile, with 100% of the residents residing in rural areas. The population densities in the 100% rural areas range from 9.5 people per square mile to 28.3 (Louisa) people per square mile.

**Population**

The data for population is based on the July 2018 U.S. Census Bureau estimates and from the World Population Review online data. Table 4 identifies the local County population noting the Counties with the highest and lowest population rates.

Table 4  
*Local County Population Rate for State December 2018*

<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Percent of Iowa Pop.</b>
<b>United States</b>	327,167,434	
<b>Iowa</b>	3,156,145	0.96% of US Pop.
<b>Counties with the Lowest Population</b>		
<b>Taylor County</b>	6,191	0.20%
<b>Osceola County</b>	6,040	0.19%
<b>Audubon County</b>	5,506	0.17%
<b>Ringgold County</b>	4,968	0.16%
<b>Adams County</b>	3,645	0.10%
<b>Counties with the Highest Population</b>		
<b>Polk County</b>	487,204	15.53%
<b>Linn County</b>	225,909	7.15%
<b>Scott County</b>	173,283	5.49%
<b>Johnson County</b>	151,260	4.79%
<b>Black Hawk County</b>	132,408	4.20%

Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018 U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division and worldpopulationreview.com

Iowa makes up almost 1% of the population in the United States. In December, 2018, Iowa was ranked 30<sup>th</sup> for most populous area in the Nation (which includes the District of Columbia), based on July, 2018 population projections.

### **Income and Poverty**

#### **Income**

Table 5 and Table 6 provide statistics for Median Age, Median Household Income, and Median Home Value.

Table 5  
*Median Age/Median Household Income/Median Home Value US and Iowa*

<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>*Median Age</b>	<b>*Median Working Age 16 to 64</b>	<b>*Household Income</b>	<b>*Home Value 2017</b>
<b>*US</b>	38.1	39.7	\$60,336	\$217,600
<b>*IA</b>	38.3	39.5	\$58,570	\$149,100

Table 6

*Median Age/Median Household Income/Median Home Value by County*

<b>**Median Age</b>			
<b>Lowest</b>		<b>Highest</b>	
Buena Vista	35.1	Dickinson	48.7
Black Hawk	34.9	Audubon	48.3
Sioux	33.3	Adams	47.7
Johnson	29.9	Pocahontas	47.2
Story	25.9	Shelby	46.9
<b>*Median Working Age 16 to 64</b>			
<b>Lowest</b>		<b>Highest</b>	
Sioux	37.2	Pocahontas	45.6
Black Hawk	35.7	Shelby	45.1
Decatur	35.5	Clayton	45.1
Johnson	33	Jackson	45
Story	27.4	Sac	44.9
<b>**Median Household Income</b>			
<b>Lowest</b>		<b>Highest</b>	
Wayne	\$42,434	Dallas	\$82,719
Webster	\$42,148	Warren	\$71,514
Monona	\$41,598	Mills	\$67,949
Decatur	\$41,042	Sioux	\$66,022
Appanoose	\$40,377	Bremer	\$65,440
<b>***Median Home Value</b>			
<b>Lowest</b>		<b>Highest</b>	
Decatur	\$76,300	Dallas	\$218,000
Taylor	\$76,100	Johnson	\$210,400
Wayne	\$74,700	Dickinson	\$175,900
Pocahontas	\$73,400	Story	\$172,900
Audubon	\$68,800	Warren	\$171,400

\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. \*\* Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 5-year Estimates.

\*\*\* Home Values (Owner-Occupied Housing Units) from 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The median age of residents for the Nation is 38.1 years and the State median age is 38.3 years. Dickinson County has the highest average median age (48.7), exceeding the Nation and State by greater than 10 percentage points. Story County's median age is significantly lower than the State and National averages by greater than 12%.

The median working age for individuals ages 16 to 64 in the United States is 39.7. In Iowa, the median age is 39.5. All Counties in the top five for highest median working age in the State have averages exceeding age 40. Three Counties (Clayton, Jackson, Sac) rank within the top 5 for highest median working age but do not appear on the list in the top 5 Counties for general median age.

The median household income for the Nation and the State are \$60,336 and \$58,570 respectively. Five Counties in the State have median household income levels that fall more than \$16,100 below the State and National averages. Dallas County's median income average exceeds the State and National averages by more than \$24,100.

Audubon County has the lowest average median home value (\$68,800) in the State, which is significantly lower than the State's median home value by over \$80,000 and lower than the National average by \$148,800. Dallas County is the only County in the State to have exceeded the National median home value of \$217,600.

### Poverty

Poverty rates in Table 7 represent the Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP) ages 18 to 64 collected from the 2017 1-year US Census and 2013-2017 US 5-year Census.

Table 7

*Poverty Rates: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population Ages 18 to 64 years*

<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>Average Poverty Rate</b>	<b>Lowest Level</b>	<b>Highest Level</b>
<b>US</b>	*12.6%	*Maryland 8.6%	*West Virginia 19.6%
<b>IA</b>	*11.2%	*Lyon 4.9 %	*Story 28.3%
<b>Counties with the Lowest Poverty Levels</b>		<b>Counties with the Highest Poverty Levels</b>	
Grundy	6.5%	Story	28.3%
Warren	5.8%	Johnson	21.7%
Cedar	5.7%	Decatur	19.7%
Dallas	5.6%	Crawford	17.5%
Lyon	4.9%	Black Hawk	17.5%

Source: \*2017 ACS 1-Year Estimates and \*\*2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Two Counties have poverty rates that are greater than 20%. Note that four of the five Counties with the highest poverty rates in the State also have the lowest median age for workers ages 16 to 64. Story County has a significantly higher poverty rate than the State by 17.1% and the Nation by approximately 15.7%. Story County has the highest poverty rate in the State, has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest median home value of the State, has the lowest median working age, and ranks 53<sup>rd</sup> in the State for median household income.

Lyon County has a poverty rate that is less than 5% and ranks 11<sup>th</sup> highest for median household income. Dallas County has the second lowest poverty rate in the State (5.6%) and has the highest median household income and highest home value in the State, and has a median working age of 39.2.

### **Educational Attainment**

Table 8 provides rates for both High School Graduation and Education at or above a Bachelor's degree for the State's total population ages 25 years and over.

Table 8

*Educational Attainment: Population 25 years and over*

<b>Area</b>	<b>*US</b>	<b>*IA</b>	<b>Lowest</b>	<b>Highest</b>
<b>HS Grad (includes equivalency)</b>	27.1%	30.5%	Johnson County 16.4%	Monroe County 45.9%
<b>Some college, no degree</b>	20.4%	21.0%	Johnson County 17.5%	Des Moines County 26.6%
<b>Associate's degree</b>	8.5%	11.6%	Decatur County 7.1%	Palo Alto County 16.4%
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	19.7%	19.4%	Wayne County 9.5%	Dallas County 34.5%
<b>Graduate or professional degree</b>	12.3%	9.5%	Pocahontas County 2.7%	Johnson County 24.5%
<b>Percent High School graduate or higher</b>	88.0%	92.1%	Crawford County 78.7%	Story County 96.8%
<b>Percent Bachelor's degree or higher</b>	32.0%	28.9%	Crawford County 13.0%	Johnson County 52.7%

\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 A C S 1-Year Estimates \*\*Source: 2013-2017 A C S 5-Year Estimates

### **Highest Level of Education Attainment Rates**

The National average for the total population over the age of 25 whose highest level of educational attainment is high school graduation or equivalent is 27.1% and the State average is 30.5%. The rate of Iowa residents age 25 or older whose highest educational attainment is an Associate's degree is three percent higher than the national average. Conversely, the rate of Iowa residents whose highest level of educational attainment is a graduate or professional degree is three percent lower than the national average. Johnson County has the highest rate of individuals whose highest educational attainment is a graduate or professional degree, nearly double the US average.

The high school graduation rates for Iowa residents exceed the national average by just over four percent, while the rate of individuals that have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher are lower than the national average by three percent. Story County has the highest rate of high school graduates at almost 97%, while Johnson County has the highest rate of those who have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher at 52.7%

### **Unemployment Rates**

Table 9 and Map 2 identify the unemployment rates for the Nation and Iowa, and compares the rates to the lowest and highest rates in the State's Counties.

Table 9

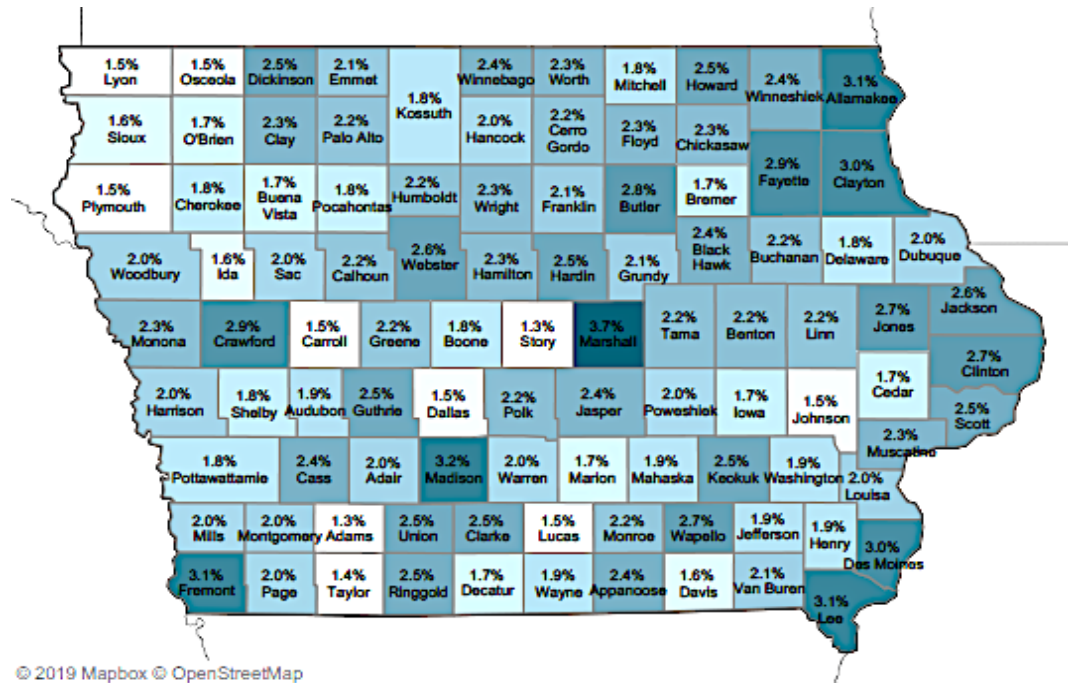
#### *Local Area Unemployment Rates*

	<b>US</b>	<b>IA</b>	<b>Lowest</b>	<b>Highest</b>
<b>Annual 2018</b>	3.9%	2.5%	Lyon 1.5%	Marshall 4.4%
<b>18-Dec</b>	3.7%	2.5%	Story 1.5%	Marshall 5.2%
<b>19-Jan</b>	4.4%	3.3%	Story 1.9%	Marshall 6.8%
<b>19-Feb</b>	4.1%	2.7%	Story 1.4%	Marshall 5.9%
<b>19-Mar</b>	3.9%	2.8%	Story 1.5%	Marshall 5.8%
<b>19-Apr</b>	3.3%	2.1%	Adams & Story 1.3%	Marshall 3.7%
<b>19-May</b>	3.4%	2.4%	Lyon 1.3%	Des Moines & Marshall 3.2%

Source: United States Department of Labor-www.bls.gov

Map 2

#### *Iowa April 2019 Non-Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate*



At the end of December of 2018, the annual non-adjusted unemployment rate for the Nation was 3.9%. The State’s annual non-adjusted unemployment rate was 1.4% lower than the National unemployment rate. At the beginning of 2019, the State and National unemployment rates rose slightly in January and declined during the first four months of the year. The Counties with the lowest and highest unemployment rates for the first four months of 2019 (Marshall County and Story County) share an east-west border as noted in Map 2.

**Labor Force Participation: Occupations**

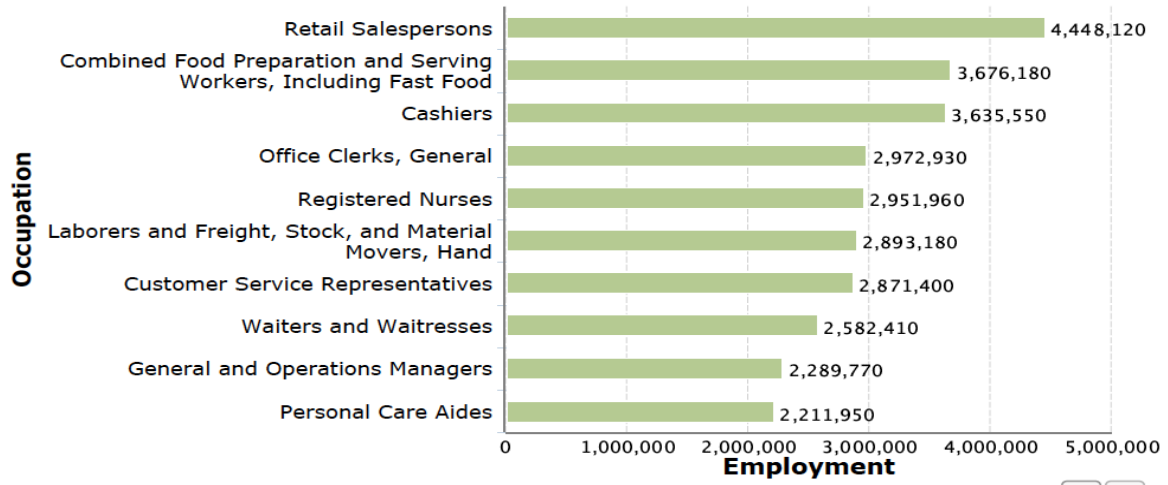
The US Department Bureau of Labor and Statistics provides data for the largest occupations within the various States and the Nation. Chart 1 and Chart 2 are the most recent data (May, 2018) results indicating the largest occupations for the Nation and Iowa.

Chart 1  
Occupational Employment Statistics for the US

4/26/2019

OES Chart

### Largest occupations in the United States, May 2018



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



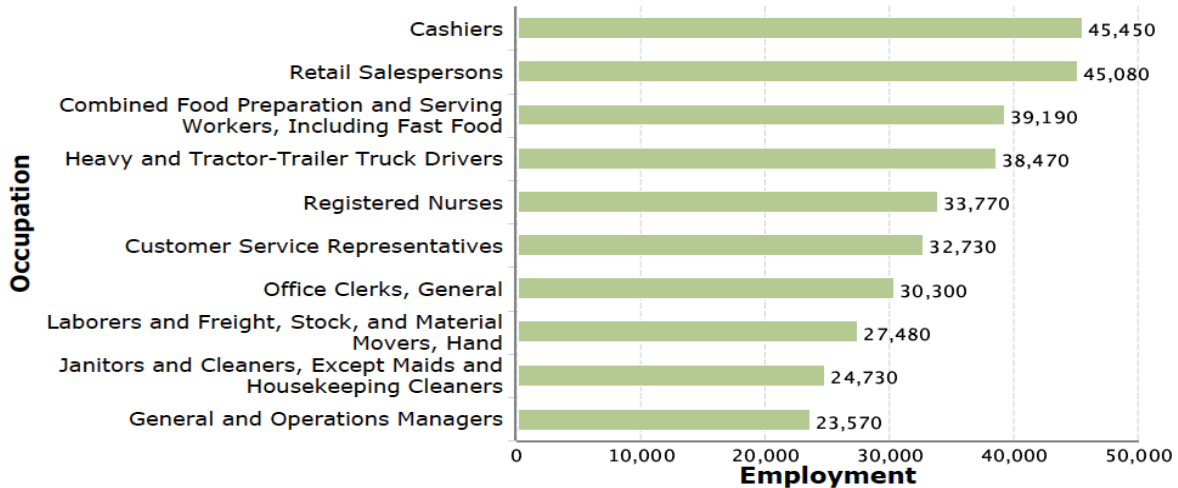


Chart 2  
Occupational Employment Statistics for IA

4/27/2019

OES Chart

**Largest occupations in Iowa, May 2018**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The top ten occupations in Iowa are reflective of the top ten occupations in the U.S. The largest occupation in Iowa is Cashiers, which ranks as the third largest occupation in the U.S. Four differences between Iowa and the U.S. occur. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, which is the fourth largest occupation in Iowa, is not included in the top ten occupations in the U.S. overall, and Waiters and Waitresses, which is eighth on the U.S. list, does not appear on Iowa’s list. Janitors and Cleaners (except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners), which are ninth in Iowa, does not appear on the U.S. list, and Iowa’s list does not include Personal Care Aides.

**Labor Force Participation: Industries**

Table 10 provides information on the top industries by employment for the nation and the state as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 10  
*Local Region Top Industries by Employment*

Region	Industries	Percent
US*	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.1%
	2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.5%
	3) Retail trade	11.2%
	4) Manufacturing	10.1%
	5) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.7%
IA*	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.7%
	2) Manufacturing	14.6%
	3) Retail trade	11.7%
	4) Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.9%
	5) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Industries that rank as Iowa's first, third and fifth top industries resemble the Nation's top industries in the same rankings with a slight variance in percentage points. Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services is the Nation's second top industry by employment and does not appear on Iowa's list. Manufacturing ranks second in the State and ranks fourth on the Nation's list of leading industries by employment. Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing does not appear on the National list.

### **Disability and Labor Force Participation**

The United States Department of Labor provides monthly Disability Employment Statistics. The Labor Force Participation Rate refers to the percentage of noninstitutionalized U.S. citizens from ages 16 and over who are in the labor force and includes the employed and the unemployed who are actively seeking work. The unemployment rate measures the percentage within the labor force currently without a job. Table 11 contains the statistics for the first six months of 2019 for individuals without and with a disability in the U.S.

Table 11

*Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates for U.S.*

Group	Labor Force Participation Rates					
	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Apr. 2019	May-19	Jun-19
People with Disabilities	20.5%	20.9%	21.5%	20.7%	20.6%	20.9%
People without Disabilities	68.3%	68.6%	68.5%	68.3%	68.5%	69.1%
	Unemployment Rate					
People with Disabilities	9.0%	9.1%	7.9%	6.3%	6.3%	7.7%
People without Disabilities	4.2%	3.9%	3.8%	3.2%	3.3%	3.7%

The data indicates that the labor force participation rates for individuals with disabilities is consistently one-third of the rate for individuals without disabilities. In addition, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is consistently at least twice as high as those without disabilities.

Cornell University provides online disability statistics. The following data is from their online resource:

**Employment rate:** In 2017, an estimated 36.4% of non-institutionalized, male or female, with a disability, ages 16-64, all races, regardless of ethnicity, with all education levels in the Nation were employed. In Iowa, the rate was estimated at 45.7%.

**Not working but actively looking for work:** In 2017, an estimated 7.4 % of non-institutionalized persons aged 21 to 64 years with a disability in the Nation who were not working and were actively looking for work. In Iowa, the estimate was 7.3%.

**Full-Time / Full-Year Employment:** In 2017, an estimated 23.9% of non-institutionalized persons aged 21 to 64 years with a disability in the Nation were employed full-time/full-year while the estimate is 28.9% for Iowa, which is 5 percentage points higher than the Nation.

<http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/reports/acs.cfm?statistic=4>

Table 12 provides data on disability status and employment for ages 16 and over from the U. S. Census Bureau for the year 2017.

Table 12

*Disability Status and Employment for the Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP) age 16 and over*

Group	United States			Iowa		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
<b>Population Age 16 and Over</b>	255,683,832	38,088,408	217,595,424	2,456,523	326,275	2,130,248
<b>Employed</b>	60.6%	23.9%	67.1%	65.9%	28.7%	71.6%
<b>Not in Labor Force</b>	36.0%	73.2%	29.5%	31.6%	69.0%	25.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Of the population age 16 years and older residing in the United States who report having a disability, 23.9% are employed and participating in the Labor Force, while approximately 73.2% are not in the Labor Force. The State of Iowa's average (28.7%) of those who report a disability are employed and 69% are not engaged in the Labor Force.

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research published the 2018 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium. In 2017, 37.0 percent of the people in the United States with disabilities, ages 18 to 64 years and living in the community were employed, while 77.2 percent of people without disabilities ages 18 to 64 years living in the community were employed. In Iowa, 45.7% of people with disabilities were employed and 82.7% of people without disabilities were employed. The employment gap, which is the difference between the employment percentage for people with disabilities and people without disabilities, was 43.2 percentage points for the Nation's population ages 18 years to 64. Eighteen states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have a lower employment gap than Iowa's employment gap of 37% while 22 states have employment gaps of over 40%.

[https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2016\\_AnnualReport.pdf](https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2016_AnnualReport.pdf)

Labor Force Participation (LFP) rates for the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 years and over that are employed and who report having a disability, is available for eight of the State's ninety-nine Counties. Table 13 provides the available data for the eight Counties based on five-year estimates.

Table 13

*IA County Disability Status and Employment for the Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP) age 16 and over*

<b>County</b>	<b>Employed TCNP Age 16 and over</b>	<b>With a Disability</b>	<b>No Disability</b>	<b>Employment Gap</b>
<b>Johnson</b>	70.1%	35.8%	73.1%	37.3%
<b>Polk</b>	70.0%	33.4%	75.4%	42.0%
<b>Dubuque</b>	67.1%	31.2%	72.3%	41.1%
<b>Pottawattamie</b>	64.5%	30.3%	71.7%	41.4%
<b>Linn</b>	68.3%	29.2%	73.5%	44.3%
<b>Woodbury</b>	66.4%	28.7%	73.2%	44.5%
<b>Black Hawk</b>	64.9%	27.4%	70.6%	43.2%
<b>Scott</b>	62.9%	24.7%	68.3%	43.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Johnson County has the highest employment rate for individuals with disabilities and the rate is significantly higher than the Nation and the State by more than seven percentage points. All eight Counties have employment rates for people with disabilities that are higher than the nation's rates and employment gaps that are higher than the State's employment gap.

### **Employment to Population Ratio – People with Disabilities**

The employment-to-population ratio indicates the ratio of civilian labor force who are currently employed to the total working-age population of the designated geographic area, which is different from the labor force participation rate because the labor force participation rate includes currently employed and those who are unemployed but actively looking for work. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau collects and analyzes the employment-population ratio for people with disabilities by State, County and urban and rural geography. Table 14 contains the available data for Iowa's Counties and urban and rural population.

Table 14

*Employment to Population Ratio for People with Disabilities Ages 18-64 years*

<b>EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY</b>		
<b>State/ Urban – Rural/ County</b>		
<b>Geographic Area</b>		<b>Percent</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>Total</b>	37.0
	<b>Urban</b>	37.9
	<b>Rural</b>	33.9
<b>Iowa</b>	<b>Total</b>	45.7
	<b>Urban</b>	45.4
	<b>Rural</b>	46.2
<b>Counties in Iowa</b>		
<b>Black Hawk County</b>		41.8
<b>Dallas County</b>		50.0
<b>Dubuque County</b>		47.9
<b>Johnson County</b>		54.8
<b>Linn County</b>		42.7
<b>Polk County</b>		50.9
<b>Pottawattamie County</b>		41.4
<b>Scott County</b>		31.0
<b>Story County</b>		48.0
<b>Woodbury County</b>		32.9

The difference between the employment to population ratio for working age individuals with a disability in the State of Iowa that reside in urban compared to rural areas is less than 1% while the difference for the Nation is about 4%. The State has a higher ratio of people with disabilities working in rural areas than urban. When compared to the Nation, Iowa's ratio of rural workers with disabilities is higher than the Nation's ratio by over 12%.

Overall, the State's employment to population ratio for people with disabilities is roughly nine percent higher than the Nation. Johnson County has the highest employment to population ratio for people with disabilities in the State, exceeding the National rate by over 17 percent. Seven other Counties throughout the State also have ratios that exceed the National ratio. Scott County's ratio is lower than the Nation and State's ratios by over 14 percentage points. Scott County is noted to have 13.5% of its residents residing in rural areas and roughly 86.5% residing

in urban areas. As a comparison, Dallas County has about 30% of its population residing in rural areas and 70% residing in urban areas while having the third highest employment to population ratios for people with disabilities in the State.

### Employment Status by Disability Type

Table 15 addresses employment status and disability type as estimated for the population age 18 years to 64 years by the US Census. Table 15 includes one-year estimates for the Nation, State and the 10 Counties in the state that had data available.

Table 15

*Labor Force Participation (Employment Status) by Disability Status and Type*

	US	IA	Black Hawk	Dallas	Dubuque	Johnson
<b>Total 18 - 64 years:</b>	197,765,139	1,873,557	82,500	52,544	57,699	100,924
<b>In labor force:</b>	77.1%	82.3%	82.3%	86.2%	80.9%	80.1%
<b>Employed:</b>	94.8%	96.5%	94.7%	97.7%	96.8%	97.0%
With a disability	5.2%	5.2%	5.8%	4.7%	4.4%	3.2%
Hearing	27.7%	28.5%	30.5%	43.6%	27.0%	36.9%
Vision	22.6%	16.8%	8.4%	7.9%	13.6%	15.5%
Cognitive	32.4%	36.4%	57.5%	25.0%	39.9%	42.1%
Ambulatory	32.5%	29.9%	24.9%	35.2%	31.6%	17.6%
Self-care	7.5%	7.4%	5.9%	6.3%	6.5%	5.5%
Independent Living	17.0%	18.9%	13.0%	7.2%	23.1%	15.1%
No disability	94.8%	94.8%	94.2%	93.1%	95.6%	96.8%
<b>Unemployed:</b>	5.2%	3.5%	5.3%	2.3%	3.2%	3.0%
With a disability	12.8%	11.8%	20.1%	16.7%	4.2%	4.0%
No disability	87.2%	88.2%	79.9%	83.3%	95.8%	96.0%
<b>Not in labor force:</b>	22.9%	17.7%	17.7%	13.8%	19.0%	19.9%
With a disability	26.2%	25.9%	30.5%	26.5%	19.3%	9.8%
No disability	73.8%	74.1%	69.5%	73.5%	80.7%	90.2%

LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	5.6%	5.5%	6.5%	5.0%	4.4%	3.2%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	94.4%	94.5%	93.5%	95.0%	95.6%	96.8%
Total Pop w/ disability	10.3%	9.1%	10.8%	8.0%	7.2%	4.5%
Total Pop w/o disability	89.7%	90.9%	89.2%	92.0%	92.7%	95.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

	Linn	Polk	Pottawattamie	Scott	Story	Woodbury
<b>Total 18 - 64 years:</b>	136,115	297,532	54,963	103,422	69,973	59,854
<b>In labor force:</b>	84.8%	84.6%	82.5%	79.2%	69.4%	79.7%
<b>Employed:</b>	95.9%	97.0%	95.6%	96.1%	97.3%	95.0%
With a disability	3.3%	5.5%	6.8%	3.9%	4.1%	4.8%
Hearing	21.4%	24.8%	16.4%	21.4%	25.0%	29.4%
Vision	13.0%	20.7%	20.3%	21.3%	1.1%	28.3%
Cognitive	30.7%	29.3%	23.7%	37.4%	56.1%	37.1%
Ambulatory	43.7%	38.0%	42.1%	26.3%	17.0%	10.0%
Self-care	8.6%	7.2%	10.0%	13.1%	11.8%	0.0%
Independent Living	16.1%	11.3%	30.7%	26.5%	23.9%	29.8%
No disability	96.7%	94.5%	93.2%	96.1%	95.9%	95.2%
<b>Unemployed:</b>	4.1%	3.0%	4.4%	4.1%	2.8%	5.0%
With a disability	5.2%	13.9%	12.4%	13.3%	4.0%	1.7%
No disability	94.8%	86.1%	87.6%	86.7%	96.0%	98.3%
<b>Not in labor force:</b>	15.2%	15.4%	17.5%	20.8%	30.6%	20.3%
With a disability	22.8%	26.0%	41.0%	29.4%	9.5%	35.8%
No disability	77.2%	74.0%	59.0%	70.6%	90.5%	64.2%



	Linn	Polk	Pottawattamie	Scott	Story	Woodbury
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	3.4%	5.8%	7.1%	4.2%	4.1%	4.6%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	96.6%	94.2%	92.9%	95.8%	95.9%	95.4%
Total Pop w/ disability	6.4%	8.9%	13.0%	9.5%	5.8%	11.0%
Total Pop w/o disability	93.6%	91.1%	87.0%	90.5%	94.2%	89.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Three Counties (Black Hawk, Polk, Pottawattamie) exceed the Nation and the State in labor force participation rates for those with and without disabilities. The remaining Counties have LFP rates that fall below the National and State rates by > .5%.

Among individuals engaged in the labor force and who report a disability in the Nation, individuals with ambulatory (32.5%) and cognitive (32.4%) difficulties rank the highest for labor force participation. Similarly, the highest labor force participation rates among those reporting a disability in the State are individuals reporting a cognitive difficulty (36.4%) and an ambulatory difficulty (29.9%). Five Counties have estimates that indicate a significantly high rate of workers with a cognitive difficulty, ranging from 37.1% to 57.5%. Dallas County's data indicates that a significantly high rate of workers report a hearing difficulty (43.6%), which is over 15% higher than the Nation and the State. Self-care difficulty is the least frequently reported disability category among those who are employed and report having a disability within nine of the ten Counties of Iowa.

Vision difficulty rates exceed 20% among employed workers in the Nation, and in four Counties. Story County's rate for vision difficulty is significantly lower than the Nation, State and all other Counties by approximately 6 to 28 percentage points.

### **Poverty and Disability Type:**

According to Cornell University Disability Statistics, in the year 2017, an estimated 26.1 percent of non-institutionalized persons aged 21 to 64 years with a disability in the United States were living below the poverty line. In Iowa, the rate was 25.9% for the same age category. Table 16 represents Poverty by Disability Type for the Nation and State for non-institutionalized persons aged 21 to 64 years with a disability in 2017.

Table 16  
*Poverty Rate by Disability Type*

<b>Disability Type</b>	<b>United States</b>	<b>Iowa</b>
<b>Any Disability</b>	26.1%	25.9%
<b>Visual</b>	27.0%	25.5%
<b>Hearing</b>	19.8%	15.7%
<b>Ambulatory</b>	29.1%	29.1%
<b>Cognitive</b>	31.5%	35.0%
<b>Self-care</b>	31.1%	32.7%
<b>Independent Living</b>	31.0%	36.3%

Source: <http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/reports/acs.cfm?statistic=7>

Individuals with independent living disabilities had the highest rate of poverty in Iowa, followed by individuals with self-care and ambulatory disabilities respectively. The poverty rate for individuals with hearing impairments in Iowa was significantly below the national average of 15.7%, but still slightly over three percentage points more than the poverty rate for individuals without disabilities nationally.

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### *Agency-Specific Data Related to Overall Performance*

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#### **General Information for all Clients**

The project team requested data related to overall performance and case movement from IDB for this assessment. The data is presented throughout the report in the applicable areas. Table 17 contains general information for all IDB clients for the period of Federal Fiscal Years 2016-2018.

Table 17  
*General Data for all IDB Clients 2016-2018*

Item	ALL CLIENTS		
	2016	2017	2018
Applications	204	181	181
Applicants found eligible	141	143	127
Percent of apps found eligible	69.1%	79.0%	70.2%
Avg. time for eligibility determination (days)	47	49	44
Significance of Disability			
Disabled	0	0	0
Significant	75	62	72
Percent of total	53.2%	43.4%	56.7%
Most significant	66	81	55
Percent of total	46.8%	56.6%	43.3%
Closed prior to IPE development	10	12	16
Percent of all closed prior to IPE development	35.8%	27.6%	38.7%
Plans developed	143	124	116
Avg. time from eligibility to plan (days)	52	48	89
Number of clients in training by type			
Vocational	27	27	23
Undergraduate	49	43	47
Graduate	11	14	13
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed other than rehabilitated	2,110	1,955	1,637
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed rehabilitated	1,709	2,370	1,779
Number of cases closed rehabilitated	260	280	145
Rehabilitation rate	77.3%	38.6%	56.6%
Total number of cases served	518	508	505
Avg. cost of all cases	\$14,682	\$8,085	\$7,993
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated	\$17,152	\$15,606	\$11,412
Avg. cost per case closed unsuccessful	\$8,762	\$5,202	\$4,685
Avg. cost per case closed prior to plan	\$80	\$220	\$102

The data indicates that the number of individuals that applied for IDB services was steady from 2017 to 2018 after slightly declining from 2016 to 2017. The average time for a determination of eligibility was well below the 60-day timeframe allowed in the Rehabilitation Act as amended for all three years of the study.

An analysis of the significance of disability of eligible individuals indicates that all of the individuals are either persons with significant or most significant disabilities. There was a reduction in the number of plans developed each year of the study, and this coincides with an increase in the percent of cases closed prior to the development of an IPE. In addition, there was a sharp increase in the average length of time for an IPE to be developed from 2017 to 2018, rising from 48 to 89 days.

The data on training indicates that slightly more than 16% of all cases served by IDB are in some kind of training program. The highest number of clients are in undergraduate training, followed by vocational training and graduate school respectively.

The average length of time a case was open when closed either successfully or unsuccessfully was over 4.5 years in 2018. The difference of time between successful and unsuccessful closure times was approximately 4 months. The number of successful closures decreased significantly from 2017 to 2018, dropping by nearly half. The employment rate, however, fluctuated throughout the study, dropping from 2016 to 2017, but then rising from 2017 to 2018, settling at 56.6% in 2018.

The total number of cases served by IDB was consistent from year to year, with a slight decrease each year. The average cost for all cases dropped each year of the study, with the most significant drop coming in cases closed rehabilitated.

### General Information by Gender and Age

The project team requested information by gender and age to determine if there were any significant differences in services for any of the groups. Table 18 contains the results of this analysis.

Table 18

#### *General Data by Gender and Age*

Item	Year		
	2016	2017	2018
Percent of female clients	47.3%	47.0%	47.7%
Percent of male clients	52.7%	53.0%	52.3%
Rehabilitation rate for females	71.3%	40.7%	75.4%
Rehabilitation rate for males	81.6%	36.3%	44.3%
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated – females	\$17,306	\$10,895	\$15,367
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated – males	\$17,047	\$21,103	\$7,098
Percent of all served - Ages 14-24	36.9%	39.0%	42.4%
Percent of all served - Ages 25-64	63.7%	62.4%	60.8%
Percent of all served - Ages 65 and over	6.9%	6.1%	4.6%

An analysis of gender differences indicates that IDB served approximately five percent more males than females in each year of the study. The greatest difference between genders served

was in 2017, when the rate of males served exceeded females by 6%. The rehabilitation rate of females to males has varied dramatically from year to year. In 2016, men had a ten percent higher rehabilitation rate than women, but this difference changed to a 4.4% difference in 2017, with women having the higher rate. In 2018, the rehabilitation rate for females far outpaced males, with a difference of slightly more than 31%. The difference in the cost of successfully closed cases reversed from 2017 to 2018. In 2017, the average cost for cases closed successfully was twice as high for males compared to females. In 2018, the average cost for females was more than twice that of males.

The data indicate that youth (14-24) represent an increasing percentage of all individuals served by IDB. The rate of youth served by IDB increased by two percent from 2016 to 2017, and increased by another 3.4% from 2017 to 2018. Concurrently, the rate of individuals aged 25-64 and 65 and over decreased each year. This data reflects the focus on youth services, including pre-employment transition services since the implementation of WIOA.

### **Common Performance Accountability Measures for the VR Program**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act contains common performance accountability measures for all of the core partners in WIOA. These common performance measures (CPMs) replaced the RSA Standards and Indicators for the VR program and include the following six measures:

- I. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- II. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- III. The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- IV. The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program;
- V. The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and
- VI. The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

As of the writing of this report, the VR programs nationally completed the second program year of gathering baseline data for the establishment of their negotiated rates for the first five measures. The project team asked IDB if they were able to gather any of this data for the years 2016-2018 and they were unable to provide the information in time for this report. The project team was able to obtain employment rate data for recently completed Program Year 2018 by Quarter. The data is contained in Table 19.

Table 19

*Employment rate by Quarter for PY 2018*

<b>Employment Rate for Program Year 2018</b>	
<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Rate</b>
First Quarter	64.3%
Second Quarter	45.0%
Third Quarter	30.8%
Fourth Quarter	36.0%

It is important to note that the employment rate is not one of the common performance measures in WIOA. There is no second and fourth quarter after exit employment rate data available at this time. In the next CSNA, this information should be available.

The project team gathered the most recent data from the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration on the negotiated performance measures for the Title I and Title III (Wagner-Peyser) programs as a point of information for IDB and partners. The information for Program Years 2018 and 2019 is contained in Table 20.

Table 20

*Negotiated Rates for Title I and III Programs in Iowa for 2018-2019*

<b>Program Years 2018 and 2019 - Negotiated Levels of Performance for Iowa</b>					
<b>Program</b>	<b>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	<b>Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit</b>	<b>Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	<b>Credential Attainment</b>	<b>Measurable Skill Gains</b>
Title I - Adult	65.0%	64.0%	\$4,100	65.0%	Baseline
Title I - Dislocated Worker	66.0%	66.0%	\$5,600	63.0%	Baseline
Title I - Youth	70.0%	67.0%	Baseline	58.0%	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	63.0%	65.0%	\$4,600	NA	Baseline

It is important to remember that the target rates for the Title I and III programs are not necessarily reflective of what the target rates will be for the VR programs in Iowa. The clients of IDB and the General agency in Iowa are individuals with significant barriers to employment, and the negotiated employment rate for the Title IV program may not be reflective of the rates from other core partners.

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***SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE***

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**INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS**

In the overall performance section of the report, general information about the respondents to the individual survey are presented as well as responses to questions that address client perspectives about the overall performance of IDB. Results that are consistent with the other portions of the report will be reported in those sections.

Surveys were distributed electronically via Qualtrics, a web-based survey application. There were 118 valid individual surveys completed by individuals, with varying degrees of completion. In some cases, individual respondents chose not to answer selected questions on the survey, but did complete the entire survey and submit it. These no responses account for the variance in survey responses in some questions.

**Respondent Demographics**

Table 21 below identifies the age of respondents to the individual survey.

Table 21  
*Age of Respondents*

<b>Age Range of Respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Age 25 - 64	63	69.2%
Age 24 or younger	22	24.2%
65 or older	6	6.6%
<b>Total</b>	91	100.0%

A total of 91 respondents indicated their age. The largest percentage of respondents were between the ages of 25 to 64 (69.2%).

Table 21 identifies the gender of respondents to the individual survey.

Table 21  
*Gender of Respondents*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Female	51	55.4%
Male	39	42.4%
Prefer not to say	2	2.2%
Transgender	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	92	100.0%

A total of 92 respondents answered the question regarding gender. The largest percentage of respondents were female (55.4%). Two respondents did not identify a specific gender.

Respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to identify their primary disabling condition. Table 22 summarizes the primary disabling conditions reported by the individual survey respondents.

Table 22  
*Primary Disability of Respondents*

<b>Primary Condition</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Blindness or visual impairment	76	82.6%
Other (please describe)	5	5.4%
Deaf-blindness	4	4.4%
Mental health impairment	3	3.3%
Cognitive impairment	2	2.2%
Communication impairment	1	1.1%
Physical impairment	1	1.1%
Deafness or hearing impairment	0	0.0%
Mobility impairment	0	0.0%
No impairment	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	92	100.0%

Blindness or visual impairment (82.6%) was the most frequently cited as the primary disability type indicated by respondents. Respondents were also asked to identify their secondary disabling condition, if they had one. Table 23 details the secondary conditions reported by respondents.



Table 23  
*Secondary Disability of Respondents*

<b>Secondary Condition</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
No impairment	33	44.0%
Mental health impairment	11	14.7%
Other (please describe)	8	10.7%
Blindness or visual impairment	7	9.3%
Physical impairment	5	6.7%
Deafness or hearing impairment	3	4.0%
Mobility impairment	3	4.0%
Cognitive impairment	2	2.7%
Deaf-blindness	2	2.7%
Communication impairment	1	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

Approximately 44% of respondents reported no secondary disabling condition. Almost 15% of the survey respondents indicated mental health impairment as their secondary disabling condition. Respondents who indicated “other” were given an opportunity to provide a narrative response. Content analysis of the data indicated specific physical or cognitive conditions such as “use of one hand”, “cancer”, “memory challenges”, “hearing, vision, balance”, “social immaturity” or diabetes.

### **Association with IDB**

Individuals who responded to the survey were presented with a question that asked them to identify the statement that best described their association with the Iowa Department for the Blind. Their responses to this question appear in Table 24.

Table 24  
*Respondent Association with IDB*

<b>Association with IDB</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
I am a current client of IDB and I am a repeat client	46	39.0%
I am a current client of IDB and I have never been a client before	37	31.4%
I am a previous client of IDB, my case has been closed	27	22.9%
Other (please describe)	8	6.8%
I have never used the services of IDB	0	0.0%
I am not familiar with IDB	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	118	100%

The majority of respondents (39%) indicated they are current and repeat clients of IDB. There is a 7.6% margin of difference between the majority response and the second most frequent choice “*I am a current client of IDB and I have never been a client before.*” Eight individuals who selected “*other*” indicated that they were either family members, parents of current clients or individuals that have toured facilities or used services, but not clients of IDB.

### **COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS**

The partner survey was distributed to representatives of partner organizations that provide services to individuals with blindness and low vision and work with IDB. A total of 64 valid partner surveys were completed. Questions appearing on the partner survey addressed five general areas:

- Services readily available to individuals with blindness and low vision
- Barriers to achieving employment goals
- Barriers to accessing IDB services
- Desired changes to community partner programs that can increase their ability to serve individuals with blindness and low vision
- Assessment of Iowa *WORKS* Centers effectiveness in serving individuals with disabilities

The bulk of the partner survey responses are presented in the sections of this report that apply to those questions. The project team included some general information about survey respondents in this section.

#### **Partner Survey Respondent Characteristics**

Respondents were provided with a list and asked to identify which County or Counties that they provided services to individuals with blindness or other visual impairments. There were no limitations to the number of Counties that a respondent could choose. Table 25 includes this information.

Table 25  
*Counties Served*

<b>County Served</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
All Counties	22	35.5%
Polk	9	14.5%
Linn	4	6.5%
Story	4	6.5%
Woodbury	4	6.5%
No Counties	4	6.5%
Allamakee	3	4.8%
Cass	3	4.8%
Dallas	3	4.8%
Pottawattamie	3	4.8%
Winneshiek	3	4.8%
Benton	2	3.2%
Carroll	2	3.2%
Cedar	2	3.2%
Des Moines	2	3.2%
Harrison	2	3.2%
Howard	2	3.2%
Iowa	2	3.2%
Johnson	2	3.2%
Jones	2	3.2%
Minona	2	3.2%
Shelby	2	3.2%
Warren	2	3.2%
Washington	2	3.2%
Blackhawk	1	1.6%
Boone	1	1.6%
Buchanan	1	1.6%

Calhoun	1	1.6%
Cerro Gordo	1	1.6%
Cherokee	1	1.6%
Chickasaw	1	1.6%
Clay	1	1.6%
Clayton	1	1.6%
Dickinson	1	1.6%
Fayette	1	1.6%
Franklin	1	1.6%
Henry	1	1.6%
Jasper	1	1.6%
Lee	1	1.6%
Marshall	1	1.6%
Mills	1	1.6%
Sac	1	1.6%
Sioux	1	1.6%
Tama	1	1.6%
Wapello	1	1.6%

The majority of respondents participating in the survey indicated that their organization served all Counties in the State. Forty-three Counties were individually represented at least one time by survey respondents.

Partners were asked whether or not their organization provides services exclusively to individuals with blindness or visual impairments. Table 26 contains these results.

Table 26

*Partner Organization Exclusivity*

<b>Provide Services Exclusively to Individuals with Blindness or Visual Impairments</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
No, we provide services to individuals with other disabilities	56	87.5%
Yes	8	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	64	100.0%

A total of 64 respondents answered this multi-select question. The largest number of respondents cited working for organizations that provided services to a variety of disability types.

### STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 40 valid staff surveys were completed. Questions appearing on the staff survey addressed five general areas:

- Services readily available to individuals with blindness and low vision;
- Barriers to achieving employment goals;
- Barriers to accessing IDB services;
- The effectiveness of the Iowa *Works* Centers in serving individuals with blindness and low vision; and
- Desired changes in IDB services that would help the organization more effectively serve individuals with blindness and low vision.

#### Respondent Characteristics:

Staff survey respondents were asked an open-ended question requesting that they indicate their job title. Forty responses were received. Table 27 contains the results.

Table 27  
*Job Title*

Job Title	Number	Percent of Total
Support Staff	12	30.0%
Counselor	9	22.5%
Instructor	7	17.5%
Other (please generally classify)	7	17.5%
Supervisor or Manager	5	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	40	100%

Almost one-third of the respondents to the staff survey identified themselves as support staff. Vocational rehabilitation counselors comprise almost one-fourth of the respondent population. Narrative responses received in the category of other included IT, librarian, library, customer service, financial, and rehabilitation technology specialist.

Staff survey respondents were asked to identify how many years that they have held their current job position. Table 28 indicates the results.

Table 28  
*Years in Current Position*

<b>Years Worked for IDB</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of total</b>
1-5 Years	15	36.6%
10-20 Years	9	22.0%
Less than one year	8	19.5%
6-10 Years	7	17.1%
21+ Years	2	4.9%
<b>Total</b>	41	100%

The largest percentage of staff survey respondents have held their current workplace position for 1-5 years, while 22 percent have held their current position for 10 to 20 years.

Respondents were provided with a list and asked to identify which client populations they served on a regular basis. There was no limit to the number of populations a respondent could select.

Table 29 illustrates the client populations indicated by the staff survey respondents.

Table 29  
*Client Populations Served Regularly by Staff*

<b>Client Populations</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Individuals who are blind	30	73.2%
Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities	22	53.7%
Individuals with visual impairments other than blindness	21	51.2%
Individuals from unserved or underserved populations	20	48.8%
Transition-aged youth (14 - 24)	20	48.8%
Individuals Requiring Supported Employment	16	39.0%
Individuals that need supported employment services	15	36.6%
Individuals served by the IowaWORKS Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers).	13	31.7%
I am in a position that does not work directly with IDB clients	11	26.8%

Individuals who are blind and individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities comprise the majority of the client populations served. An equal number of staff respondents reported working with individuals that are unserved or underserved populations and transition age youth.

### **Staff Survey: Changes that will Improve Service Delivery**

Staff were presented with a list of twelve options and asked to identify the top three changes that would enable them to better assist their IDB clients. Table 30 details the staff responses to this question.

Table 30

*Top Three Changes That Would Enable Staff to Better Serve Clients*

<b>Top Three Changes to Better Assist IDB Clients</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Smaller caseload	17	56.7%
More streamlined processes	14	46.7%
More administrative support	11	36.7%
Better data management tools	6	20.0%
Increased outreach to clients in their communities	6	20.0%
Improved business partnerships	5	16.7%
More effective community-based service providers	5	16.7%
Additional training	4	13.3%
Other (please describe)	4	13.3%
Better assessment tools	2	6.7%
More supervisor support	2	6.7%
Decreased procurement time	2	6.7%

The items most frequently identified among the top three changes that would enable staff to better serve clients were smaller caseloads, more streamlined processes, and more administrative support.

Staff survey respondents were asked two open-ended questions regarding changes that IDB could make to improve services for the individuals they serve. The narrative responses included the following themes:

- Improving communication among the different divisions in the agency;
- Increasing the speed of service delivery;
- Addressing transportation concerns of clients; and
- Understanding client needs.

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*KEY INFORMANT AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS*

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The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment as it relates to overall program performance for IDB:

1. There were many participants in the individual interviews and focus groups that were very complimentary of the services provided by IDB. Clients indicated that they were very thankful for all of the services they received from IDB, especially adjustment to blindness training and assistive technology. IDB staff were frequently characterized as caring and committed to their jobs and their clients.
2. The most frequent criticism of the organization was the responsiveness of staff to the requests of their clients and partners. Email and phone responses, as well as the purchase and delivery of equipment and services, were often described as very delayed, which was a source of frustration for those served by the organization.
3. Several participants indicated that they were aware that successful employment outcomes for IDB clients were decreasing in recent years. The most commonly identified reasons cited for this decline were:
  - a. The increase in young people served by IDB, and the turnover of staff. Although the focus on serving youth was generally applauded by the participants in this study, these individuals indicated that youth typically take longer to move into employment, which can affect the overall employment rate of the individuals served by the organization.
  - b. The increase in the number of individuals with multiple disabilities has taxed the ability of IDB staff and providers to meet the numerous rehabilitation needs of these individuals. Many clients have significant barriers to employment, including significant behavioral challenges that impact their ability to be successful in employment.
  - c. Staff turnover was described as impactful on outcomes because of the size of IDB and the small number of counseling staff. When vacancies occur, there is an impact on existing staff and service delivery speed and responsiveness is adversely affected, which can affect outcomes.
  - d. The lack of available vendors to help with job placement for IDB clients.
4. IDB was given praise for their support of individuals pursuing higher education, often supporting individuals at the graduate level.
5. There were several participants that indicated direct job placement assistance was a need for the organization. While individuals who are self-directed and can perform their own job search do well, those requiring more intervention on the part of IDB staff or CRP staff struggled to obtain quality employment.
6. IDB's library was consistently praised as one of the best in the country and as an important resource for all blind individuals.



7. Participants indicated a need to increase awareness of IDB and available services, especially for individuals transitioning out of the secondary school system.
8. Several participants indicated that IDB needs to hire more Rehabilitation Teachers to meet the need for blindness skills training for individuals that are unable to attend the Orientation Center. The lack of Rehabilitation Teachers results in clients having to wait for long periods of time to be seen in their homes or communities, which adversely affects their ability to engage in a rehabilitation plan.

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## *RECOMMENDATIONS*

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The following recommendations are offered to IDB based on the results of the research in the Overall Agency Performance area:

1. IDB is encouraged to develop and implement policies that explicitly identify acceptable response times for staff at all levels of the organization to clients and partners. It would be helpful for these policies to be developed and implemented as part of a comprehensive customer service training.
2. IDB should ensure that the different divisions in the organization work together to identify ways to streamline the purchase and delivery of assistive technology and other equipment and services to clients.
3. IDB is encouraged to develop a formal marketing plan that will increase community awareness of their services across all age groups. IDB should consider expanding its Social Media presence as a way to inform and educate the public about services and as a way to communicate with current or potential clients and their families.
4. IDB is encouraged to implement the use of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) to serve the growing number of clients with multiple disabilities. Although IDB is working with their Workforce partners and the WINTAC to implement IRTs in the IowaWORKS centers, this service strategy can be effective for other IDB clients. Integrated resource team members can include behavioral health professionals, psychologists, community rehabilitation program staff, and other individuals working with the client to help him/her achieve their employment goals.
5. IDB is encouraged to conduct targeted outreach to recruit and hire for all vacant staff positions.
6. IDB should conduct a staff training needs assessment on at least a biannual basis that seeks to identify the current or emerging training needs of staff. Once the training needs assessment is completed, IDB should appoint a responsible individual to arrange for the training.
7. As a result of the challenges in pulling the data requested for this study, IDB is encouraged to examine its current case management system and determine if there are modifications that can be made to increase the availability of outcome data that can contribute to the ability of the agency to engage in program evaluation.
8. IDB should examine why the average time for plan development after an eligibility determination rose significantly from 2017 to 2018. Although the average time was just under the 90-day time frame allowable in the Rehabilitation Act, the 89-day average represents an increase of over 40 days from the prior year. In addition, IDB should examine why there is an increase in the percentage of individuals being closed after application, but prior to the development of an IPE. It would be helpful for the

organization to know why this is occurring so that they can identify and implement strategies that will increase client engagement.

**SECTION TWO:  
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT  
DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED  
FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

Section 2 includes an assessment of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment. This section includes the rehabilitation needs of IDB clients as expressed by the different groups interviewed and surveyed. All of the general needs of IDB clients were included here, with specific needs identified relating to supported and customized employment.

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*Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods*

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The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for supported employment:

- The skills learned at the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center and from Rehabilitation Teachers are essential for individuals with blindness and low vision to live and work independently. The acquisition of the skills learned fosters self-confidence and helps to overcome misconceptions that employers and the general public have about the capabilities of individuals with blindness and low vision.
- Transportation was a common need cited by participants. There are many parts of the State where transportation options are limited, and this limits the opportunities for individuals with blindness and low vision.
- The need for self-confidence of individuals with blindness and low vision was a recurring theme. This lack of confidence was directly related to the pursuit of employment and the tenacity needed to overcome employer misconceptions about the abilities of people with blindness.
- The acquisition and training in the use of assistive technology is a significant need of individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa. This need is important for success in academic and vocational training, as well as employment.
- IDB is serving an increasing number of individuals with mental health impairments and other disabilities in addition to blindness and low vision.
- There are a number of individuals, especially among youth, that are on the Autism spectrum, and need supported employment services.

***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE  
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT  
DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED  
EMPLOYMENT:***

An analysis of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for SE, begins with an analysis of the primary disability types served by IDB, the number of individuals receiving supported employment services and the rate of SSA beneficiaries served by the organization.

Table 31 includes general information about individuals with visual impairments or low vision and blindness. There was only one applicant for services in 2017 and one in 2018 that was coded as being Deaf-Blind, so this population was excluded from the analysis.

Table 31  
*General Information by Disability Type*

Item	Primary Disability Type					
	Visual Impairments			Blindness		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Applications	132	63	27	71	114	141
Percent of all applications	65.0%	35.6%	16.1%	35.0%	64.4%	83.9%
Avg. time for eligibility determination (days)	52	54	48	43	47	39
Significance of Disability						
Plans developed	57	44	28	85	79	86
Avg. time from eligibility to plan (days)	49	47	88	55	49	84
Number of clients in training by type						
Vocational	3	7	2	25	22	21
Undergraduate	5	6	9	44	37	38
Graduate	2	2	2	10	13	12
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed other than rehabilitated	1178	484	846	2160	2008	1736
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed rehabilitated	482	2583	868	1916	2316	2092
Number of cases closed rehabilitated	27	28	28	227	252	117
Total number of cases served	109	133	119	436	403	400
Percent of all cases served	20.0%	24.8%	22.9%	80.0%	75.2%	77.1%

The data indicates that the rate of applicants for IDB services that were classified as having a visual impairment other than blindness decreased significantly from 2016 to 2018. Conversely, the rate of applicants classified as having blindness increased proportionately. The percent of all clients served by disability type remained relatively steady for each group from 2016 to 2018, with the rate of individuals with blindness constituting 75% or more of all clients each year. The number of plans developed, number of clients in training by type, and number of cases closed rehabilitated by type reflect a similar ration of 25% for those with visual impairments to 75% for those with blindness. The average length of time for an open case that was closed either successfully or unsuccessfully was twice or three times as long for an individual with blindness as opposed to an individual with a visual impairment.

### Supported Employment:

Table 32 includes available data for individuals in supported employment served by IDB.

Table 32

#### *Supported Employment*

Item	Supported Employment		
	2016	2017	2018
Applications	20	12	4
Percent of all applications	9.8%	6.6%	2.2%
Avg. time for eligibility determination (days)	52	54	48
Significance of Disability			
Plans developed	57	44	28
Percent of all plans developed	39.9%	35.5%	24.1%
Avg. time from eligibility to plan (days)	49	47	88
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed other than rehabilitated	1178	484	846
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed rehabilitated	482	2583	868
Number of cases closed rehabilitated	27	28	28
Percent of all cases closed successfully	10.4%	10.0%	19.3%
Total number of cases served	109	133	119
Percent of all cases served	21.0%	26.2%	23.6%

The number of applicants noted as needing supported employment decreased significantly from 2016 to 2018, as did the number of plans developed with an SE goal. However, the total number closed successfully with an SE goal was stable from 2016 to 2018, though these cases increased

as a rate of all closed successfully in 2018 due to the decrease in the number of overall cases closed successfully that year.

#### SSA Beneficiaries:

The analysis of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities includes a review of the number of individuals that receive either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) because these individuals are automatically categorized as individuals that have at least a significant disability. It is well documented that the receipt of SSI or SSDI can affect the return to work behavior of individuals. Consequently, it is important for IDB to know what percentage of individuals they serve fall into this category. Table 33 contains this information.

Table 33

#### *SSA Beneficiaries*

Item	SSA Beneficiaries		
	2016	2017	2018
Applications	104	88	88
Percent of all applications	51.0%	48.6%	48.6%
Avg. time for eligibility determination (days)	48	53	42
Significance of Disability			
Plans developed	73	62	58
Percent of all plans developed	51.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Avg. time from eligibility to plan (days)	58	40	51
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed other than rehabilitated	1379	1425	1058
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed rehabilitated	678	583	903
Number of cases closed rehabilitated	63	97	48
Percent of all cases closed successfully	24.2%	34.6%	33.1%
Total number of cases served	204	209	208
Percent of all cases served	39.4%	41.1%	41.2%

The data indicates that SSA beneficiaries constitute nearly half of the applicants for IDB services and exactly half of all IPEs developed in 2017 and 2018. Although SSA beneficiaries represent more than 40% of all cases served by IDB in 2017 and 2018, they represent only one-third of cases closed successfully. The data is consistent with the feedback received from interviewed participants that SSA beneficiaries represent a large portion of individuals served by IDB. The fear of benefit loss (especially medical benefits) is a significant concern for SSA beneficiaries

when returning to work. SSA benefits represent a safety net that many beneficiaries want to ensure is in place even after they start earning wages. It will be important for IDB to be aware of these concerns and plan accordingly with their clients.

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***SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE***

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**INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS**

**Services from IDB:**

Individuals were asked if they had received services directly from the Iowa Department of the Blind Services, not just from the Iowa Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center. Table 34 summarizes the responses.

Table 34

*Services from IDB*

<b>Did you receive Services from IDB?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	85	93.4%
No	6	6.6%
<b>Total</b>	91	100%

Over 93% of the 91 individuals who answered the question indicated that they had received IDB services.

**Receipt of Social Security Disability Benefits**

Respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to indicate whether they received Social Security disability benefits. Table 35 summarizes the responses to this series of questions. It should be noted that individuals were allowed to select more than one response in the series of items (for example, in the case of an individual who received both SSI and SSDI).

Table 35

*SSA Benefit Status*

<b>Indicate Whether You Receive Social Security Benefits</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)	52	45.2%
I do not receive Social Security disability benefits	43	37.4%
I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income)	26	22.6%
I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits	2	1.7%



The total number of respondents who answered this question is 115. The most common response to the question regarding Social Security benefits was “I receive SSDI.” Of the 123 responses received regarding this question, more than 37% of the respondents indicated that they do not receive Social Security disability benefits. The rate of survey respondents that are SSA beneficiaries is approximately ten percent higher than the rate of SSA beneficiaries in the overall population of IDB clients.

### Services from Iowa Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center

Tables 36 and 37 summarize the responses to a series of questions regarding the Iowa Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center.

Table 36

#### *Attending and Completing the IA Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center Program*

<b>Attending and Completing the IA Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center Program</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No, I did not attend the Center	13	39.4%
Yes, and I completed the program	10	30.3%
Yes, but I did not complete the program	10	30.3%
<b>Total</b>	33	100%

Table 37

#### *Why Services Not Completed*

<b>Why Services Not Completed at the IA Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Other (Please describe)	5	50.0%
I was not pleased with the instruction	3	30.0%
Health issues	2	20.0%
The program was too long	0	0.0%
I was dismissed from the program	0	0.0%
Family issues	0	0.0%
I had difficulty getting along with others	0	0.0%
Mental health concerns prevented me from completing	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	10	100%

The majority of survey respondents (39.4 %) did not attend the Center. Of those who attended the Center, ten individuals did not complete the program and ten did complete the program. The respondents who did not complete the program were asked a question regarding why they did not complete the program. Five of the respondents cited other reasons than those on the list provided.

A diverse set of narrative responses were received and no theme was observed. “Health issues and financial stress at home,” “not having a good experience at camps,” and “being an employee that had 3 months to complete the program” were cited narrative responses.

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the quality and helpfulness of services at the Iowa Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center. Tables 38–44 summarizes the responses.

Table 38

*Quality of the Orientation and Mobility Training*

<b>Quality of the Orientation and Mobility Training at the Center</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Excellent	7	35.0%
Good	7	35.0%
Average	3	15.0%
Poor	2	10.0%
I did not receive Orientation and Mobility training	1	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 39

*Quality of the Braille Training*

<b>Quality of the Braille Training at the Center</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Excellent	7	36.8%
Good	6	31.6%
Average	3	15.8%
I did not receive Braille training	2	10.5%
Poor	1	5.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 40

*Quality of the Computer and Technology Training*

<b>Quality of the Computer and Technology Training at the Center</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Good	6	30.0%
Excellent	5	25.0%
Poor	4	20.0%
Average	3	15.0%
I did not receive computer and technology training	2	10.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 41

*Quality of the Personal Home Management/Cooking Training*

<b>Quality of the Personal Home Management/Cooking Training at the Center</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Excellent	6	30.0%
Good	6	30.0%
Average	5	25.0%
I did not receive home and personal management training	2	10.0%
Poor	1	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 42

*Quality of the Industrial Arts Training*

<b>Quality of the Industrial Arts Training at the Center</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Excellent	13	68.4%
Good	3	15.8%
I did not receive Industrial Arts training	2	10.5%
Poor	1	5.3%
Average	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 43

*Quality of the Jobs Class*

<b>Quality of the Jobs Class at the Center</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
I did not participate in the Jobs Class	8	42.1%
Good	4	21.1%
Average	3	15.8%
Excellent	2	10.5%
Poor	2	10.5%
<b>Total</b>	19	100%

Table 44

*Helpfulness of the Business of Blindness Course*

<b>Helpfulness of the Business of Blindness Course at Center</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very helpful	7	36.8%
Somewhat helpful	5	26.3%
Not helpful	4	21.1%
I did not take the Business of Blindness course	3	15.8%
<b>Total</b>	19	100%

An equal percentage of respondents (35%) found the quality of the orientation and mobility training at the Center to be either excellent or good and an equal percentage of respondents (30%) found the quality of the personal home management/cooking training to be either excellent or good. The majority of respondents that answered the question regarding the quality of the Braille training at the Center indicated the training was excellent, with a difference of 5% between excellent and good. Of all the training courses offered at the Center, the computer and technology training course received the highest “poor” quality rating (20%) and the industrial arts training received the highest “excellent” rating (over 68%). The jobs class had the lowest participation rate (slightly more than 42%) based on survey data as the majority of respondents indicated that they did not participate in the jobs class. Slightly more than 26% of the respondents indicated that the business of blindness course was somewhat helpful while almost 37% found the course very helpful.

Individual survey respondents were asked two questions regarding the preparedness they experienced as a result of the training they received at the Center. Tables 45 and 46 contain the results.

Table 45

*Preparedness to Live Independently*

<b>Preparedness to Live Independently as a Result of Training Received</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very prepared	12	60.0%
Moderately prepared	4	20.0%
Minimally prepared	3	15.0%
Not at all prepared	1	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 46

*Preparedness to Go to Work*

<b>Preparedness to Go To Work as a Result of Training Received</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very prepared	7	35.0%
Moderately prepared	6	30.0%
Minimally prepared	6	30.0%
Not at all prepared	1	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

Of the 20 survey respondents who answered the question regarding preparedness to live independently, 60% cited being “very prepared” as a result of the training they received at the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center. Respondents were more divided on their level of preparedness to go to work as a result of the Center’s training. Thirty-five percent of the respondents indicated they were “very prepared” to go to work after receiving the Center training and 60% indicated they were either moderately or minimally prepared.

Individuals were presented with an open-ended question asking them how the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center could improve its services. Eleven narrative responses were received. Table 47 contains comments from the responses received.

Table 47

*Recommendations for Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center Improvement*

<b>Comments Regarding Staff</b>
Improve communication and organization
Involve volunteers from the community, especially in braille literacy.
More funding - employees have too much on their plates
Staff are over-worked. Too many students in one class that students do not receive the individual attention needed.
Staff only have skills for instructing in screen-reading software and they do not have the skills to teach any other way. Hire qualified staff, rather than unqualified staff.
"The Center needs to be more flexible."
"Make everyone feel welcome! Have someone in charge, so if someone has a problem, he or she knows who to go to."
"When I was a student, there were times when teachers could speak pretty abrasively. I think they thought they were being helpful, but when you are a young nineteen-year old who knows little about the adult world, a little more tact and gentleness are preferable."
<b>Comments Regarding Service</b>
Help people get jobs
Incorporate real life stuff - use community services and classes. Student are too segregated from the real life learning and living.
"The methods used to teach do not work for every client going through the center. My learning styles don't seem to work. I need instruction instead of being told figure it out."
<b>Comments Regarding Technology</b>
Computers are crucial to almost every job. The Center only provides training with computers using a screen-reader.
"I do not require screen-reading training. Any knowledge I gain using screen-readers is not applicable to my employment goals, making any knowledge I gain in this skill useless."

The majority of responses cited areas of improvement for staff members. Comments regarding service improvements included providing more assistance with finding jobs, incorporating community programs to acquire more relevant skills, and improving instruction techniques. Two respondents commented on the computer skills training being limited to only screen reader training.

Individuals were also asked an open-ended question regarding which IDB service they found to be most helpful to prepare, obtain, or retain employment. Seventy-three narrative responses were received. The following table was designed based on the specific services cited by respondents.

Table 48  
*Services Cited by Respondents*

Type of Service	Number of times chosen	Percent of time chosen
Assistive Technology and Training	23	31.5%
None helpful	22	30.1%
Education Assistance Related to College and Trade Schools	15	20.5%
Counselor and Specialist Support	10	13.7%
Employment Services	8	11.0%
Orientation and Mobility Training	7	9.6%
Orientation and Mobility Training	7	9.6%
Independent Living Services	7	9.6%
Travel Assistance	3	4.1%
Business Development Assistance	2	2.7%
Audio Books	2	2.7%
Funding for Networking Opportunities	1	1.4%
IPE Plan	1	1.4%

Assistive technology and training was cited more than 30% percent of the time by respondents. Respondents also indicated that they did not receive helpful services from IDB slightly more than 30% percent of the time. Education assistance related to college and trade schools ranked third on the list by respondents.

### **Employment-Related Needs**

Respondents were presented with a series of yes/no questions about employment-related needs that prevent them from achieving their employment goals. Table 49 includes the results of the series of four questions asking individuals if they had certain skills to achieve their employment goals.

Table 49

*Employment-Related Needs*

<b>Employment-Related Needs Impacting Achievement of Employment Goals</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
Do you have the education or training to achieve your employment goals?	60	60.00%	40	40.00%	100
Do you have the job skills to achieve your employment goals?	59	60.20%	39	39.80%	98
Do you have the job search skills to achieve your employment goals?	61	61.60%	38	38.40%	99
Do you have the language skills to achieve your employment goals?	89	89.90%	10	10.10%	99

More than 60% of the respondents to the questions regarding education and training, job skills, job search skills and language skills to achieve their employment goals indicated that they did have the skills identified in the question. The majority of individual respondents indicate that most of the barriers to achieving their employment goals rest outside of their skill levels, education or ability. Consequently, it is important to examine what they believe prevents them from achieving their employment goals. Table 50 includes this information.



Table 50  
*Barriers to Employment*

Have you been prevented from achieving your employment goals because of ...	Yes		No		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Employers' perceptions of people with disabilities?	53	53.0%	47	47.0%	100
Other transportation issues (no reliable means)?	50	50.0%	50	50.0%	100
A lack of accessible transportation?	47	48.0%	51	52.0%	98
A lack of assistive technology?	43	42.6%	58	57.4%	101
Concerns regarding the impact of employment on Social Security benefits?	33	33.3%	66	66.7%	99
There were no jobs available?	23	23.2%	76	76.8%	99
A lack of independent living skills?	23	23.0%	77	77.0%	100
Other health issues?	23	23.2%	76	76.8%	99
Mental health issues?	20	20.2%	79	79.8%	99
Issues with affordable housing?	19	19.4%	79	80.6%	98
A lack of disability related personal attendant care?	17	17.0%	83	83.0%	100
Issues with accessible housing?	9	9.2%	89	90.8%	98
Child care issues?	6	6.1%	93	93.9%	99
Substance abuse issues?	3	3.0%	97	97.0%	100
Prior convictions for criminal offenses?	1	1.0%	99	99.0%	100

“Employers’ perceptions of people with disabilities” was identified most frequently as the item that prevented individuals from achieving their employment goals. The lack of accessible transportation and other transportation issues were the next two most frequently cited barriers, identified by about one-half of the respondents. The margin of difference as to whether or not a lack of assistive technology was a barrier for respondents is about 15%, with the majority indicating a lack of assistive technology was not a barrier to achieving employment goals. The last eleven items on the list were cited as a barrier by one-third or less of the respondents, indicating that although the items may be a barrier for some individuals, most do not experience the item as a barrier to achieving their employment goals.

Respondents were presented with a yes-no question asking them if anything else prevented them from achieving their employment goals. Of the 98 responses received, 38 indicated yes to the question and 35 individuals provided a narrative response. Content analysis of the responses indicated 10 of the 35 narrative comments repeated an item that was listed on Table 50 (above). Seven of the narrative comments revealed that a lack of assistance and support from IDB has prevented them from achieving their employment goals. Being out of the workforce for more than ten years, being underemployed, a lack of education and training, and living in a rural area were also noted in respondent narrative comments.

Individuals were presented with an open-ended question asking them to identify the most significant barrier to achieving their employment goals. Eighty-five individuals answered the question and provided a narrative response. Content analysis of the responses is provided in Table 51.

Table 511

*Most Significant Barrier to Achieving Employment Goals*

<b>Most Significant Barrier to Achieving Employment Goals</b>	<b>Number of times stated</b>	<b>Percent of time stated</b>
Transportation-related issues	14	16.5%
Physical and mental health conditions	13	15.3%
Lack of higher education, technology skills, and/or job training	12	14.1%
Perceptions of public and employers	11	12.9%
Lack of assistive technology/equipment	10	11.8%
Difficulties with IDB staff	8	9.4%
Personal preferences/conflicts	7	8.2%
Age	5	5.9%
No barrier	5	5.9%
Loss of other income	3	3.5%
Housing	2	2.4%
Job availability	2	2.4%
Geographical location	2	2.4%
Lack of interview skills	2	2.4%
Lack of skills assessment	2	2.4%
Lack of job coach	2	2.4%
Financial issues	2	2.4%
Only part-time jobs available	1	1.2%
Racism	1	1.2%

The results revealed that transportation-related issues were the most frequently cited barrier followed by physical and mental health conditions, and a lack of higher education, technology skills, and/or job training. Transportation and the issues surrounding transportation were cited 14 times in the 85 narrative responses received. Physical and mental health conditions were cited 13 times by respondents. Items that were noted two times or less by respondents include financial issues, racism, and loss of other income, while age and no barrier were cited five times each by respondents.

**Barriers to Accessing IDB Services**

Respondents were presented with several questions describing potential barriers to accessing IDB services and asked to indicate whether the barriers made it difficult for the respondents to access IDB services. Table 52 summarizes the responses of the individuals to the questions about barriers to accessing IDB services.

Table 52

*Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing IDB Services*

Barriers to Accessing IDB	Yes		No		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Other difficulties working with IDB staff	37	41.1%	53	58.9%	90
Limited accessibility to IDB via public transportation	29	31.2%	64	68.8%	93
Lack of information about available services	28	30.1%	65	69.9%	93
Other challenges related to physical location of IDB office	27	29.4%	65	70.7%	92
Difficulties scheduling meetings with counselor	22	23.7%	71	76.3%	93
Other challenges or barriers not already mentioned	21	23.3%	69	76.7%	90
Lack of disability-related accommodations	15	16.5%	76	83.5%	91
Hours of Operation	10	10.8%	83	89.3%	93
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	9	9.9%	82	90.1%	91
Difficulties completing the IDB application	8	8.8%	83	91.2%	91
Language barriers	2	2.2%	88	97.8%	90

Of the 11-item list of potential barriers to accessing IDB services, four items were cited as barriers to accessing IDB services with percentage rates of more than 25%. The four items most frequently cited as barriers were: 1) other difficulties working with IDB staff; 2) limited accessibility to IDB via public transportation; 3) lack of information about available services; and 4) other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office. The least common barriers chosen by respondents were difficulties completing the IDB application and language barriers.

Respondents were presented with a yes-no question asking them to describe anything else that were challenges or barriers not already mentioned that made it difficult to access IDB services. Of the 21 responses received that indicated yes to the question, 20 individuals provided a narrative response. Content analysis of the narrative responses revealed the following: concern over the lack of communication/responsiveness and lack of assistance from of IDB counselors (n=12); problems related to living in a rural area where training needed and access to IDB services is limited or non-existent (n=2); and inability to obtain information regarding assistive technology and obtaining the necessary technology or equipment (n=4).

Individual survey respondents were provided with a narrative question asking their opinion on how IDB could improve services to their clients. A total of 58 narrative responses were received. Four compliments regarding the IDB services were received and five respondents did not have any suggestions for IDB service improvements. Content analysis of the remaining responses indicated the following:

- Improving communication with clients to include understanding the specific needs of clients, prompt responsiveness and follow through with what has been promised.
- Hire more knowledgeable and qualified staff, teachers and technology specialists.
- Provide more of a variety of technology choices and update technology and training programs.
- Improve job development and placement assistance: share more information with searches, listing and training materials that are accessible: increase the number of job coaches.

Respondents were presented a separate narrative question regarding anything they would like to add regarding IDB or its services. A total of 25 responses were received. Approximately one-fourth of the responses were compliments and appreciation for the services received and one-fourth (n=6) of the respondents did not have additional comments. The remaining one-half of the responses either commented on the dissatisfaction with the staff, management and services provided by IDB and or provided suggestions on improvements such as connecting with the Des Moines Skywalk system or the Helen Keller National Center, and extending hours for the “Aids and Devices” store. Quotes from the narrative comments include:

- *“Really grateful for all that the Iowa Department for the blind does, but sometimes their bureaucracy makes the process of applying for and requesting services not even worth the stress.”*
- *“IDB has the potential to provide a wonderful service to blind Iowans. Technology to teaching to media access, these are what make the Department unique, but other than the VR services and the library, the other services are inadequate at times.”*
- *“Spent year at the center and learned a lot about travel but didn't receive the technology skills that is feel will help me in the future as to computer and office related technology.”*

A separate question asked respondents to indicate where they usually met with their counselor. Table 53 details the meeting locations reported by respondents.

Table 53

*Meeting Locations*

<b>Meeting Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of total</b>
I usually meet with my counselor in my home	39	42.9%
I usually meet with my counselor in my community	29	31.9%
I don't have a IDB counselor	15	16.5%
I go to a IDB office to meet with my counselor	8	8.8%
<b>Total</b>	91	100%

According to the survey, meetings with counselors occur most frequently at the client's home. Almost 32% of the respondents that indicated they usually meet with their IDB counselor in the community. Less than 10% of the respondents met with their counselor in the IDB office.

### **PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS:**

#### **Partner Survey: Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: General IDB Clients**

Respondents were presented with a question asking them to select the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for individuals with blindness or vision impairments from a list of 20 responses. Table 54 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was identified as one of the top three barriers by partner survey respondents.

Table 54

*Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: General IDB Clients*

<b>Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: General IDB Clients</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	25	61.0%
Disability-related transportation issues	20	48.8%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	14	34.1%
Not having job skills	8	19.5%
Not having disability-related accommodations	8	19.5%
Other (please describe)	7	17.1%
Not having education or training	6	14.6%
Not enough jobs available	6	14.6%
Other transportation issues	6	14.6%
Poor social skills	4	9.8%
Not having job search skills	3	7.3%
Lack of self-confidence	2	4.9%
Mental health issues	2	4.9%
Language barriers	1	2.4%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	1	2.4%
Other health issues	1	2.4%

A total of 41 respondents answered the question. Partner survey respondents chose employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities, disability-related transportation issues, and perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits as the top three barriers to employment for general IDB clients. Not having job skills and not having disability-related accommodations were identified almost 20% of the time as barriers to employment by partner respondents. Partner and individual survey respondents identify transportation as the most significant barrier to achieving employment goals and differ on the other top barriers. Individual respondents cited "employers' perceptions of people with disabilities" most frequently when presented on the list of potential barriers to preventing them from achieving goals and was ranked in the fourth position on the list derived from the narrative responses for the most significant barrier to achieving employment goals.

### Partner Survey: Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Individuals Requiring Supported Employment

Partner survey respondents were asked a yes-no question regarding whether or not the barriers to achieving employment goals for individuals requiring supported employment were different from the overall population. A total of 41 responses were received. The majority of respondents indicated yes. However, the margin of difference between yes and no was 2.4%, meaning partners are divided on whether or not the barriers to achieving employment goals are different for individuals receiving supported employment when compared to the general population of IDB clients.

Partner respondents were presented with a question asking them to select the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for individuals requiring supported employment. Table 55 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was identified as one of the top three barriers by partner survey respondents.

Table 55

*Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Individuals Requiring Supported Employment*

<b>Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Individuals Requiring Supported Employment</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	11	50.0%
Not having disability-related accommodations	8	36.4%
Not having job skills	7	31.8%
Disability-related transportation issues	7	31.8%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	5	22.7%
Not having education or training	4	18.2%
Poor social skills	4	18.2%
Not enough jobs available	3	13.6%
Lack of self-confidence	3	13.6%
Language barriers	2	9.1%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	2	9.1%
Other transportation issues	2	9.1%
Other (please describe)	2	9.1%
Not having job search skills	1	4.5%
Convictions for criminal offenses	1	4.5%

When community partners were asked to identify the top three barriers to employment for individuals requiring supported employment, the ranking order of the barriers differed slightly from the items selected for the general population of IDB clients with the exception of the top item on each list. Not having job skills was fourth on the list chosen by partners for the general population of clients (19.5%), but third for the group requiring supported employment (over 31%). Partner survey respondents selected disability-related transportation as the one of the top two barriers for general clients and fourth for those requiring supported employment.

Respondents were asked an open-ended question about asking if there was anything else that the surveyors ought to know about the primary barriers to achieving employment goals for individuals with blindness or vision impairments. Quotes from the narrative responses are provided:

- *“Employers' reluctance - not able to think of jobs that IDB clients could do in their business.”*
- *“I think lack of opportunity or the need for more opportunities for employment skills training, job searching and job experience is lacking. I would say that these experiences are lacking for all students with disabilities and not just those who are blind or visually impaired. I also believe that school districts do not take seriously their responsibility to meet unmet transition needs in the areas of living, working and learning. Cutbacks in transition staff at the AEA level or in schools hinders forward movement in this area.”*
- *“IDB needs to have the financial and human resources to adequately serve Iowa's employable blind and visually impaired population.”*
- *“People desire to have choices and desire to be treated as a whole person, not just their vision. With the high percentage of persons with co-occurring disabilities, it appears that the focus remains on their vision and not the whole person. Giving people choices versus telling them what they need to do, would be helpful. If they do not choose what you want, it would be helpful to still provide services versus simply closing them out. It would be helpful to return phone calls and respond to emails as this may help establish trust and rapport with clients which could help them reach their employment goals as well as establish a relationship with them.”*
- *“The world is different than it used to be. Unless a client has a degenerative eye disease, stop blind folding clients who have low vision.”*
- *“We believe it would be in the best interests of the clients if the Commission consisted of a broader group of representatives in number and diversity. Also, a Deaf Blind specialist is critical.”*

### **Partner Survey: Difficulties Accessing IDB Services for Individuals with Blindness or Vision Impairments**

Respondents were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons that individuals with blindness or vision impairments might find it difficult to access IDB services. Twelve response options were provided. Table 56 lists the reasons preventing IDB



access along with the number of times each of the reasons was identified as one of the top three reasons preventing IDB access by the partner survey respondents.

Table 56

*Top Three Barriers to Accessing IDB Services: General IDB Clients*

<b>Top Three Reasons Preventing Access to IDB Services: General IDB Clients</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Slow service delivery	15	41.7%
Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation	14	38.9%
Other (please describe)	12	33.3%
IDB staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients	9	25.0%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office	8	22.2%
Inadequate assessment services	7	19.4%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	7	19.4%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	4	11.1%
IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	4	11.1%
Language barriers	2	5.6%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	2	5.6%
Difficulties completing the application	1	2.8%

A total of 36 responses were received. Slow service delivery was the most frequently chosen barrier to accessing IDB services, identified by over 40% of the partners responding to the survey. Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation and the item “other” were chosen by approximately one-third or more of the respondents. The respondents that chose the “other” category, indicated that poor communication/lack of counselor responsiveness to clients and partners, delays in processing requests, not enough counselors available, and lack of family interest/follow-through as top reasons preventing access to IDB services for individuals with blindness or vision impairments.

### Partner Survey: Difficulties Accessing IDB Services for Individuals Requiring Supported Employment

Partner survey respondents were asked a yes-no question whether or not the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by individuals requiring supported employment were different from the general population of clients with blindness and vision impairments. A total of 40 responses were received and over 67% of the respondents indicated that the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services were not different for those requiring supported employment.

Partner survey respondents were provided a list of 12 items and asked to indicate the top three reasons that individuals requiring supported employment might find it difficult to access IDB services. Table 57 lists the reasons preventing IDB access along with the number of times each of the reasons was identified as one of the top three reasons preventing IDB access by the partner survey respondents.

Table 57

#### *Top Three Barriers to Accessing IDB Services: Individuals Requiring Supported Employment*

<b>Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access IDB Services: Individuals Requiring Supported Employment</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation	7	58.3%
Slow service delivery	6	50.0%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	4	33.3%
Difficulties completing the application	3	25.0%
Other (please describe)	3	25.0%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	2	16.7%
Inadequate assessment services	2	16.7%
IDB staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients	2	16.7%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	1	8.3%
IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	1	8.3%

Two of the top three reasons selected by partners that prevent individuals requiring supported employment from accessing IDB service were similar to the reasons partners selected for the general population yet with different percentage rates. Slow service delivery and limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation were each selected 50% or more times by the 12 respondents who answered the question and difficulties accessing training or education programs was selected by about 33% of the time by respondents.

Community partners were asked an open-ended question about asking if there was anything else that the surveyors ought to know about why individuals with blindness or vision impairments find it difficult to access IDB services. One narrative response was a compliment regarding assistance received and two responses were without additional comment. The remaining eight out of the eleven narrative responses addressed the need to improve responsiveness of IDB staff.

### STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

#### Staff Survey: Services from Iowa Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center

Tables 58-60 summarize the responses to a series of questions regarding the Iowa Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center.

Table 58

#### *Referral to the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center*

Referral Question	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total
Have you ever referred a client to the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center?	9	100.0%	0	0.0%

Table 59

#### *Effectiveness of the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center*

How Effectively does the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center Prepare Clients to Live Independently	Number of times chosen	Percent of total
Somewhat effectively	6	66.7%
Very effectively	2	22.2%
Not effectively	1	11.1%
<b>Total</b>	9	100%

Table 60

#### *Client Preparedness for Work*

How Prepared are Clients for Work Upon Completing the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center Program	Number of times chosen	Percent of Total
Somewhat prepared	5	55.6%
Not at all prepared	3	33.3%
Very prepared	1	11.1%
I do not send my clients to the Center to prepare for employment	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	9	100%

A total of nine respondents answered the questions regarding the Iowa Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center. All nine respondents have referred clients to the Center. The majority of respondents (almost 67%) cited the services to be somewhat effective. A lower percentage of respondents (about 55%) indicated that clients were somewhat prepared for work upon completing the program. When compared to the responses of the individual survey respondents, clients have a higher regard for the Center's quality and preparedness for return to work.

Staff were presented with an open-ended question asking them to identify at least two ways the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center could improve its services. Nine narrative responses were received. Table 61 contains comments from the responses received. The comments were divided and placed into the table according to their relevance to the table's themes.

Table 61

*Recommendations for Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center Improvement*

<b>Staff Related Change</b>
Increase staff to meet client needs
More qualified staff
Collaborate with partners so that clients learn to access services in the community (stop working in silos)
<b>Service Related Change</b>
Internships
Job shadowing
Teach job search tools and techniques
Teach interviewing skills
Better technology training
More employable skills training
Training in magnification technology for computers and handheld magnifiers
Include employment component in all aspects of training (i.e. travel to IWD during cane travel class, search for jobs / colleges in computer class, etc.).
Ensure clients do job search activities prior to leaving center
Ensure clients plan next steps with counselor prior to leaving center
More employment related activities while in the center
Start job search activities prior to graduation
More job-related activities while in center
Program needs to be completed in 6 months or less

The majority of responses cited areas of improvement for service related changes. Comments regarding service improvements included providing more internships, job shadowing, teaching job search skills and interviewing skills, better technology training and increasing the employment skills that are job related. One respondent recommended better coordination with VR counselors regarding benchmarks. Individual respondents cited staff changes more frequently than staff respondents.

### Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Staff survey respondents were given a list of 20 barriers and asked to identify which are barriers to employment for individuals with blindness or visual impairments. Table 62 below lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was cited.

Table 62

#### *Barriers to Employment*

<b>Barriers to Employment: Individuals with Blindness or Visual Impairments</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Not having education or training	28	84.8%
Not having job skills	28	84.8%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	28	84.8%
Not having job search skills	26	78.8%
Inability to advocate for oneself	25	75.8%
Poor social skills	21	63.6%
Disability-related transportation issues	19	57.6%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	18	54.5%
Not having disability-related accommodations	17	51.5%
Other health issues	15	45.5%
Other transportation issues	13	39.4%
Language barriers	12	36.4%
Mental health issues	12	36.4%
Childcare issues	10	30.3%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	8	24.2%
Not enough jobs available	7	21.2%
Housing issues	7	21.2%
Substance abuse issues	6	18.2%
Convictions for criminal offenses	5	15.2%
Other (please describe)	1	3.0%

Staff identified not having education or training; not having job skills; employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities; not having job search skills; and the inability to advocate for oneself most frequently as barriers to employment for the clients, each cited by over 75% of the respondents. The top three choices by respondents were identified 28 times by the 33 respondents who answered the question. Staff and individual respondents selected “employers’ perceptions of people with disabilities” most frequently as a barrier to employment.

### **Staff Survey: Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: General IDB Clients**

Respondents were presented with a question asking them to select the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for the general IDB clients. Table 63 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was identified as one of the top three barriers by staff survey respondents.

Table 63

#### *Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: General IDB Clients*

<b>Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: General IDB Clients</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Not having education or training	21	63.6%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	21	63.6%
Not having job skills	17	51.5%
Poor social skills	7	21.2%
Not enough jobs available	5	15.2%
Lack of self-confidence	5	15.2%
Not having job search skills	4	12.1%
Disability-related transportation issues	4	12.1%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	4	12.1%
Other transportation issues	3	9.1%
Not having disability-related accommodations	2	6.1%
Mental health issues	1	3.0%
Other health issues	1	3.0%

Staff and partner responses to this question varied slightly. Staff chose not having education or training and employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities an equal number of times and selected not having job skills over 50% of the time. Partners agreed with staff on employers’ perceptions about employing persons with a disability as a top barrier, but had a

different ranking order for the remaining items on the list. When comparing staff responses to this question to individuals' identification of the most significant barrier to achieving employment goals, "lack of higher education, technology skills, and/or job training" matches the staff response "not having education or training."

### **Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment for IDB Clients with the Most Significant Disabilities**

Staff survey respondents were asked a yes-no question regarding whether or not the barriers to achieving employment goals for individuals requiring supported employment were different from the overall population. A total of 33 responses were received and almost 85% of the respondents indicated that the barriers to achieving employment goals were different for those requiring supported employment when compared to the general population.

Staff survey respondents were provided a list of 20 items and asked to identify the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for individuals requiring supported employment. Table 64 details the responses to this question. There was no limit to the number of barriers that a staff respondent could choose.

Table 64

#### *Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Supported Employment*

<b>Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Individuals Requiring Supported Employment</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	18	64.3%
Not having education or training	14	50.0%
Not having job skills	14	50.0%
Not having job search skills	6	21.4%
Poor social skills	6	21.4%
Not having disability-related accommodations	6	21.4%
Disability-related transportation issues	4	14.3%
Not enough jobs available	3	10.7%
Lack of self-confidence	3	10.7%
Other transportation issues	3	10.7%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	2	7.1%
Mental health issues	2	7.1%
Convictions for criminal offenses	1	3.6%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	1	3.6%
Other (please describe)	1	3.6%

IDB staff identified employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities, not having education or training and not having job skills as the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for those requiring supported employment. Staff clearly differed with partners on one top barrier as partners identified not having disability-related accommodations as a top barrier, while slightly more than one-third of staff selected the item, causing it to be ranked in the sixth position on the staff list. Another difference is the selection of disability-related transportation issues. The item was cited by almost 32% of the responses by partners, ranking it in the 4<sup>th</sup> position, but the staff selected the item less than 15% of the time, ranking it 7<sup>th</sup> on the staff list of barriers. Respondents who selected the category "other" were provided the opportunity to write a narrative response. One narrative response was received containing the following phrase: "Long term supports, job coaches who understand blindness and assistive technology."

Respondents were asked an open-ended question about asking if there was anything else that the surveyors ought to know about the primary barriers to achieving employment goals for individuals with blindness or other visual impairments. Six out of the eight narrative responses received included additional comments. Quotes are provided:

- *"Access to assistive technology training. Access to appropriate computer training."*
- *"Clients fear losing the SSI and SSDI benefits and health insurance."*
- *"Due to high agency turnover, clients don't get consistent services."*
- *"I have had many complaints about the lack of enough employees or down time while hiring processes and training takes place. Clients are saying while this is going on they are just waiting, doing best on own, but not good situation. Clients would like employees and longevity with those employees."*
- *"Irregular and infrequent training."*
- *"Low expectations with education where not all students are taught Braille is a big barrier to employment in Iowa for transition age youth in school."*
- *"Social perceptions about abilities of blind people."*

### **Staff Survey: Difficulties Accessing IDB Services for Individuals with Blindness or Vision Impairments**

Staff survey respondents were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons that individuals with blindness or vision impairments might find it difficult to access IDB services. A list of 11 response options was provided. Table 65 contains the list of reasons presented to the respondents along with the number of times each of the reasons was identified as one of the top three reasons preventing IDB access for clients, and the percentage of time it was chosen as one of the top three barriers to access.



Table 65

*Top Three Barriers to Accessing IDB Services: Individuals with Blindness or Vision Impairments*

<b>Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access IDB Services: Individuals with Blindness or Vision Impairments</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Slow service delivery	14	48.3%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office	11	37.9%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	11	37.9%
Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation	10	34.5%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	6	20.7%
Inadequate assessment services	5	17.2%
Other (please describe)	4	13.8%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	3	10.3%
Language barriers	3	10.3%
Difficulties completing the application	1	3.4%
IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	1	3.4%

The top three access barriers cited by staff are different from the individual survey respondents. The top three barriers to accessing IDB services most frequently cited by staff included slow service delivery, other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office, and difficulties accessing training or education programs. There were four respondents who selected the “other” category and submitted a narrative response. Content analysis outlines not knowing about IDB or services as the major theme. Quotes from the comments are:

- *“Clients do not always know about the services available.”*
- *“Limited number of qualified vendors.”*
- *“Perception IDB Services aren't good”*
- *“They haven't heard about us and what we offer.”*

### **Staff Survey: Difficulties Accessing IDB Services for Individuals Requiring Supported Employment**

Staff survey respondents were asked a yes-no question whether or not the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by individuals requiring supported employment were different from the general population. A total of 30 responses were received. The margin of difference between a yes or a no response is 54.3%, with 76.7% of the respondents indicating that the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services were not different for those requiring supported employment.

Staff survey respondents were provided a list of 11 items and asked to indicate the top three reasons that individuals requiring supported employment might find it difficult to access IDB services. Table 66 lists the reasons preventing IDB access along with the number of times each of the reasons was identified as one of the top three reasons preventing IDB access by the staff survey respondents.

Table 66

*Top Three Barriers to Accessing IDB Services: Individuals Requiring Supported Employment*

<b>Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access IDB Services: Individuals Requiring Supported Employment</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation	4	57.1%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	4	57.1%
Slow service delivery	3	42.9%
Language barriers	2	28.6%
Inadequate assessment services	2	28.6%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	2	28.6%
Difficulties completing the application	1	14.3%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	1	14.3%
Other (please describe)	1	14.3%

Staff and partners agreed on two of the top three reasons why individuals requiring supported employment find it difficult to access IDB service. Staff survey respondents cited limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation and slow service delivery as the first and third ranking items on their list of reasons why individuals requiring supported employment find it difficult to access IDB service while partners selected the items as their top two of three choices. Staff ranked inadequate disability-related accommodations in the second position while partners ranked it in the sixth position.

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*KEY INFORMANT AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS*

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The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment:

1. The Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center (The Center) is a residential center that provides instruction for individuals with blindness and low vision age 17 and above that prepares them to live and work independently. Classes include Braille, travel with the long white cane, home and personal management, computer and technology, industrial arts, and career exploration through the Jobs class. The Center uses a structured discovery approach for all residents, regardless of the degree of their vision loss. Individuals that need adjustment to blindness training that cannot attend the Center are served in their homes by Rehabilitation Teachers.
2. The skills learned at the Center and from Rehabilitation Teachers are essential for individuals with blindness and low vision to live and work independently. The acquisition of the skills learned fosters self-confidence and helps to overcome misconceptions that employers and the general public have about the capabilities of individuals with blindness and low vision.
3. Although the skills taught by the Center and by Rehabilitation Teachers are essential for individuals with blindness and low vision to live independently and to prepare for, obtain and retain employment, the Center has not been operating at full capacity, and there is a long wait for Rehabilitation Teacher services in many areas of the State. Multiple participants indicated that the wait for RT services adversely impacted the time frame for individuals with blindness and low vision to pursue a rehabilitation plan. In addition, the residency requirements of the Center, and the length of time needed to complete training was a challenge and contributed to low occupancy and low completion rates.
4. Transportation was a common need cited by participants. There are many parts of the State where transportation options are limited, and this limits the opportunities for individuals with blindness and low vision.
5. The need for self-confidence of individuals with blindness and low vision was a recurring theme. This lack of confidence was directly related to the pursuit of employment and the tenacity needed to overcome employer misconceptions about the abilities of people with blindness.
6. The acquisition and training in the use of assistive technology is a significant need of individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa. This need is important for success in academic and vocational training, as well as employment. The evaluation, purchase and delivery of assistive technology was most frequently characterized as slow and burdensome, with multiple layers of approval needed.
7. Multiple participants indicated that IDB is hesitant to purchase assistive technology for clients unless the client has been offered a job. The participants indicated that IDB will loan out equipment to individuals in training or for employment preparation and job

development, but that the actual purchase of AT for a client's use is reliant on a specific job offer that requires the technology. This results in clients using equipment that may not be the type they ultimately end up with, necessitating retraining. In addition, the purchase process is time consuming, and may not be completed in time for a job that is starting. In addition, participants indicated that IDB rarely, if ever, provides AT for low vision. The technology that is loaned or purchased is generally for use by individuals who are blind, which may not meet the needs of individuals with low vision.

8. IDB is serving an increasing number of individuals with mental health impairments and other disabilities in addition to blindness and low vision. This change in the demographic of the typical IDB client results in several needs that were identified numerous times during this assessment. These include:
  - a. Improved coordination with mental health service providers;
  - b. Increased capacity of IDP counselors to effectively serve individuals with multiple disabilities;
  - c. An increase need for training of IDB staff;
  - d. A need for more community resources to serve individuals with mental health impairments, especially those in crisis;
  - e. The development of service providers that are able to effectively serve individuals with multiple disabilities; and
  - f. The need to develop customized employment as a service option for IDB clients.
9. There are a number of individuals, especially among youth, that are on the Autism spectrum, and need supported employment services.
10. Multiple participants indicated that there is a very long waiting list for Medicaid waiver services in Iowa, as long as 800 days, which significantly impacts the ability of IDB and the General agency to identify an extended services provider for individuals that need supported employment services.
11. The need to develop self-advocacy skills was a recurring theme in this study. The individuals served by IDB often do not come to the agency with the ability to advocate for themselves. They need to participate in training to develop this ability so that they can combat discrimination in the job search and employment process.

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## *RECOMMENDATIONS*

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The following recommendations are offered to IDB based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment are:

1. IDB is encouraged to review the reasons for the Orientation Center not operating at full capacity and determine if there are changes that can be made that will contribute to a greater occupancy rate. In addition, IDB is encouraged to consistently and accurately gather and report data on the Orientation Center so that the organization can evaluate the effectiveness of the program.
2. IDB is encouraged to examine their policy and practice on the purchase of assistive technology for clients and the conditions and situations in which they loan equipment. An examination of the expenditure data for assistive technology indicated that the agency has expended a decreasing amount on assistive technology since 2016. It would be beneficial for the agency to examine why this is occurring and determine if there are flexibilities that are possible in the AT purchase process, especially for clients in training.
3. IDB should establish regular and consistent training for staff and partners on supported employment. IDB may wish to consult with the General Agency to identify SE vendors throughout the State and then include those vendors in ongoing communication and cross-training to help build the capacity of the existing SE providers to serve individuals with blindness and low vision, and to increase the options for clients when choosing an SE provider.
4. IDB should investigate ways that they can develop customized employment as a service option for their clients with the most significant disabilities.
5. IDB is encouraged to identify natural supports as an extended service provider option for their clients that need supported employment but that are on a long waiting list for Medicaid Waiver services.
6. IDB is encouraged to expand the use of the Partnership Plus model as a strategy to ensure that follow-along and extended services are available for clients that need SE or CE.
7. IDB should consider partnering with the Centers for Independent Living in Iowa to provide instruction in self-advocacy and to provide peer mentor opportunities for their clients.
8. IDB is encouraged to arrange for the provision of training for staff in how to effectively work with individuals with significant mental health impairments and Autism.
9. IDB is encouraged to continue to submit for reimbursement from the Social Security Administration for those SSA beneficiaries that return to work and reduce dependence on benefits. This is an important source of income for the organization.
10. To effectively address the fear of benefit loss by SSA beneficiaries, IDB should provide training for staff and providers on strategies that contribute to the pursuit of work above the level of SGA, including self-sufficiency. These interventions and strategies include:
  - a. Establishing and reinforcing high expectations for the individual;

- b. Identifying role models, or peer mentors that will model positive behavior and provide a positive “push” for the individual to achieve their maximum potential (in many instances, the positive push can come from the rehabilitation counselor if there are no family members, friends or mentors available);
  - c. Maximizing the individual’s ability to live and function independently;
  - d. Reinforcing the need for tenacity, persistence by the individual by helping the develop resiliencies, and then providing constant support and positive feedback;
  - e. Benefits planning that is ongoing and plans for overpayments when work occurs. Overpayments are planned for and the individual or the Benefits Planner is aware enough to calculate the effect of wages on benefits for themselves and set aside dollars that occur as a result of overpayments for future payback to SSA;
  - f. Pursuit of higher education at the highest possible level for the individual; and
  - g. Work experience, internships or any exposure to work in the beneficiary’s field of choice.
11. In addition to the strategies noted in #10, IDB should consider providing training for internal staff to become Certified Benefits Planners through Cornell University’s online training program. Similar training is available from Virginia Commonwealth University.
12. IDB should consider providing training to counseling staff on how to develop IPEs that include the development of self-efficacy of the individual in the plan. These types of plans include achievable short-term intermediate objectives that purposely include a series of graded successes that build the confidence of the individual and the expectation of future success. Through a series of successes, the individual comes to expect success. She/he will pursue higher goals because they are more confident in their abilities. These plans are flexible and build as slowly as necessary to increase “approach” and risk-taking behavior on the part of the individual. For instance, they do not necessarily require the individual to start out in college as a full-time student, but build the course-load slowly, provide necessary supports and technology, and ensure there is a solid support system in place for the individual to provide positive and encouraging feedback on a regular basis. Success or failure is not viewed as an all-or-nothing proposition, but is defined for each unique individual and a plan is developed and revised accordingly.

**SECTION THREE:  
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH BLINDNESS OR  
LOW VISION FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING  
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN  
UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY IDB**

Section Three includes an identification of the needs of individuals with blindness and low vision from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by IDB.

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*Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods*

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The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with blindness and low vision from different ethnic groups, including individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by the IDB:

- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision that are minorities did not differ from the needs of other individuals with blindness and low vision with the exception of language interpreter needs.
- Individuals that are Deaf-Blind were identified as potentially underserved by IDB. They were the only disability group that was identified with any frequency in this area.
- Although there were no specific racial or ethnic groups identified as underserved by IDB, there were participants that indicated any race where English is a second language may have difficulty finding culturally competent staff at IDB.
- The very rural areas of Iowa were identified as potentially underserved by IDB primarily due to the lack of transportation, which restricts access to IDB offices, and makes travel times lengthy and time consuming for Rehabilitation Teachers.

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***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF  
INDIVIDUALS WITH BLINDNESS AND LOW VISION FROM DIFFERENT  
ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS THAT MAY HAVE  
BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY IDB***

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**Ethnicity**

Data for ethnicity is obtained from 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates and the 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. The ethnic demographic averages for each Region are calculated by adding population totals for each ethnic group and dividing by the total population. Table 68 contains the information on the ethnic make-up of Iowa.

Table 68  
*Ethnicity*

Area	Total Pop.	Hispanic - Latino	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Two or more races
<b>*US</b>	325,719,178	18.0%	60.6%	12.3%	0.7%	5.5%	0.2%	2.4%
<b>*Iowa</b>	3,145,711	5.9%	85.9%	3.3%	0.2%	2.6%	0.2%	1.8%
<b>Lowest County**</b>	Adams 3,785	Lucas 0.1%	Buena Vista 61.4%	Ida & Montgomery 0.0%	Nine Counties 0.0%	Four Counties 0.0%	57 Counties 0.0%	Hamilton 0.2%
<b>Highest County**</b>	Polk 467,235	Crawford 27.4%	Lucas 99.1%	Black Hawk 8.8%	Tama 6.9%	Buena Vista 8.9%	Buena Vista 1.3%	Jefferson 3.7%

\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. \*\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

The State's average for Black or African American residents is significantly lower than the National average by 9%. Black Hawk County has the highest rate of Black or African American residents, exceeding the State average by 5.5% and falling below the National average by 3.5%.

Four Counties in the State do not have Asian residents. Of the remaining 95 Counties, Buena Vista has the largest number of Asians, exceeding the State and National averages by more than three percent.

Over half of the State's Counties do not have Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders as residents. Buena Vista has the highest percentage of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders, exceeding the National and State averages that fall below one percent of the population.

Tama County has the State's highest percentage of American Indian and Alaskan Natives (6.9%), which significantly exceeds both the National (.7%) and State (.2%) averages.

Buena Vista County has the lowest percentage of White residents (61.4%) which is .8% less than the National average. Lucas County has the highest rate of White residents, exceeding the State average by over 13 percentage points.

The rates for Hispanic/Latino residents living in the various Counties of the State fluctuate between 27.4% (high) and .1% (low) with Crawford County's rate being significantly higher than the State's average of 5.9%.



### **Poverty and Ethnicity**

Poverty is calculated by the US Census Bureau for the total population as related to ethnicity. Table 69 identifies the percentage of individuals living below poverty levels for the State's ethnic categories.

Table 69

#### *Poverty and Ethnicity*

Area	Poverty Rate for Total Population	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
*US	13.4%	11.1%	23.0%	25.4%	11.1%	18.3%	16.7%	19.4%
*Iowa	10.7%	9.3%	32.3%	24.1%	14.7%	40.0%	24.3%	18.0%
<b>Lowest County</b>	Lyon 4.9%	Lyon 4.4%	19 Counties 0.0%	38 Counties 0.0%	38 Counties 0.0%	83 Counties 0.0%	Nine Counties 0.0%	Four Counties 0.0%
<b>County Highest</b>	Story 22.0%	Story 19.6%	Mitchell 100%	Four Counties 100.0%	Two Counties 100.0%	Seven Counties 100.0%	Lucas 71.7%	Monroe 78.9%

\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. \*\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

The State's poverty levels based on ethnicity contain distinct differences when compared to the Nation's levels. The poverty rates for American Indians and Alaskan Natives exceed all other ethnic categories in the State by greater than 13 percentage points and exceed the National average by almost 10%. Asians have the lowest poverty levels in the State while Black or African Americans have the second highest poverty levels, exceeding the National levels by roughly nine percentage points. Poverty rates for Whites in Iowa exceed the National average by 1.5%.

Although the poverty levels are calculated for the entire population based on ethnicity and County rates have a wide range of difference, the data is important for understanding the impact of poverty and ethnicity when addressing the needs of IDB clients.

### **Educational Attainment and Ethnicity**

The US Census Bureau collects data on educational attainment by ethnicity. Table 70 contains averages for high school and bachelor's degree recipients in each ethnic category for the population 25 years and over.

Table 70

*Educational Attainment by Ethnicity: Total Population Age 25 Years and Over*

<b>Ethnicity/Percentage Type</b>	<b>*US</b>	<b>*Iowa</b>	<b>**County Lowest</b>	<b>**County Highest</b>
<b>White alone</b>				
Percent HS graduate or higher	89.9%	93.2%	Crawford 82.6%	Story 97.2%
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher	33.4%	29.2%	Van Buren 13.7%	Johnson 53.3%
<b>Black alone</b>				
Percent HS graduate or higher	85.9%	85.5%	3 Counties 0.0%	28 Counties 100%
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher	21.4%	19.7%	40 Counties 0.0%	Monona & Monroe 100%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native alone</b>				
Percent HS graduate or higher	80.2%	86.8%	7 Counties 0.0%	44 Counties 100%
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher	14.7%	12.9%	57 Counties 0.0%	4 Counties 100%
<b>Asian alone</b>				
Percent HS graduate or higher	86.9%	78.5%	5 Counties 0.0%	32 Counties 100%
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher	53.8%	42.4%	22 Counties 0.0%	Humboldt & Monroe 100%
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone</b>				
Percent HS graduate or higher	87.6%	67.8%	60 Counties 0.0%	30 Counties 100%
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher	17.7%	10.4%	85 Counties 0.0%	6 Counties 100%
<b>Two or more races</b>				
Percent HS graduate or higher	88.8%	89.9%	Floyd 13.6%	33 Counties 100%
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher	31.7%	24.7%	23 Counties 0.0%	Grundy 89.5%
<b>Hispanic or Latino Origin</b>				
Percent HS graduate or higher	68.7%	62.7%	Monroe 1.4%	6 Counties 100%
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher	16.0%	13.2%	9 Counties 0.0%	Bremer 58.1%

\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

\*\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Individuals that are White in Iowa had the highest percentage that had achieved the level of high school graduate or higher. Approximately 78.5% of Asians age 25 and over in Iowa obtained a high school education or higher and 42.4% obtained a bachelor's degree, which is reflective of

the national rates in which roughly half of the Asian population is receiving and successfully completing post-secondary education.

Asians have the smallest gap of difference between the percentage rates of high school graduates and percentage of graduates with a bachelor's degrees (36.1 points) in Iowa, while Hispanic and Latinos rank second, with a gap of difference between the degree achievement levels equaling 49 percentage points. The gap between high school graduation rates and bachelor's degree rates for Blacks is approximately 65-points while Whites have a 64-point difference. American Indian and Alaskan Natives have the largest gap between high school and college graduation levels. This information indicates that all ethnic groups have access to education beyond high school yet the majority of all ethnic groups other than Asians are not successfully obtaining post-secondary degrees. This information also indicates that the majority of White individuals are not receiving education beyond high school.

### **Disability and Ethnicity**

The US Census collects data on disability rates among ethnic categories for the total population. Table 71 identifies the estimated average rates of disability among ethnic categories. Averages are calculated by determining the total population for each ethnic category in the Region and dividing by the total population.

Table 71

#### *Disability and Ethnicity: Total Population*

Region	TCNP	White alone	Black or African American alone	Hispanic-Latino (any race)	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races
*US	12.7%	13.3%	14.0%	9.0%	17.3%	7.1%	10.3%	11.1%
*IA	11.3%	11.6%	10.4%	5.9%	15.2%	5.5%	4.9%	10.7%
** Lowest	Johnson 7.0%	Johnson 7.5%	22 Counties 0.0%	9 Counties 0.0%	36 Counties 0.0%	46 Counties 0.0%	86 Counties 0.0%	Three Counties 0.0%
** Highest	Appanoose 17.8%	Page 17.6%	Mitchell 100%	Page 23.5%	Five Counties 100%	Clay 86.1%	Three Counties 100%	Wayne 47.2%

\* Source: 2017 ACS 1-Year Estimates \*\* Source: 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability rates for ethnic groups in the State's Counties have a wide range of difference. When examining data related to educational attainment and disability among ethnic categories, Whites have the smallest range of difference between Counties for rates of disability while making up over 80% of the State's overall population. The range of difference between Counties for

Hispanic and Latino residents reporting a disability is 0 to 23.5% while all other minority ethnic groups have a range of difference from 0 to over 47%.

An equal percentage (0.2%) of American Indian and Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders comprise the State's population. Data indicates that the State's disability rate for American Indian and Alaskan Natives is 15.2%, the highest in the State. The disability rate for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders is over 10% less than American Indian and Alaskan Natives. Over 33% of the State's 99 Counties report 0% disability for residents of Native American and Alaskan decent while over 85% of the Counties report 0% disability for Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders.

Of the 3.3% of Black or African Americans residing in the State, Mitchell County has the highest rate of disability reported among the ethnic group (100%).

### **Ethnicity and Disability Type Prevalence Rates:**

Table 72 contains the State's disability prevalence rates categorized by ethnicity, age 18 to 64, and disability type.

Table 72

*Disability Type and Ethnicity: Ages 18 to 64*

<b>Iowa 2017 Prevalence Rates</b>	<b>Visual Disability</b>	<b>Hearing Disability</b>	<b>Ambulatory Disability</b>	<b>Cognitive Disability</b>	<b>Self-care Disability</b>	<b>Independent Living Disability</b>
White, non-Hispanic	1.20%	1.90%	4.20%	3.90%	1.50%	3.10%
Black-African American, non-Hispanic	1.40%	0.50%	4.50%	4.90%	0.50%	2.80%
Native American and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	4.20%	1.30%	5.70%	8.50%	0.00%	6.90%
Asian, non-Hispanic	0.80%	1.90%	3.00%	1.40%	1.80%	1.80%
Some Other Race, non-Hispanic	0.30%	1.40%	1.30%	3.90%	0.50%	3.40%

Hispanic-Latino	1.60%	0.60%	1.40%	2.80%	0.40%	2.00%
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<http://disabilitystatistics.org>

Less than 3% of all ethnic categories with the exception of Native American and Alaskan Natives reported a visual disability. Native American and Alaskan Natives have the highest rate of individuals ages 18 to 64 reporting a visual disability (4.2%). Additionally, hearing disability and self-care disability was reported by less than 2% of all ethnic categories.

Ambulatory disability was the most frequently reported disability type among working age Asians and Whites. Working age individuals who identify in the ethnic categories of Black/African American, “Some Other Race,” Native American and Alaska Native, and Hispanic/Latino indicated cognitive disability as the most frequently reported disability type.

The least frequently reported disability type among working age Whites, Asians and “Some Other Race” was a visual disability. Self-care disability was the least frequently reported disability type among working age Native American and Alaskan Natives and Hispanic/Latinos. and those identifying as “Some Other Race.” Black/African Americans indicated both hearing disability and self-care disability with 0.5 percentage points.

#### **Ethnicity Comparison of IDB with Iowa Overall:**

The project team analyzed the ethnicity of Iowa overall with the ethnicity of the clients served by IDB to determine if the individuals served by IDB were representative of the population of Iowa. Table 73 contains the results of this analysis.

Table 73

#### *Ethnicity of Iowa Compared to IDB Clients*

Race/Ethnicity	Iowa Overall	All IDB Clients 2018	Difference
White	85.9%	82.8%	-3.1%
American Indian	0.2%	1.2%	1.0%
Asian	2.6%	3.4%	0.8%
Black	3.3%	12.3%	9.0%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Multi-Race	1.8%	Not Avail.	NA
Hispanic	5.9%	5.0%	-0.9%

The data indicates that the ethnic make-up of IDB clients closely mirrors the general population of Iowa, with the exception of African-Americans. The client population of IDB consists of 12.3 percent African-Americans, which is 9% higher than their appearance in the general population of the State. However, when this information is examined in light of the poverty rate of African-Americans in Iowa (second highest in the State), their overrepresentation in the IDB client

population may be an indicator that the organization is providing services to those individuals in greatest need.

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***SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE***

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**INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS**

**Individual Survey: Ethnicity of Respondents**

Individuals were asked to report their primary race or ethnic group. Responses to this question are detailed in Table 74.

Table 74

*Ethnicity of Respondents*

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Caucasian/White	78	85.7%
African American/Black	6	6.6%
Multi-Race	3	3.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1.1%
Asian	1	1.1%
Hispanic/Latino	1	1.1%
Other (please describe)	1	1.1%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
I don't know	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	91	100%

The majority of respondents to the question regarding ethnicity identified as Caucasian/White (almost 87%) while African American/Black respondents accounted for 6.6% of the total respondents to the question. Individuals identifying in all other ethnic and racial groups accounted for almost 8% of the total number of respondents.

**PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS**

**Partner Survey: Barriers to Employment for Clients Who are Racial or Ethnic Minorities**

Partner survey respondents were asked a yes-no question regarding whether or not the barriers to achieving employment goals for those that are racial or ethnic minorities were different from the overall population. A total of 40 responses were received. More than 72% of the respondents indicated that the barriers to achieving employment goals were not different for those that are racial or ethnic minorities as compared to clients with blindness and vision impairments.

Respondents were asked to identify the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who were racial or ethnic minorities. Table 75 contains the results.

Table 75

*Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Racial or Ethnic Minorities*

<b>Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Racial or Ethnic Minorities</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Language barriers	5	45.5%
Other (please describe)	5	45.5%
Not having education or training	4	36.4%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	3	27.3%
Not having job search skills	2	18.2%
Lack of self-confidence	2	18.2%
Disability-related transportation issues	2	18.2%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	2	18.2%
Not having job skills	1	9.1%
Not having disability-related accommodations	1	9.1%
Other transportation issues	1	9.1%
Mental health issues	1	9.1%
Housing issues	1	9.1%

The results indicate that the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for racial or ethnic minorities are different from the general IDB clients. Partners that indicated the barriers to employment for minorities were different from the general population of IDB clients identified language barriers, not having education or training and “other” items as the top three barriers preventing achievement of employment goals. Comments provided by respondents in the category of other included “entitlement attitude,” “lack of informed choice,” “lack of training of service providers,” “lack of training and technology for persons with vision loss,” and “lack of quality, client driven choices provided by the department of the blind.”

**Partner Survey: Access to IDB Services for Clients Who are Racial or Ethnic Minorities**

Partner survey respondents were asked a yes-no question whether or not the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by clients who are racial or ethnic minorities were different from the general population. A total of 39 responses were received. The margin between yes and no



was 64.1%, with 82.1% of the respondents indicating that the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services were not different for clients who are racial or ethnic minorities.

Partner survey respondents were provided a list of 12 items and asked to indicate the top three reasons that individual clients who are racial or ethnic minorities might find it difficult to access IDB services. Table 76 lists the barriers to IDB access along with the number of times each of the barriers was identified as one of the top three barriers by the partner survey respondents.

Table 76

*Top Three Barriers to Accessing IDB Services: Racial or Ethnic Minorities*

<b>Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access IDB Services: Racial or Ethnic Minorities</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Language barriers	5	71.4%
Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation	3	42.9%
Difficulties completing the application	2	28.6%
IDB staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients	2	28.6%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	1	14.3%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	1	14.3%
Slow service delivery	1	14.3%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	1	14.3%
IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	1	14.3%
Other (please describe)	1	14.3%

A total of seven respondents answered this question. Language barriers was the item chosen most frequently by partner survey respondents, followed by limited accessible transportation.

## STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

### Staff Survey: Barriers to Employment for Clients Who are Racial or Ethnic Minorities

Staff survey respondents were asked a yes-no question regarding whether or not the barriers to achieving employment goals for those that are racial or ethnic minorities were different from the overall population. A total of 29 responses were received and the results were similar to the partners' response rate. More than 65% of the respondents indicated that the barriers to achieving employment goals were not different for those that are racial or ethnic minorities.

Staff survey respondents were asked to identify the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who are racial or ethnic minorities from a list of 20 barriers. Table 77 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was cited. There was no limit to the number of items a respondent could select.

Table 77

#### *Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Racial or Ethnic Minorities*

<b>Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Racial Ethnic Minorities</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Not having education or training	7	58.3%
Language barriers	6	50.0%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	6	50.0%
Not having job skills	3	25.0%
Not having job search skills	3	25.0%
Other (please describe)	3	25.0%
Not enough jobs available	2	16.7%
Poor social skills	1	8.3%
Lack of self-confidence	1	8.3%
Disability-related transportation issues	1	8.3%
Other transportation issues	1	8.3%

Two of the top three barriers to achieving employment goals that staff cited for minorities are identical to two of the top barriers staff selected for the general population. Not having education or training and language barriers appear in the top three on both lists. Overall, staff and partners differ slightly in their perception about whether or not racial and ethnic minorities experience different barriers to achieving employment goals than the general population of clients.

### **Staff Survey: Access to IDB Services for Clients Who are Racial or Ethnic Minorities**

Staff survey respondents were asked a yes-no question whether or not the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by clients who are racial or ethnic minorities were different from the general population. A total of 31 responses were received, with 87.1% of the respondents indicating that the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services were not different for clients who are racial or ethnic minorities. Partners responded similarly to this question.

Staff survey respondents were provided a list of 11 items and asked to indicate the top three reasons that individual clients who are racial or ethnic minorities might find it difficult to access IDB services. Inadequate disability-related accommodations and language barriers were the top two choices by respondents.

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### ***KEY INFORMANT AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS***

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The following themes emerged in the needs of individuals with blindness and low vision from different ethnic groups, including individuals who have been potentially unserved or underserved by IDB:

1. The rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision that are minorities did not differ from the needs of other individuals with blindness and low vision with the exception of language interpreter needs.
2. Individuals that are Deaf-Blind were identified as potentially underserved by IDB. They were the only disability group that was identified with any frequency in this area. The data from IDB supports this observation by the participants in the study. The most common reason cited for this group being underserved was the elimination of the position that was set-aside by IDB to serve the Deaf-Blind.
3. Although there were no specific racial or ethnic groups identified as underserved by IDB, there were participants in two different focus groups that indicated any race where English is a second language may have difficulty finding culturally competent staff at IDB. There are interpreter needs when clients speak Spanish or other languages, and the use of interpreters can be time-consuming. The participants in the focus groups indicated that individuals with blindness and low vision from different ethnic groups do not access services from IDB frequently, and this may be due to language barriers, mistrust of government agencies, or fear.
4. The very rural areas of Iowa were identified as potentially underserved by IDB primarily due to the lack of transportation, which restricts access to IDB offices, and makes travel times lengthy and time consuming for Rehabilitation Teachers.

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*RECOMMENDATIONS:*

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The following recommendations are offered to IDB based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with Blindness and Low Vision from Different Ethnic Groups, including needs of Individuals who have been Unserved or Underserved by the Program area:

1. IDB is encouraged to identify and implement strategies that will increase services to individuals that are Deaf-Blind. As resources allow, IDB should consider redirecting some portion of a staff member's time to increase outreach and service to this population in Iowa.
2. IDB is encouraged to conduct targeted outreach and recruitment of bilingual staff to increase outreach and service to diverse cultures that may not be accessing services. IDB should partner with community agencies serving these individuals and establish a referral relationship. In addition, IDB should develop marketing materials in different languages and widely disperse them throughout the State.
3. IDB is encouraged to expand the use of distance technologies to conduct outreach to the rural areas of the State. The use of Social Media platforms, text, and other programs can contribute to improving access to the agency by rural residents and can increase the frequency and consistency of communication between IDB staff and potential clients in these geographic areas.

## **SECTION FOUR: NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH BLINDNESS AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN TRANSITION**

The reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act under WIOA places a greater emphasis on the provision of transition services to youth and students with disabilities, especially their need for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). The Final Rule for 34 CFR 361 indicates that the CSNA must include an assessment of the needs of youth and students with disabilities in the State, including their need for Pre-ETS. This section contains information about the rehabilitation needs of transition-aged youth with disabilities (14 to 24) and the needs of students with disabilities (16 to 21) for pre-employment transition services.

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### *Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods*

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- The relationship and communication between IESBVI and IDB was repeatedly referred to as critical in the transition process for students and youth with blindness and low vision.
- It was clear from the participants in all of the groups in this study that the five required pre-employment transition services represent significant needs of students with blindness and low vision in Iowa. Work experience and soft skill development were noted as the most important services that prepare students for the world of work, but all of the five required services were repeatedly mentioned as important and meaningful.
- Many of the students and youth served by IDB are individuals with multiple disabilities in addition to blindness or low vision. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that staff and service providers are trained and capable of addressing the multiple needs presented by these youth as they prepare for postsecondary education and/or employment.
- There is a need to develop high expectations for students and youth with blindness and low vision in Iowa.
- Transportation to and from school, work experiences, and full-time work is a significant barrier to employment for youth with blindness and low vision. This is especially true in the rural areas.
- Because of the number of youth that are being served by IDB with multiple and complex disabilities, there is a need to enhance the development of supported employment, including the development of customized employment as a service option for youth.

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***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE  
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRANSITION***

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### **Youth Data**

Table 78 contains Educational Attainment rates for ages 18 to 24 years, which includes High School Graduation rates and Bachelor's degree achievement.

Table 78

*Educational Attainment for Ages 18 to 24 Years*

<b>Region</b>	<b>Less than High School Graduate</b>	<b>HS Grad (includes equivalency)</b>	<b>Some college, or Associate's degree</b>	<b>Bachelor's degree or higher</b>
<b>*US</b>	12.7%	31.7%	44.6%	10.9%
<b>*IA</b>	10.5%	28.3%	49.6%	11.5%
<b>**Lowest</b>	Grundy 4.9%	Emmet 17.4%	Greene 32.8%	Fremont 2.8%
	Winneshiek 3.5%	Jefferson 16.2%	Osceola 32.4%	Mills 2.3%
	Johnson 3.9%	Story 14.3%	Iowa 31.8%	Cherokee 1.3%
	Palo Alto 3.9%	Bremer 12.0%	Wright 31.7%	Audubon 0.7%
	Story 2.1%	Winneshiek 9.9%	Davis 24.5%	Adams 0.0%
<b>**Highest</b>	Davis 50.0%	Clarke 51.3%	Winneshiek 80.8%	Dallas 24.7%
	Cass 27.6%	Iowa 50.7%	Story 73.9%	Jefferson 21.1%
	Montgomery 27.6%	Adams 47.9%	Bremer 73.7%	Worth 17.2%
	Van Buren 26.5%	Hamilton 46.1%	Poweshiek 66.8%	Johnson 17.0%
	Page 25.5%	Tama 46.0%	Emmet & Buena Vista 64.8%	Monroe 16.6%

The educational attainment rates for youth in Iowa generally exceed those of youth in the U.S. The percentage of youth whose highest level of educational attainment is less than a high school graduate is 2.2% lower than the U.S. population, and 3.5% lower than those whose highest level of education is a high school graduate. In addition, the rate of youth whose highest level of educational attainment is some college or an Associate's degree is five percentage points higher than the national average in Iowa, while the State exceeds the national average for Bachelor's degrees by just over one-half of a percentage point.

Cornell University provides online disability statistics for youth employment. The following data in Table 79 is from the online resource and contains the employment rates from 2017 for the Nation and the State by disability type. The categories are for non-institutionalized youth ages 16 – 20, male and female, from all ethnic backgrounds and includes all education levels.

Table 79

*2017 Employment by Disability Type for Non-institutionalized Youth ages 16 -20*

Disability Type	Percent Employed in US	Percent Employed in Iowa
Any Disability	24.0%	41.6%
Visual Disability	28.8%	62.4%
Hearing Disability	26.8%	No Data
Ambulatory Disability	15.8%	42.1%
Cognitive Disability	21.6%	42.8%
Self-Care Disability	7.8%	18.4%
Independent Living Disability	13.7%	31.6%

Source: <http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/>

The employment rate for youth with disabilities ages 16-20 in Iowa is significantly higher than the national rate, with Iowa's rates almost double the nation's percentages in each category.

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics collects information on youth labor force participation and unemployment. Table 80 provides National data for youth ages 16 -19 and 20-24 with and without disabilities.

Table 80

*Youth Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate: Jan-April 2019*

Group	Labor Force Participation Rate							
	19-Jan		19-Feb		19-Mar		19-Apr	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16 to 19	22.3%	33.3%	20.5%	33.0%	22.2%	33.8%	22.6%	32.2%
Age 20 to 24	47.7%	71.5%	45.3%	72.1%	48.7%	72.3%	48.3%	72.2%
	Unemployment Rate							
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16 to 19	33.2%	13.1%	27.8%	13.6%	24.4%	11.8%	21.1%	11.6%
Age 20 to 24	12.1%	8.5%	13.0%	7.4%	15.3%	6.8%	9.0%	5.7%

Source: Data received from DOL-ODEP via email inquiry 4/17/2019 and 7/26/2019.

The data indicates that the labor force participation rates for youth with disabilities are lower by almost 10% or more compared to individuals without disabilities when youth are ages 16-19. However, once both groups age, the disparity grows dramatically to more than 23 percentage

points. On the other hand, the unemployment rate difference between the groups reduces as youth age, dropping from roughly 16.5 percentage points to 2.3 percentage points.

#### IDB Transition-Age Youth:

The project team examined general case service data for transition-age youth served by IDB. Table 81 contains the results of this analysis.

Table 81

#### *Transition-Age Youth – General Information*

Item	14-24		
	2016	2017	2018
Applications	50	46	40
Percent of all applications	24.5%	25.4%	22.1%
Avg. time for eligibility determination (days)	59	41	39
Plans developed	42	37	25
Percent of all plans developed	29.4%	29.8%	21.6%
Avg. time from eligibility to plan (days)	76	81	98
Number of clients in training by type			
Vocational	16	14	11
Undergraduate	41	36	42
Graduate	5	8	9
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed other than rehabilitated	2816	2052	3695
Avg. length of open case (days) for cases closed rehabilitated	2834	3879	3091
Number of cases closed rehabilitated	68	74	43
Percent of all cases closed rehabilitated	26.2%	26.4%	29.7%
Total number of cases served	191	198	214
Percent of all cases served	36.9%	39.0%	42.4%

The data indicates that youth ages 14-24 comprise a decreasing percentage of all applicants for services from 2017 to 2018, and a decreasing percentage of all plans developed for that time period. The average time for a plan to be developed for a transition-age youth exceeded the maximum time allowed by the rehabilitation Act of 90 days in 2018. The 2018 average of 98 days represents a three-year increase in the average plan developed time frame.

Although youth represent a decreasing percentage of applicants and plans developed, they constitute an increasing rate of all clients served by IDB since 2016, indicating that youth served by the agency have open cases for a longer period of time than other age groups. The data in Table 81 supports this conclusion, as the average time a case is open for a transition-age youth



who is closed either successfully or unsuccessfully was between 8.5 and ten years in 2018. This is more than three times the length of other age groups served by IDB.

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### *Pre-Employment Transition Services*

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The Rehabilitation Act as amended and reauthorized in WIOA requires VR programs to expend at least 15% of their Federal allotment annually on pre-employment transition services. These services must be made available to all eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities in the State that have need of such services. It is clear from the interviews and the survey results that students with blindness and low vision in Iowa have a need to receive the five required Pre-ETS. These services include the following:

1. Job exploration counseling;
2. Work-based learning experiences;
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living (often referred to as soft skills); and
5. Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

Each of these Pre-ETS was noted as a need on a recurring basis when discussing the needs of students with blindness and low vision in Iowa, with work-based learning experiences being the most frequently mentioned and considered the most valuable in terms of preparing youth for employment in the future. Soft skill development and self-advocacy were the two other pre-employment transition services noted as needed by staff and partners in Iowa.

The Rehabilitation Act indicates that the following authorized services can be provided if funds remain after the provision of the five required services noted above:

1. Implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces;
2. Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;
3. Providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities;
4. Disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section;
5. Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);
6. Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section;
7. Developing model transition demonstration projects;

8. Establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goals of this section; and
9. Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.

To determine if a VR agency can move from the five required services to the nine authorized services, a fiscal forecasting model must be utilized which identifies the expenditures on the required services and on coordination activities and then forecasts how much of the remaining funds, if any, can be utilized to pay for authorized services. IDB completed an analysis of their ability to move from required to authorized pre-employment transition services for 2017. The following information is quoted from IDB's analysis for 2017:

*IDB makes available statewide all of the required pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities in Iowa. The IDB has developed and is implementing a plan to provide continuous outreach in the form of letters and information sessions to Iowa's education agencies, to schools, and to parents informing them of the pre-employment services available statewide to students with disabilities. IDB offers a wide range and expanding menu of services to students with disabilities to assist them in developing the skills, confidence, and positive attitude about blindness that they need to make a more successful transition from secondary to post-secondary environments. The IDB collaborates with the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the State Department of Education, local area education agencies and local school districts, in addition to other stakeholders to ensure that pre-employment transition services are made available statewide to students who are blind or have vision loss.*

One of the key focuses of all IDB programs is to ensure consistent messages of a positive attitude about blindness, importance of the development and efficient use of blindness skills, and maintaining high expectations about the abilities and capabilities of persons who are blind. IDB programs place significant emphasis on assisting students who are blind to have access to the following key areas:

- Self-Advocacy Skills Training
- Discovery activities
- Soft skills
- Assistive Technology
- Skills of Blindness Training
- Problem Solving Skill Development
- Meaningful career experiences in competitive and integrated environments

Through IDB, students are able to participate in trainings and to have opportunities that will allow them to more fully participate in the career development process and to develop meaningful employment plans. IDB offers opportunities and resources in assistive technology,

career exploration, work-based learning experiences, attitude and adjustment to blindness training, and access to peer mentoring to assist students to develop the skills, positive attitude and confidence they need to move successfully into post-secondary environments.

Several of the IDB transition programs are designed to support the student's IEP with regard to the Expanded Core Curriculum. For example, a summer program for transition clients focuses on career exploration and development by having participants talk with a Human Resources supervisor, tour different businesses, and learn job-seeking skills, such as appropriate appearance for the workplace. A program on college preparation will have clients residing on a college campus and learning how to hire drivers and readers, work with the registrar's office and disability services, order books in alternative media, and more. Students who are blind or low vision also have the opportunity to participate in specialized IDB programs for children and youth. IDB collaborates with educators to develop programs based on the needs of clients.

IDB offers a variety of assistive technology services to transition age youth and educators of transition age youth. IDB technology specialists provide technology assessments and one-on-one assistive technology training to transition age youth at school or at home. IDB staff attend IEP meetings at the request of the team and consult with special education teachers to help them come up with solutions to classroom access barriers. IDB technology specialists have implemented a program in which they provide a monthly webinar about assistive technology for TVIs, para-educators, and other education professionals. By mid-2016, the IDB will be launching a similar webinar series for teens.

#### IDB-Sponsored Programs

The Iowa Department for the Blind LEAP Program is dedicated to providing meaningful and high-quality vocational rehabilitation services to blind and low vision transition-age youth from across the state. The Program provides many opportunities for blind and low vision Iowa youth to develop the confidence and skills necessary for seamless transitions to life after high school. The focus of LEAP is to motivate and assist youth in high school to: learn skills for independence and workplace readiness; explore careers and educational opportunities; learn to advocate and take charge of their future, and; prepare for the future through work-based learning experiences in integrated settings.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires IDB and other vocational rehabilitation agencies to provide five Pre-Employment Transition Services. The services include: job exploration counseling, work-based learning and work experiences in competitive integrated employment, counseling on post-secondary educational opportunities, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. The expected outcome of all IDB sponsored programs is employment in integrated competitive employment. The pre-employment transition services were the basis for the development of the IDB LEAP concept.

The Summer LEAP Academy is a multi-week residential program that provides training to blind and low vision high school students with regard to independent living skills and specific non-visual techniques in the areas of technology, cane travel, Braille and other communication, home management and industrial arts. There is a focus on self-advocacy and other life skills as well as job readiness and career-related topics. In addition to the classes, students participate in fun and challenging activities to develop positive attitudes about blindness and vision loss and equip them with the confidence to believe in themselves and their abilities.

IDB LEAP Weekend Retreats (Friday evenings through Sunday afternoons) are offered during the school year. Blind and low vision high school students from across Iowa participate in the theme-based retreats and work on building disability-related skills as well as skills in areas such as job readiness, job interviewing, communication, orientation and mobility, technology, team-work, time-management, social behavior, advocacy, peer interaction, problem solving, etc. The retreats also provide a means for students to step out of their comfort zones to increase confidence and positive attitudes about blindness.

The Braille Challenge is an annual event sponsored by the IDB and IESBVI, provides opportunities for students in grades 1 to 12 to test their Braille skills in reading, writing, spelling and comprehension. Top finishers in the various age brackets advance to other competitions. The Challenge brings students and families together from across the state of Iowa where new connections and friends are made every year. The competition inspires many blind and low vision students to work to improve their Braille skills. Program staff take this opportunity to provide outreach and training to parents, students, and support systems about the importance of students developing workplace readiness, self-advocacy and blindness skills.

The importance of pre-employment transition services brought forth an opportunity for IDB to develop the Youth Employment Services Team. This is a cross-agency group of individuals that focuses on the provision of pre-employment transition services and the development and implementation of related programs. The team has the following members:

- IDB Director.
- Education and Training Programs Director, who is responsible for the development of IDB-sponsored pre-employment transition services and assessments.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Counselor, who has a caseload of only students with disabilities.
- Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Technology Specialist, who is responsible for assistive technology assessments, recommendations and trainings for students statewide.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher, who provides workplace readiness training statewide to students.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Specialists, who are responsible for developing opportunities for work-based learning experiences.
- Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center Director, who provides consultation on program development and oversees implementation of programs at IDB.
- Iowa Library for the Blind Director, who oversees development of Library programs and services.
- Instructional Materials Center representatives, who facilitate the provision of materials in alternate formats for students with disabilities.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program Administrator.

IDB ensures the statewide provision of services in the five required activities. To ensure that students are able to fully access all of the pre-employment transition services, IDB will purchase and provide interpreters, readers, and appropriate accommodations and auxiliary aids so students have the supports they need to access the pre-employment transition services.

### **Pre-Employment Transition Services Provided in Program Year 2018:**

The Rehabilitation Services Administration recently posted Program Year 2018's Fourth Quarter data dashboards, which includes information on pre-employment transition services in Iowa specific to IDB. Table 82 contains the most up-to-date data on pre-employment transition services at the time of this report.

Table 82

*Pre-employment Transition Services Provided by IDB in the Fourth Quarter of PY 2018*

Item	Number
Number receiving Pre-ETS	27
Number receiving Pre-ETS who are potentially eligible	0
Number receiving Pre-ETS who applied for services	27
Number receiving job exploration counseling	4
Number receiving work-based learning experiences	4
Number receiving counseling and enrollment opportunities	3
Number receiving work readiness training	22
Number receiving instruction in self-advocacy	7

The data indicates that IDB provided pre-employment transition services to eligible individuals only in the Fourth Quarter of Program Year 2018. This has been true for all four quarters of the Program Year. Work readiness training, which includes soft skills, is the service that was provided to the greatest number of students, with instruction in self-advocacy the second most common service provided in the Quarter.

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## *Survey Results by Type*

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### **PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS**

#### **Partner Survey: Barriers to Employment for Youth in Transition**

Partner survey respondents were asked a yes-no question regarding whether or not the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition were different from the overall population of clients with blindness and vision impairments. A total of 38 responses were received. Almost 54% of the respondents indicated that the barriers to achieving employment goals were different for youth in transition when compared with the general IDB population with blindness or other visual impairments.

Respondents were asked to indicate the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from a list of 20 barriers. Table 83 lists the barriers along with the number of times and percent of time each of the barriers was identified. There was no limit to the number of items that could be chosen by the respondents.

Table 83

*Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Youth in Transition*

<b>Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Youth in Transition</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Not having job skills	15	68.2%
Not having education or training	10	45.5%
Not having job search skills	7	31.8%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	6	27.3%
Poor social skills	5	22.7%
Disability-related transportation issues	5	22.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	3	13.6%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	3	13.6%
Other (please describe)	3	13.6%
Not enough jobs available	2	9.1%
Other transportation issues	2	9.1%
Language barriers	1	4.5%
Lack of self-confidence	1	4.5%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	1	4.5%

A total of 22 respondents answered the question. Not having job skills was cited the most frequently at 68.2% for transition youth, while the same barrier was ranked fourth for the general population by partners. Not having education or training was the second most frequently chosen barrier for youth in transition achieving their employment goals and ranked 8<sup>th</sup> for the general population.

### **Partner Survey: Access to IDB Services for Youth in Transition**

Partner survey respondents were asked a yes-no question whether or not the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by clients who are youth in transition were different from the general population. A total of 38 responses were received. The margin between yes and no was 42.1%, with 71.1% of the respondents indicating that the reasons youth in transition find it difficult to access IDB services are not different from the general population of clients with blindness and vision impairments.

Partner survey respondents were provided a list of 12 items and asked to indicate the top three reasons that individual clients who are youth in transition might find it difficult to access IDB services. Table 84 lists the barriers to IDB access along with the number of times each of the barriers was identified as one of the top three barriers by the partner survey respondents.

Table 84

*Top Three Barriers to Accessing IDB Services: Youth in Transition*

<b>Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access IDB Services: Youth in Transition</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation	4	40.0%
Slow service delivery	4	40.0%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office	3	30.0%
Difficulties completing the application	3	30.0%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	3	30.0%
Other (please describe)	3	30.0%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	2	20.0%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	1	10.0%
Inadequate assessment services	1	10.0%
IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	1	10.0%

The 10 respondents who answered the question regarding difficulties in accessing IDB services for youth in transition selected the same top two reasons in the list that partners selected for the general population.

### **STAFF SURVEY RESULTS**

#### **Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for Youth in Transition**

Staff survey respondents were asked a yes-no question regarding whether or not the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth with disabilities in transition were different from the overall population. A total of 32 responses were received. The margin of difference (25%) is noted between the yes and no responses with slightly more than 62% of the respondents indicating that the barriers to achieving employment goals were different for youth with disabilities in transition when compared with the general IDB population with blindness or other visual impairments.

Staff survey respondents were provided a list of 20 barriers and asked to indicate the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition. Table 85 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was identified as a barrier to achieving employment goals for youth in transition. There was no limit to the number of items a staff respondent could choose.

Table 85

*Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Youth in Transition*

<b>Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: Youth in Transition</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Not having job skills	14	70.0%
Not having education or training	12	60.0%
Not having job search skills	11	55.0%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	6	30.0%
Lack of self-confidence	6	30.0%
Poor social skills	5	25.0%
Disability-related transportation issues	2	10.0%
Not enough jobs available	1	5.0%
Not having disability-related accommodations	1	5.0%

A total of 20 respondents answered the question. Seventy percent of staff cited not having job skills as the top barrier to achieving employment goals for youth with disabilities in transition, which is the third top choice as a barrier for the general population (51.5%). Not having education or training and not having job search skills were in the staff's top three and cited by over 50% of respondents for youth. Overall, three of the top five items staff selected for youth as barriers to achieving employment goals were identical to what staff selected for the general clients. The staff's top four choices for barriers to employment for youth are identical to the partner survey choices, with the remaining choices in a different ranking order.

#### **Staff Survey: Access to IDB Services for Youth in Transition**

Staff survey respondents were asked a yes-no question whether or not the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by clients who are youth in transition were different from the general population. A total of 30 responses were received. The margin between yes and no was 46.6%, with 73.3% of the respondents indicating that the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services were not different for clients who are youth in transition.

Staff survey respondents were provided a list of 11 items and asked to indicate the top three reasons that individual clients who are youth in transition might find it difficult to access IDB services. Table 86 lists the barriers to IDB access along with the number of times each of the barriers was identified as one of the top three barriers by the staff survey respondents.

Table 86

#### *Top Three Barriers to Accessing IDB Services: Youth in Transition*

<b>Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access IDB Services: Youth in Transition</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
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Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation	3	33.3%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office	3	33.3%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	3	33.3%
Slow service delivery	3	33.3%
Language barriers	2	22.2%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	2	22.2%
Other (please describe)	2	22.2%
Difficulties completing the application	1	11.1%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	1	11.1%
Inadequate assessment services	1	11.1%

The staff and partner surveys identified limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation and other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office in the top three reasons preventing youth from accessing IDB services.

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*KEY INFORMANT AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS*

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The following recurring themes emerged related to the needs of youth with blindness and low vision in transition:

1. The State of Iowa has established a robust continuum of care for children and youth with blindness and visual impairments that includes services provided by the Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (IESBVI), formerly known as the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School. The relationship and communication between IESBVI and IDB was repeatedly referred to as critical in the transition process for students and youth with blindness and low vision. Participants indicated that IESBVI and IDB at times have different approaches to teaching and training youth to utilize assistive technology and to live and function independently. These differing approaches can cause periodic tension between the two organizations. Frequent and regular communication between the staff of both organizations was cited as a need to ensure that a positive working relationship is cultivated. IESBVI and IDB have established quarterly coordination meetings in the different areas of the State to help improve communication.
2. It was clear from the participants in all of the groups in this study that the five required pre-employment transition services represent significant needs of students with blindness and low vision in Iowa. Work experience and soft skill development were noted as the most important services that prepare students for the world of work, but all of the five required services were repeatedly mentioned as important and meaningful.
3. The need for the acquisition and training in the use of assistive technology was a major need identified for students and youth with blindness and low vision in Iowa.
4. Many of the students and youth served by IDB are individuals with multiple disabilities in addition to blindness or low vision. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that staff and service providers are trained and capable of addressing the multiple needs presented by these youth as they prepare for postsecondary education and/or employment.
5. Several participants indicated that there is a need to develop high expectations for students and youth with blindness and low vision in Iowa. It was reported by several participants that there are low expectations about the future school and work possibilities for young people transitioning from secondary school, and that families, school staff and service providers need to encourage these young people to focus on achievement.
6. Related to the need to develop high expectations for youth is the impact of the receipt of SSI on the pursuit of work at the self-sufficiency level. Multiple participants across all groups indicated that youth that are receiving SSI are only interested in pursuing employment at a level that ensures they are able to keep their SSI benefits, especially their medical benefits.
7. Transportation to and from school, work experiences, and full-time work is a significant barrier to employment for youth with blindness and low vision. This is especially true in the rural areas. The availability of ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft have helped, but there is still a need to develop public transportation options in many parts of the State.

8. IDB provides pre-employment transition services directly and through contracted service providers. They rely heavily on summer youth programs for work-based learning experiences
9. Participants indicated that youth that are transitioning to postsecondary education need to receive further training in the use of assistive technology prior to beginning college or vocational training so that they do not fall behind at the beginning of their programs. While the provision of AT was not cited as a challenge, the training in the use of the technology was a recurring rehabilitation need.
10. Because of the number of youth that are being served by IDB with multiple and complex disabilities, there is a need to enhance the development of supported employment, including the development of customized employment as a service option for youth. IDB needs to develop their internal capacity and the capacity of their service provider network to deliver CE.
11. Several partner participants indicated that there is a growing substance abuse problem with Iowa's youth, which adversely affects the ability of young people to prepare for and enter employment. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, the number of deaths related to opioid overdose has more than tripled since 2005, and the number of individuals treated for opioid dependency has almost quadrupled in that same time frame. While these statistics do not refer solely to youth, the participants in this study indicated that it is common for them to work with youth that have a history of substance abuse.

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## *RECOMMENDATIONS*

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The following recommendations are provided to IDB related to the needs of youth with disabilities in transition:

1. IDB is encouraged to continue meeting with IESBVI staff on at least a quarterly basis throughout the State to ensure that services for students with blindness and low vision are coordinated and that a smooth transition occurs from school to adult life for IDB clients. The quality of the partnership between IDB and IESBVI is an essential determinant in the student and family's knowledge of IDB and the services available to help the young person successfully transition to postsecondary education or employment.
2. IDB is encouraged to contact the Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC) to see if they can assist IDB to develop a network of peer mentors for youth with blindness and low vision in Iowa. Y-TAC has developed a series of peer mentor training modules that can help prepare youth to mentor others to achieve their highest potential. Peer mentors are a proven effective strategy to help youth establish high expectations for their future, develop self-advocacy skills and to receive the encouragement and support they may not get from other sources.
3. Another potential source of peer mentors is the network of Centers for Independent Living in Iowa. IDB should consult with these Centers to determine if there is capacity to mentor youth in transition that are IDB clients.
4. IDB is encouraged to continue to work with the WINTAC to ensure that they are accurately tracking and reporting pre-employment transition services expenditures and that the costs they are charging to the 15% reserve are allowable.
5. IDB should examine strategies to increase parental involvement in the planning and delivery of transition services. IDB may wish to consult with the PROMISE programs in California and Wisconsin to identify successful family engagement strategies. Information about the California PROMISE program can be found here: <https://www.capromise.org/>. Information about the Wisconsin PROMISE program can be found here: <https://promisewi.com/>.
6. To increase success in work experiences for students, IDB should ensure that there is appropriate AT in place for the student prior to beginning the work experience.
7. IDB is encouraged to develop more pre-employment transition services providers that can provide work experiences for students.
8. IDB is encouraged to establish an active referral and cross-training relationship with substance abuse, mental health and Autism treatment programs for youth. It will be important for IDB staff to engage in consistent training in these areas to develop their capacity to effectively serve youth with multiple disabilities.
9. The rate of clients served by IDB that have either a primary or co-occurring disability of substance abuse necessitates that IDB staff and partners increase collaboration and partnerships with other State and community organizations that serve youth and adults in recovery. IDB is encouraged to share expertise and resources with recovery programs and

provide training to counselors and providers on ways to help clients address the multiple dimensions of recovery that include:

- a. Planning for physical and emotional health;
- b. Helping the individual identify resources to ensure that they have a safe and supportive living environment;
- c. Assist the individual to have hope, often as a result of a sense of purpose which can frequently be established through the pursuit of meaningful employment; and
- d. Provide the individual with resources that can help establish a support network and build a sense of community.

The dimensions of recovery noted above are also applicable to individuals with mental health impairments and are recognized as a standard of effective counseling and treatment by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) found here: <https://www.samhsa.gov/>.

**SECTION FIVE:  
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH BLINDNESS AND L; SERVED  
THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

The following information was gathered during this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with blindness and low vision served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System. Throughout this section, the term Iowa*WORKS* Center will be used to refer to services provided by IDB's partners in what used to be termed the One-Stop Career Center, and is now referred to nationally as American Job Centers (AJCs). The information and comments noted in this Section only refer to IDB's partners, not IDB unless explicitly stated.

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*Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods*

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The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with blindness and low vision served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

- There is a positive working relationship between IDB and the Iowa*WORKS* Centers across the State, but the relationship in many areas is still primarily one of referral.
- Assistive technology at the Centers was described as out-of-date, when it was available. The staff at the Iowa*WORKS* Centers were often described as inexperienced and lacking knowledge in how to work with individuals with blindness and low vision.
- There was excitement expressed by several participants about the development of a pilot program between IDB, the Iowa*WORKS* Centers, and the WINTAC aimed at increasing the use of apprenticeships as a career pathway for individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa.
- In addition to apprenticeships, the Iowa*WORKS* Centers and IDB are utilizing Integrated Resource Teams as a way to increase co-enrollment and coordinate and collaborate on service delivery.
- Tracking co-enrollment has been a challenge for Iowa*WORKS* and IDB historically. The Title I and Title III programs in Iowa have recently transitioned to the Geosolutions case management system, which should help with accurate tracking of co-enrollments from their end.
- The Title I Youth program in Iowa was characterized as “struggling” to serve youth with disabilities generally, and especially youth that are blind or low vision.
- Iowa State Government and the Iowa Workforce Development System have embarked on initiative called Future Ready Iowa ([www.futurereadyiowa.gov](http://www.futurereadyiowa.gov)), which aims to close the skills gap between Iowa job seekers and the skilled workforce needs of employers in Iowa.

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*Survey Result by Type*

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**INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS**

**IowaWORKS Centers:**

Individuals with blindness and low vision impairments in Iowa were asked a series of questions about their use and opinion of IowaWORKS Centers. Table 87 summarizes the responses to questions of use and accessibility.

Table 87

*IowaWORKS Centers Use and Accessibility*

Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Have you ever tried to use the services of the IowaWORKS Centers?	33	35.5%	60	64.5%	93
Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?	6	18.8%	26	81.3%	32
Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the Center (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?	11	35.5%	20	64.5%	31

Less than 36% of the respondents to the individual survey had used the services of an IowaWORKS Center. Of the respondents that utilized the WORKS Center services, physical accessibility of the building was difficult for roughly 19% of the respondents and access to programs was challenging for almost 36%. Table 88 details results from using the Job Center for seeking training and employment.

Table 88

*IowaWORKS Centers Training and Employment*

Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you go to the Center to get training?	15	45.5%	18	54.6%	33
Did you get the training that you were seeking?	11	73.3%	4	26.7%	15
Did the training result in employment?	6	40.0%	9	60.0%	15
Did you go to the Center to find a job?	24	72.7%	9	27.3%	33
Did they help you find employment?	7	29.2%	17	70.8%	24

Survey respondents indicated that the majority of respondents (almost 55%) did not seek training at the IowaWORKS Centers. Fifteen survey respondents went to the IowaWORKS Center to get training, and six individuals indicated they received the training they were seeking and found work as a result of the training. Twenty-four (72.7%) out of 33 individuals went to the IowaWORKS Center with the purpose of seeking assistance to find a job. Twenty-four respondents answered the question regarding receiving help that resulted in employment with almost 71% indicating that they did not receive assistance in finding a job.

Table 89 and Table 90 identify the ratings for the helpfulness of the staff at the Centers and the value of the services provided by IowaWORKS Centers by individuals with blindness or low vision that responded to the survey.

Table 89

*Helpfulness of the IowaWORKS Centers Staff*

Helpfulness Rating	Count	Percent of Total
Very helpful	16	50.0%
Somewhat helpful	10	31.3%
Not helpful	6	18.8%
<b>Total</b>	32	100%

Table 90

*Value of the IowaWORKS Centers' Services*

Value of Services Rating	Count	Percent of Total
Very valuable	14	42.4%
Somewhat valuable	12	36.4%
Not valuable	7	21.2%
<b>Total</b>	33	100%

The concepts of helpfulness and value are closely related in this study with respect to IowaWORKS Center services. Thirty-two respondents answered the question regarding helpfulness and thirty-three respondents answered the question regarding value. The majority of the respondents (50%) felt the staff was very helpful and 42.4% found the services very valuable. Roughly 19% of the respondents felt the staff were not helpful and slightly more than 21% found the services not valuable. Slightly more than 31% of respondents felt that the IowaWORKS Center staff somewhat helpful. More than 36% of the respondents felt the services at the IowaWORKS Center were somewhat valuable.



### STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

The project team asked the staff a series of questions regarding their use and opinion of the IowaWORKS Center. Tables 91-94 below summarize the responses from the staff survey.

Table 91

#### *Referral to IowaWORKS Center*

Referral to the IowaWORKS Center	Number	Percent of total
No	23	71.9%
Yes	9	28.1%
<b>Total</b>	32	100%

Table 92

#### *Training and Employment*

Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Has the IowaWORKS Center helped any of your clients to get training for a job?	6	66.7%	3	33.3%	9
Has the IowaWORKS Center helped any of your clients to get a job?	2	22.2%	7	77.8%	9

Table 93

#### *Effectiveness of IowaWORKS Centers in Serving Individuals with Blindness or Visual Impairments*

How effectively do the IowaWORKS Centers serve individuals with blindness and low vision?	Number	Percent of total
Not effectively	5	55.6%
Somewhat effectively	3	33.3%
Unsure	1	11.1%
Very effectively	0	0.0%
They do not serve individuals with blindness or other visual impairments	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	9	100%

Table 94

*Improving Service of the IowaWORKS Centers for Individuals with Blindness and Visual Impairments*

<b>How can the IowaWORKS Centers improve their ability to serve individuals with blindness and vision impairments?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Train their staff on how to work with people with blindness or other visual impairments	9	100.0%
Improve programmatic accessibility	7	77.8%
Include individuals with blindness or other visual impairments when they fund for training for clients	6	66.7%
Partner more effectively with IDB	5	55.6%
Improve physical accessibility	4	44.4%
Other (please specify)	1	11.1%

Of the 32 responses to the question regarding referring clients to the IowaWORKS Centers, almost 72 percent of IDB staff respondents indicated that they did not refer clients to the IowaWORKS Centers, while slightly more than one-fourth of the respondents did refer clients to the IowaWORKS Centers.

Staff survey respondents who referred clients to the IowaWORKS Centers were asked a question regarding training and employment services at the Center. Nine staff survey respondents answered the questions. Two-thirds of the respondents indicated that their clients received training to obtain a job and slightly more than 22% of the respondents indicated that their clients obtained a job with the help of the IowaWORKS Center services.

Staff survey respondents who referred clients to the IowaWORKS Centers were asked to rate how effectively the Centers serve individuals with blindness or visual impairments. The majority of the respondents (52.9 percent) indicated the Centers were not effectively serving individuals with blindness or other visual impairments and three respondents indicated that the Centers were “somewhat effectively” serving individuals with blindness or other visual impairments.

Staff survey respondents were asked what the IowaWORKS Centers could do to improve service to clients. Table 95 lists suggestions for improvement and the number of times each item was selected. There was no limit to the number of suggestions that could be chosen.

Table 95

*Improving Service of the IowaWORKS Centers for Individuals with Blindness and Visual Impairments*

<b>How can the IowaWORKS Centers improve their ability to serve individuals with blindness and vision impairments?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of times chosen</b>
Train their staff on how to work with people with blindness or other visual impairments	9	100.0%
Improve programmatic accessibility	7	77.8%
Include individuals with blindness or other visual impairments when they fund for training for clients	6	66.7%
Partner more effectively with IDB	5	55.6%
Improve physical accessibility	4	44.4%
Other (please specify)	1	11.1%

A total of nine respondents answered the question presented in Table 95. All respondents agreed that the IowaWORKS Centers could improve services to individuals with blindness and low vision by training their staff on how to work with this population. Over 50% of the respondents cited partnering more effectively with IDB as a way to improve services at the Center.

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### *KEY INFORMANT AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS*

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The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

1. Participants indicated that the IowaWORKS Centers are trying to serve individuals with blindness and low vision effectively. The general impression of participants was that the Centers are getting better at serving individuals with disabilities, including individuals with blindness and low vision, but the relationship between IDB and the IowaWORKS Centers is still primarily one of referral in many areas. While the IowaWORKS Centers have focused on effectively serving individuals with disabilities, they have a “ways to go” when it comes to serving individuals with blindness and low vision.
2. The core partners in Iowa have been working with the WINTAC to complete the integration Self-Assessment Continuum in an effort to strategically align services.
3. Assistive technology at the Centers was described as out-of-date, when it was available. The staff at the IowaWORKS Centers were often described as inexperienced and lacking knowledge in how to work with individuals with blindness and low vision.
4. There was excitement expressed by several participants about the development of a pilot program between IDB, the IowaWORKS Centers, and the WINTAC aimed at increasing

the use of apprenticeships as a career pathway for individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa.

5. In addition to apprenticeships, the Iowa*WORKS* Centers and IDB are utilizing Integrated Resource Teams as a way to increase co-enrollment and coordinate and collaborate on service delivery.
6. Tracking co-enrollment has been a challenge for Iowa*WORKS* and IDB historically. The Title I and Title III programs in Iowa have recently transitioned to the Geosolutions case management system, which should help with accurate tracking of co-enrollments from their end. IDB was not able to track co-enrolled clients for this study, so it will be important for the organization to develop this capacity in the future.
7. The Iowa*WORKS* programs are active Employment Net*WORKS* and they are familiar with the Partnership Plus service model for SSA beneficiaries participating in the Ticket to Work program. There is a detailed and clear process for Partnership Plus and the hand-off from the VR program to the Iowa*WORKS* program was described as clean and common. IDB has used the Partnership Plus model for SSA beneficiaries as well, but their use was described as infrequent.
8. The Title I Youth program in Iowa was characterized as “struggling” to serve youth with disabilities generally, and especially youth that are blind or low vision. The Title I Youth program subcontracts out direct service delivery to youth, and this was described as contributing to the difficulty in serving individuals with disabilities.
9. Iowa State Government and the Iowa Workforce Development System have embarked on initiative called Future Ready Iowa ([www.futurereadyiowa.gov](http://www.futurereadyiowa.gov)), which aims to close the skills gap between Iowa job seekers and the skilled workforce needs of employers in Iowa. This initiative represents an opportunity for IDB to leverage resources to train their clients to prepare for in-demand jobs in Iowa.

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### *RECOMMENDATIONS:*

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The following recommendations are offered to IDB based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities served through other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System area:

1. IDB should work with local staff throughout the State to identify those Iowa*WORKS* Centers that do not have working assistive technology and then ensure they work with the Centers so these sites can be made accessible to individuals with blindness and low vision.
2. IDB is encouraged to identify examples of shared funding and shared resources with co-enrolled clients with blindness and low vision and share these examples across the State with IDB staff and Iowa*WORKS* staff. Understanding the specifics of what is possible with shared cases can help to encourage replication in areas where shared funding of cases does not exist. If these examples are not readily available, then IDB should work closely with an Iowa*WORKS* Center to pilot shared funding that results in training and employment for a co-enrolled client.
3. IDB is encouraged to continue working with the Iowa*WORKS* Centers to implement Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) for shared clients. IRTs are a proven successful method of delivering services in an American Job Center for job seekers with multiple barriers to employment and needs that are most effectively met by a variety of agencies. IRTs involve diversified service systems coordinating services and leveraging funding to meet the needs of an individual job seeker with a disability. The number of clients with multiple disabilities (including mental health impairments) that are accessing the Iowa*WORKS* Center services indicates that the use of IRTs may be an effective strategy to meet the needs of these individuals. A team consisting of Iowa*WORKS* staff, an IDB counselor, and a Mental Health practitioner is one possible IRT for an individual with blindness that has a mental health impairment. All of these individuals would work in concert and share resources to meet the needs of the individual. More on IRTs can be found here: [http://wintac-s3.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/topic-areas/ta\\_IntegrationVR/Braiding\\_and\\_Leveraging\\_Virginia\\_Jan\\_2016.pdf](http://wintac-s3.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/topic-areas/ta_IntegrationVR/Braiding_and_Leveraging_Virginia_Jan_2016.pdf).
4. IDB and Iowa*WORKS* Center staff need to ensure that there is a reliable and accurate method in place to track co-enrolled clients. This is important for reporting purposes, but also informs both programs about where they need to increase partnership across the State.
5. IDB and the core partners in Iowa are encouraged to continue to regularly assess their alignment and integration levels using the Integration Self-Assessment tool developed by the WINTAC. As the partners identify their current and desired levels of alignment and integration, they should ensure that there are regular reviews of progress and joint planning on how to achieve the targeted integration levels.

## **SECTION SIX: NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN IOWA**

Section Six identifies the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in IOWA that serve individuals with blindness and low vision. IDB provides many services to their clients with their internal staff, but they do purchase services from qualified vendors.

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### *Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods*

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The following themes emerged in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa.

- There is a need to develop the capacity of CRPs to work with individuals with blindness and low vision in all service areas. There are very few CRPs that are knowledgeable about the employment needs of individuals with blindness and low vision, and when IDB does help train CRPs in this area, there is often a turnover at the CRP that negates the progress made.
- There is a need to develop supported employment vendors for all areas of the State outside of the Des Moines area according to the participants in this study. The need for supported employment is especially important given the fact that many of the individuals served by IDB have multiple disabilities in addition to blindness and low vision.
- There is a need to develop CRPs that have the capacity to provide customized employment to individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa.
- There is a need to develop CRPS that can provide vocational evaluation and assessment services for IDB clients. It is very difficult to find vendors that are capable or willing to administer a battery of standardized tests to individuals with blindness and low vision. This adversely affects the ability of IDB staff to adequately assess the functioning level of some clients.

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### *Survey Results by Type*

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#### **PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS**

##### **Partner Survey: Services Readily Available to IDB Clients**

Respondents were provided with a list and asked to identify the services listed that were readily available to IDB clients. Table 96 summarizes the results.

Table 96  
*Services Readily Available*

<b>Services Available in Geographic Work Area</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Job search services	39	78.0%
Job training services	37	74.0%
Assistive technology	28	56.0%
Other education services	25	50.0%
Benefit planning assistance	22	44.0%
Other transportation assistance	21	42.0%
Medical treatment	18	36.0%
Low vision services	17	34.0%
Mental health treatment	17	34.0%
Income assistance	16	32.0%
Substance abuse treatment	16	32.0%
Health insurance	16	32.0%
Housing	12	24.0%
Personal care attendants	11	22.0%
Other (please describe)	10	20.0%
Vehicle modification assistance	9	18.0%

Job search services were identified as the most readily available service for IDB clients, with 78% of partner survey respondents indicating that it was readily available. Job training services and assistive technology services were identified as the next two most readily available services.

More than 40 percent of the partner respondents indicated that other education services, benefit planning assistance, and other transportation assistance were readily available to IDB clients. Vehicle modification assistance was cited the fewest number of times as being readily available. Items cited in the category of "other" include advocacy, information and resource facilitation, braille literacy, day rehabilitation services, and job coaching.

### Partner Survey: Service Providers Meeting Client Needs

Partner survey respondents were asked to identify if service providers in the state of Iowa were able to meet IDB clients' rehabilitation service needs. Table 97 summarizes the results to this question.

Table 97

#### *Frequency of Meeting Needs*

<b>Ability of Service Providers to Meet IDB Clients' Vocational Needs</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Yes	27	57.5%
No	20	42.5%
<b>Total</b>	47	100%

Over 57% of the partner survey respondents indicated that service providers are able to meet the needs of IDB clients.

### Partner Survey: Service Needs that Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Partner respondents were provided a list of 17 items and asked to identify the service needs that the network of rehabilitation service providers in the State of Iowa are unable to meet. Table 98 lists the services and the number of times each item was selected. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen.



Table 98

*Service Needs that Providers are Unable to Meet*

<b>What Service Needs are Providers Unable to Meet</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Job training services	11	68.8%
Job search services	8	50.0%
Low vision services	7	43.8%
Other (please describe)	7	43.8%
Assistive technology	6	37.5%
Transportation	6	37.5%
Personal care attendants	5	31.3%
Benefits planning	5	31.3%
Mental health treatment	4	25.0%
Vehicle modification	3	18.8%
Income assistance	3	18.8%
Medical treatment	3	18.8%
Housing	3	18.8%
Adjustment to blindness	2	12.5%
Substance abuse treatment	2	12.5%
Health insurance	2	12.5%
Other education services	1	6.3%

Sixteen respondents answered the question. Over 65% of the survey respondents indicated that service providers are unable to meet the job training needs of clients. Over 40% of the respondents indicated that job search services and the low vision service needs of clients are not being met by service providers. Respondents that selected the item “other” from the list were given the opportunity to provide a narrative response. However, no narrative responses were received.

Respondents were provided with a list of reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons why vocational rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet clients’ service needs. Table 99 summarizes the responses to this question.

Table 99

*Reasons Providers are Unable to Meet Client Needs*

<b>Primary Reasons Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Service Needs</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Not enough providers available in area	10	58.8%
Other (please describe)	9	52.9%
Services take too long to provide	8	47.1%
Low quality of provider services	7	41.2%
The rates of payment for services are too low	4	23.5%
Client barriers prevent successful interactions with providers	1	5.9%

Over half of the respondents indicated that “not enough providers available in the area” was one of the primary reasons why service providers are unable to meet the needs of clients. The next most common response was the “other” category in which nine respondents provided narrative comments. The comments included phrases such as: “clients do not want to go through the onboarding process that is required through IDB;” “inconsistent quality of service providers;” “poor communication on behalf of the counselor... takes FOREVER to receive payments on claims;” “lack of informed choice in all service areas;” and “there is a lack of engagement with families and a lack of follow through with services.”

**Partner Survey: Changes to Help Better Serve IDB Clients**

Partner survey respondents were presented with a narrative question asking them to identify changes IDB could make that would help them more effectively support clients to achieve their employment goals. The comments fell into two main categories: Changes that IDB staff could make and Service Changes that IDB could make.

**Staff Changes – Themes included:**

- Increasing availability of IDB Counselors
- Adding additional IDB Counselors
- Improving communication with CRPs, including improved responsiveness to phone messages and emails
- Process payments faster

**Service Changes – Themes included:**

- Clients need access to more AT and accommodations
- Increase creativity in jobs that clients obtain
- Increase delivery of pre-employment transition services to students
- Increase community awareness of services

Community partners were asked an open-ended question about what was the most important change the network of rehabilitation service providers could make in Iowa to support client's achievement of their employment goals. Three of the responses cited increasing the speed of service delivery and three comments addressed increasing education to employers on what clients are able to do. Other comments cited improving job development activities and job skills training for clients, improving collaboration with partners, schools, youth, and Iowa VR to benefit the client and adding more staff.

### STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

#### Staff Survey: Services Immediately Available to Individuals to IDB Clients

Staff survey respondents were provided with a list and asked to identify which of the services listed were immediately available to individuals who were served by IDB. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen. Table 100 summarizes the responses from the staff survey.

Table 100

#### *Services Immediately Available*

<b>Services Readily Available to IDB Clients</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Job search services	31	88.6%
Other education services	28	80.0%
Assistive technology	28	80.0%
Job training services	27	77.1%
Other transportation assistance	20	57.1%
Benefit planning assistance	19	54.3%
Income assistance	16	45.7%
Medical treatment	16	45.7%
Substance abuse treatment	16	45.7%
Housing	16	45.7%
Mental health treatment	15	42.9%
Health insurance	15	42.9%
Personal care attendants	14	40.0%
Vehicle modification assistance	9	25.7%
Other (please describe)	3	8.6%

Staff and community partners agree that job search services are immediately available as indicated by results ranking the item in the top position in both surveys. The remaining items on both lists were similar in ranking order. The services most often identified by staff as immediately available to clients were other education services, assistive technology, job training services, other transportation assistance, and benefit planning assistance as the items were identified over 50% of the time by staff respondents. Vehicle modification assistance and the category of “other” comprise the least identified immediately available services by staff and partner respondents. Of the three narrative responses received, only one respondent identified services and wrote:

*“Coordination of or finding comparable benefits to cover medical treatment such as mental health, personal care attendant, substance abuse treatment, medical treatment and health insurance, and housing.”*

### **Staff Survey: Service Providers Meeting Client Needs**

Staff survey respondents were asked whether or not vendors in the state of Iowa were able to meet IDB clients’ rehabilitation service needs. Table 101 summarizes the results to this question.

Table 101

#### *Frequency of Meeting Needs*

<b>Ability of Vendors to Meet Client Needs</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of total</b>
No	19	57.6%
Yes	14	42.4%
<b>Total</b>	33	100%

The data indicates that staff and partner survey respondents disagree in response to this question as a “flip flop” of percentage rates are noted. The majority of partner respondents (57.5%) selected “yes” in response to this question, while 57.6% of staff selected “no”.

### **Staff Survey: Service Needs that Service Providers are Unable to Meet**

Staff survey respondents were provided a list of 16 items and asked to identify the service needs that the vendors are unable to meet. Table 102 lists the services and the number of times each item was selected. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen.

Table 102  
*Client Service Needs Vendors are Unable to Meet*

<b>Client Service Needs Vendors are Unable to Meet</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Adjustment to blindness training	16	84.2%
Assistive technology	14	73.7%
Low vision services	14	73.7%
Job training services	10	52.6%
Other education services	8	42.1%
Other, please describe	6	31.6%
Other transportation assistance	4	21.1%
Medical treatment	4	21.1%
Mental health treatment	4	21.1%
Job search services	3	15.8%
Income assistance	3	15.8%
Health insurance	3	15.8%
Substance abuse treatment	2	10.5%
Personal care attendants	2	10.5%
Housing	2	10.5%
Benefits planning assistance	2	10.5%

Adjustment to blindness training was the most common need that staff identified that service providers were unable to meet. This is consistent with the fact this service is provided almost exclusively to IDB clients by the Orientation Center or by Rehabilitation Teachers. Assistive technology and low vision services were noted as the next two service needs that providers were unable to meet.

Staff respondents were provided with a list of reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons why vocational rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet clients' service needs. Table 103 summarizes the responses to this question.

Table 103  
*Primary Reasons Vendors are Unable to Meet Client Needs*

<b>Primary Reasons Why Vendors are Unable to Meet Service Needs</b>	<b>Number of times chosen</b>	<b>Percent of time chosen</b>
Low quality of CRP, other service provider or vendor services	13	68.4%
Services take too long	8	42.1%
Low levels of accountability for poor performance by CRPs, other service providers or vendors	8	42.1%
Not enough CRPs, other service providers or vendors available in area	7	36.8%
Other (please describe)	5	26.3%
Low rates paid for services	4	21.1%
Client barriers prevent successful interactions with CRPs, other service providers or vendors	4	21.1%
IDB does not purchase the full range of services from CRPs, other service providers or vendors	3	15.8%

Staff survey respondents differ from partners in the primary reasons why vendors are unable to meet the IDB clients' vocational rehabilitation service needs. Staff indicated that the low quality of CRPs, other service provider or vendor services, services taking too long and low levels of accountability for poor performance are the top three primary reasons vendors are unable to meet the service needs of clients. The respondents who cited "other" were given the opportunity to provide a narrative response. Two out of the five narrative responses received contained detailed comments:

*"Adjustment to blindness training takes knowledge of skills such as Braille that are not known by the average CRP."*

*"CRPs need more solid relationships with employers. CRPs need to spend more time developing jobs, carving jobs and finding jobs in the "hidden job market". Less time doing on line job searching with the client, as these jobs are being pursued by all job seekers. Need to think outside of the box, hit the pavement and talk, face to face, with employers."*

#### **Staff Survey: Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Help IDB Clients**

Staff survey respondents were asked an open-ended question about what was the most important change that service providers could make to support client's achievement of their employment goals. Recurring themes included:

- Reduce turnover at CRPs by picking better talent and providing incentives

- Improve communication with IDB
- Provide training for staff
- Increase the speed of service delivery
- Get better paying jobs for clients that are consistent with their skills

### **Most Important Change Vendors Could Make to Help IDB Clients:**

Staff respondents were asked an open-ended question about what was the most important change that CRPs, other service providers or vendors could make in Iowa to support the clients achievement of their employment goals. A total of fifteen narrative responses were received.

Two of the responses did not have any suggestions for change. Six comments included participating in trainings to increase understanding of blindness and assistive technology. Three comments cited increasing expectations across the board and specifically for clients to reach for higher goals rather than just current setting goals, and two comments suggested being aware and believing in the abilities of clients.

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### *KEY INFORMANT AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS*

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The following themes were recurring from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve CRPs serving individuals with disabilities in IDB:

1. The participants in this study identified the need to develop the capacity of CRPs to work with individuals with blindness and low vision in all service areas. Participants indicated that there are very few CRPs that are knowledgeable about the employment needs of individuals with blindness and low vision, and when IDB does help train CRPs in this area, there is turnover at the CRP that negates the progress made.
2. There is a need to develop supported employment vendors for all areas of the State outside of the Des Moines area according to the participants in this study. The need for SE is especially important given the fact that many of the individuals served by IDB have multiple disabilities in addition to blindness and low vision.
3. There is a need to develop CRPs that have the capacity to provide customized employment to individuals with blindness and low vision in Iowa.
4. There were several IDB staff members that identified a need for vocational evaluation and assessment services for IDB clients. Participants indicated that it is very difficult to find vendors that are capable or willing to administer a battery of standardized tests to individuals with blindness and low vision. This adversely affects the ability of IDB staff to adequately assess the functioning level of some clients.

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## *RECOMMENDATIONS*

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The following recommendations are offered to IDB based on the results of the research in the Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in IDB:

1. IDB is encouraged to develop employment services providers (either CRPs or individual service providers) for their clients throughout the State. One possibility might be to approach the CRPs certified by the General Agency to see if they would be willing to expand their services to individuals with blindness and low vision. This includes supported and customized employment services.
2. IDB should provide frequent and regular training to CRPs throughout the State on how to effectively work with individuals with blindness and low vision to ensure there are always available and knowledgeable employment service providers to meet the needs of their clients. It will be essential to provide the training to CRPs on a regular basis to account for staff turnover at these organizations.
3. IDB should collaborate with CRPs in the State to identify strategies for expanding services into the rural areas of the State. It will be important for IDB to proactively address the financial implications for the CRPs to expand in the rural areas, and strategize ways to ensure such an expansion is possible and sustainable. This process is likely to involve multiple partners planning and working together to achieve a shared vision.



## **SECTION SEVEN: NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS**

The need for the VR program to engage with the business community and effectively provide services to employers is one of the common performance measures for the core partners in WIOA. WIOA has moved the discussion from whether or not VR programs should serve the business community to how well are VR programs serving this community. Consequently, it is important for every VR program to do a self-assessment of how well they are serving employers. The project team is hopeful that this section of the report will be useful to IDB as they seek to identify employer needs and develop strategies to increase business engagement.

A total of 11 businesses participated in some way in the CSNA, with eight completing a survey and three being interviewed. The reader is cautioned to interpret any findings with the low participation rates in mind.

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### *Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods*

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The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of business and effectiveness in serving employers:

- IDB's business services were frequently described as a strength of the organization by the partners interviewed for this study.
- Business representatives indicated a desire to be educated about the employment and accommodation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision. They would like to have disability sensitivity training and to establish a long-term relationship with IDB that can be mutually beneficial.
- There is room for the Employment Specialists to expand their partnership with their counterparts in the Iowa *WORKS* Centers.
- The low unemployment rate in Iowa has resulted in many employers opening their minds to hiring individuals with blindness and low vision because of their need for qualified workers. This represents an opportunity for IDB to make inroads with employers that have historically been fearful of hiring individuals with blindness and low vision.

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## *Survey Results*

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### BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONSES

With respect to the “Disability in the Workplace” section of the survey, business survey respondents were presented with nine questions regarding whether or not their business needed help with a variety of concerns related to disability and employment. The questions were structured in a yes/no response format. Table 104 summarizes the results to the nine questions according to the percentage of respondents who indicated a need for help with respect to the need or needs indicated in the question.

Table 104  
*Disability in the Workplace: Employer Needs*

Does your business need help...	Number of Times Yes was Chosen	Percent of Time Yes was Chosen	Number of Times No was Chosen	Percent of Time No was Chosen	Total
Recruiting job applicants who are people with blindness or low vision?	7	87.50%	1	12.50%	8
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with blindness or low vision?	6	75.00%	2	25.00%	8
Obtaining diversity training for leadership and/or employees related to hiring employees with blindness or low vision	5	62.50%	3	37.50%	8
Identifying job accommodations for workers with blindness or low vision?	4	50.00%	4	50.00%	8
Helping workers with blindness or low vision to retain employment?	4	50.00%	4	50.00%	8
Obtaining training on the different types of visual impairments?	4	50.00%	4	50.00%	8
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with blindness or low vision?	3	37.50%	5	62.50%	8
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with blindness or low vision?	2	25.00%	6	75.00%	8
Understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act?	1	12.50%	7	87.50%	8

Three survey items were selected by over 60% of the respondents. The survey item with the highest percentage of respondents indicating that their business would benefit from assistance with that item was recruiting job applicants who are people with blindness or other visual impairments. Three items (identifying job accommodations for workers with blindness or other

visual impairments; helping workers with visual impairments and blindness to retain employment; obtaining training on the different types of visual impairments) were selected by 50% of respondents as items their businesses could use assistance with.

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question if they would like to further comment on their answers in the previous question or if they had additional comments or needs regarding disability in the workplace. One response was received:

*“I have used the IDB before, and they've been responsive. I know how to reach out for help, but a more proactive relationship could be helpful.”*

### **Business Survey: Applicants with Disabilities**

Business survey respondents were asked six questions regarding the need for recruitment assistance for applicants with disabilities. Respondents were asked to provide responses to the questions in a yes/no response format. Table 105 summarizes the results of the responses to the six questions according to the percentage of respondents who indicated a need for help with respect to the item indicated in each question.

Table 105

*Recruitment: Applicants with Disabilities: Does Your Business Need Help with...*

<b>Does your business need help...</b>	<b>Number of Times Yes was Chosen</b>	<b>Percent of Time Yes was Chosen</b>	<b>Number of Times No was Chosen</b>	<b>Percent of Time No was Chosen</b>	<b>Total</b>
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	4	80.0%	1	20.0%	5
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	4	80.0%	1	20.0%	5
Assessing Applicants' skills?	4	80.0%	1	20.0%	5
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	4	80.0%	1	20.0%	5
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	5
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	5

All areas of the applicant recruitment process were identified as areas of need by business respondents, with each item being cited by 60% or more of the respondents. The results indicate that businesses desire more assistance from the IDB when recruiting individuals with blindness and visual impairments.

### Business Survey: Employees with Disabilities – Challenges to Job Retention

Business survey respondents were presented with a list of 13 job-related challenges and asked to identify a maximum of three challenges they have now or have experienced in the past with respect to individuals with disabilities and job retention. Table 106 presents the percentage of business survey respondents who identified each item as a challenge to job retention.

Table 106

*Challenges Related to Job Retention: Employees with Disabilities*

Challenges to Job Retention	Number of Times Chosen	Percent of Time Chosen
We have not experienced any challenges	3	60.0%
Identifying effective accommodations	2	40.0%
Poor attendance	1	20.0%
Poor work stamina	1	20.0%
Physical health problems	1	20.0%

A total of five respondents answered the question. Almost two-thirds of the business survey respondents selected “we have not experienced any challenges.” Identifying effective accommodations was cited by two respondents.

### Business Survey: Services Provided by IDB

Businesses survey respondents were asked questions regarding their knowledge of IDB and their utilization of services provided by the agency. Tables 107-109 include the results of those questions.

Table 107

*Utilization of IDB Services by Employers*

Have you used IDB Services?	Number	Percent of All Responses
Yes	3	60.0%
No	2	40.0%
<b>Total</b>	5	100%

Table 108  
*Services Provided to Employers by IDB*

<b>Services Provided to Employers by IDB</b>	<b>Number of Times Chosen</b>	<b>Percent of Time Chosen</b>
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants	3	100.0%
Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with blindness or other visual impairments	2	66.7%
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants	2	66.7%
Helping workers with blindness or other visual impairments to retain employment	1	33.3%
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with blindness or other visual impairments	1	33.3%
Assessing Applicants' skills	1	33.3%
Other (please describe)	1	33.3%

Table 109  
*Employer Satisfaction with IDB Services*

<b>Satisfaction Rating</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Satisfied	2	66.7%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	33.3%
Very satisfied	0	0.0%
Dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Very dissatisfied	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	3	100%

Three business survey respondents indicated they had used the services of the IDB and the service they used the most frequently was identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants. One-half of the respondents indicated that they used the IDB for assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with blindness or other visual impairments and discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants.

Business survey respondents who utilized IDB services were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from “very satisfied” to “very dissatisfied”) and asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the services they received from IDB. There were three respondents that provided an answer to the question. Two of the respondents indicated that they

were satisfied with the services they received from IDB, and one was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with IDB services.

Although the respondent numbers are small, they do indicate that businesses found value in the assistance that IDB can provide them with identifying reasonable job accommodations for individuals with blindness and low vision.

### **Business Survey: Applicant or Employee Needs Not Met**

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking if their business has any needs related to applicants or workers with disabilities that are not currently being met and to describe them in a narrative format. One response to the question was received and is quoted:

*“We have low vision and hard-of-hearing employees and would like to know if there are options we're not aware of. Any information to ensure no barriers exist for future applicants. I would LOVE a referral!!”*

### **Business Survey: Business Demographics**

Business survey respondents described their respective businesses types and the number of employees the business currently employs. Tables 110 and 111 indicate the various business types and size of the organization based on the number of employees.

Table 110  
*Type of Business*

<b>Business Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Responses</b>
Other (please describe)	2	40.0%
Service	1	20.0%
Education	1	20.0%
Banking/Finance	1	20.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 111  
*Size of Organization by Employee*

<b>Number of Employees</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Responses</b>
51 - 250	4	80.0%
251 - 999	1	20.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

The most commonly reported business type was service followed by “other.” Two responses were received and indicated a software development company and a food service organization. In response to the question regarding organization size by number of employees, one size was most commonly reported: 51- 250 (n=4).

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### *KEY INFORMANT AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS*

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The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers:

1. IDB has redirected two positions to be Employment Specialists, and this has helped the agency develop services to employers. IDB’s business services were frequently described as a strength of the organization by the partners interviewed for this study.
2. Participants indicated that there is room for the Employment Specialists to expand their partnership with their counterparts in the Iowa *WORKS* Centers. IDB and the General Agency in Iowa were described as striving to develop and improve collaborative business engagement in Iowa, and there are now integrated business services teams in the Workforce Development System which should contribute to this effort.
3. Business representatives that participated in the assessment indicated a desire to be educated about the employment and accommodation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision. They would like to have disability sensitivity training and to establish a long-term relationship with IDB that can be mutually beneficial.
4. Business representatives that participated in the assessment expressed excitement related to learning about the different types of available assistive technology and how this technology can be used in the work place. The business representatives expressed a desire to hear about success stories of individuals with blindness that were successful in work environments so that they can conceptualize how this *WORKS*. This presents a potential area of service to employers by IDB.
5. There were several community partner participants that indicated that the low unemployment rate in Iowa has resulted in many employers opening their minds to hiring individuals with blindness and low vision because of their need for qualified workers. This represents an opportunity for IDB to make inroads with employers that have historically been fearful of hiring individuals with blindness and low vision.

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## *RECOMMENDATIONS*

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The following recommendations are based on the information gathered in the Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers section:

1. IDB is encouraged to provide training to employers to help educate them about the abilities of individuals with blindness and low vision. This training should include information about how individuals with blindness and low vision can perform the essential functions of jobs with available technology and reasonable accommodations. Exposure to the different types of assistive technology available and how this technology *WORKS* should be an important element in any employer engagement or education. In addition, IDB should gather real-life examples of how individuals with blindness and low vision have been successful in the workplace. Providing frequent educational opportunities for employers serves the dual purpose of increasing employment opportunities for individuals with blindness and low vision while increasing employer awareness about IDB and the services they offer.
2. The Employment Specialists at IDB are encouraged to continue to strengthen their collaboration and partnership with the Iowa *WORKS* Centers and their counterparts throughout the Workforce Development System in Iowa. This partnership increases exposure of the organization to a broad range of employers in the State and contributes to accurate reporting of their effectiveness in serving employers.
3. IDB should consider establishing partnerships with Career-Technical Programs at community colleges in the State and with employers to develop customized training programs for individuals with disabilities. These programs ensure employment in high-demand occupations for IDB clients that successfully complete the training and are often developed in partnership with the Title I programs in a State. More information can be found here: <http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/apprenticeships-and-customized-training>.



## **CONCLUSION**

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment for the Iowa Department for the Blind utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and low vision in the State. The combination of surveys and interviews resulted in 338 people participating in the assessment. The project team at San Diego State University's Interwork Institute is confident that data saturation occurred across the multiple areas of investigation in the CSNA and is hopeful that the findings and recommendations will be useful in informing the VR portion of the Unified or Combined State plan and future planning and resource allocation for the agency.

## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A: Individual and Focus Group Protocols**

### **Key Informant Individual Interview Protocol**

1. Please identify your name, title, time with IDB or time in your current role.
2. Briefly describe your duties and service areas?

#### **Overall IDB Performance**

3. Regarding IDB's overall performance as an agency, how effectively is the organization fulfilling its mission of helping people with blindness or other visual impairments obtain employment?
  - A. How would you describe the changes, if any, that have occurred in IDB in the last three years?
  - B. What are the major challenges that IDB client's face in obtaining and retaining employment?
  - C. What are the major challenges that you face that impact your ability to help clients obtain and retain employment?

#### **MSD and SE**

4. What are the needs of people with blindness and visual impairments in Iowa and how effectively is IDB meeting those needs?
5. Do you provide SE services? If so, please describe the model of SE services you use.
  - A. How long does job coaching typically last?
  - B. Who provides extended services
  - C. How many providers do you have and how effective are they?
  - D. What populations generally receive SE services?
6. Do you provide customized employment services to individuals with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa? Please describe this service.
7. What would you recommend to improve your SE or CE program?

#### **Unserved/Underserved Populations**

8. What geographic areas are underserved and why?
9. What racial/ethnic minority groups are underserved and why?
10. What are the rehabilitation needs of the minority populations that you serve?
11. What disability types are underserved and why?
12. How effective is IDB's outreach to these groups/areas and what can be done to improve outreach to them?
13. What do you recommend to improve service to these areas or populations?
14. Are there any other groups that are underserved, and if so, why do you think that is and what can be done to improve services to this group?

#### **Transition**

15. Please describe how transition services works for people with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa. Comment on:
  - A. Partnerships with schools
  - B. Outreach and intake/referral/plan processes
  - C. Services provided

16. What are the greatest needs of transition-aged youth and how well are IDB and the schools meeting these needs?
17. Are you involved in pre-employment transition services? If yes, please describe how this works in Iowa.
18. Do you serve foster care youth or youth involved with the juvenile justice system?
19. What can be done to improve youth and/or transition services in Iowa?

#### **CRPs**

20. How effective are the CRPs in Iowa in serving people with blindness or other visual impairments?
21. What are the greatest challenges you face as a CRP, or in working with CRPs?
22. What needs to happen to improve or increase CRPs in Iowa?
23. Is there a need to develop CRPs to serve any specific population or geographic areas?
24. What services do CRPs in the Iowa need to provide? Where are the current gaps in service?

#### **Workforce Development System**

25. How well is the Workforce Development System in Iowa meeting the needs of people with blindness or other visual impairments? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the system?
26. What is the relationship like between IDB and the IowaWORKS Centers ?
27. Are there shared-funding of cases between IDB and the IowaWORKS Centers ?
28. What has to happen to improve the relationship between the two organizations? Has there been a noticeable improvement in the relationship over the last three years?
29. Do you work closely with Adult Education and Family Literacy? Please describe.
30. Are there other workforce agencies that serve people with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa? If so, please identify them and the service they provide to your clients as well as IDB's relationship with them.

#### **The Orientation Center**

31. Have your clients received services from the Orientation Center?
32. How would you rate the effectiveness of the IL and vocational services provided by The Center?
33. What would you recommend the Center do to improve services?

#### **Business Partnerships**

34. Please describe the ways that IDB partners with businesses in Iowa to promote the employment of people with blindness or other visual impairments.
35. What can IDB do to improve business partnerships and to engage employers in recruiting and hiring people with blindness or other visual impairments?
36. What would you recommend that IDB do as an organization to maximize its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission and providing excellent customer service during the next three years?

**Iowa IDB, CSNA 2018  
Focus Group Protocols**

[Introductions/confidentiality/purpose statements]

**Focus Group Protocol - Individuals with Blindness or other visual impairments:**

**Employment goals**

- What barriers do people with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa face in getting or keeping a job?  
Follow up: Transportation, education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

**IDB Overall Performance**

- What has your experience with IDB been like? What have been the positives and negatives?
- What services were helpful to you in preparing for, obtaining and retaining employment?
- What services did you need that were not available or provided and why weren't you able to get these services?
- What can IDB do differently to help clients get and keep good jobs?

**Barriers to accessing services**

- What barriers do people with blindness or other visual impairments encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from IDB? (prompts if necessary -- mobility, communication, structural)

**IowaWORKS Center Partners**

- Has anyone had used or tried to use the services of the IowaWORKS Centers? Follow-up: What was that experience like for you? What can they do differently to better serve individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?

**Transition**

- What needs do young people with blindness or other visual impairments in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Iowa preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- What can IDB do to improve services to youth in transition?

**Needs of underserved groups with blindness or other visual impairments**

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?  
(Prompt if needed for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area and any other characteristics)  
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

**Need for establishment of CRPs**

- Have you received services from a CRP? If so, how was your service? How effective was it? What can be done to improve the future service delivery by CRPs?
- What programs or services should be created that focus on enhancing the quality of life for people with blindness or other visual impairments and their families, meeting basic needs and ensuring inclusion and participation? Of these services now in existence, which need to be improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?

**Orientation Center**

- Did you attend the Orientation Center?
- What is your assessment of the value of the program?
- How prepared were you to live independently and to work as a result of your participation in the Center?
- What recommendations do you have to improve the Center?

**Need for improvement of services or outcomes**

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive in Iowa?

**Focus Group Protocol - Partner Agencies:****Employment Goals**

- What barriers do people with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa face in getting or keeping a job?  
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

**Barriers to accessing services**

- What barriers do people with blindness or other visual impairments encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from IDB?

**Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant blindness or other visual impairments**

- What are the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant blindness or other visual impairments?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant blindness or other visual impairments are being met the best/most extensively?

**Needs of underserved groups with blindness or other visual impairments**

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?  
(Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area or other characteristics)  
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

**Need for supported employment**

- Please describe how effective the SE program is in Iowa. What populations are receiving SE services?
- What SE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to meet the needs for SE?

**Transition**

- What needs do young people with blindness or other visual impairments in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Iowa preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize IDB's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in Iowa?
- How well is IDB serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can IDB do to improve services to youth in transition?

**Needs of individuals served through the IowaWORKS Centers**

- How effectively does the IowaWORKS Center system serve individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with blindness or other visual impairments accessing services through the IowaWORKS Centers? If so, what are they and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is IDB working in partnership with the IowaWORKS Centers? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the IowaWORKS Centers' ability to serve individuals with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa?

**Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs**

- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

**Need for improvement of services or outcomes**

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?



**Focus Group Protocol –IDB staff:****Employment Goals**

- What barriers do people with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa face in getting or keeping a job?  
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

**Barriers to accessing services**

- What barriers do people with blindness or other visual impairments encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from IDB?

**Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant blindness or other visual impairments**

- What are the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant blindness or other visual impairments?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant blindness or other visual impairments are being met the best/most extensively?

**Needs of underserved groups with blindness or other visual impairments**

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?  
(Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area or any other characteristics).  
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

**Need for supported employment**

- Please describe how effective the SE program is in Iowa. What populations are receiving SE services?
- What SE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to meet the needs for SE?

**Transition**

- What needs do young people with blindness or other visual impairments in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Iowa preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize IDB's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in Iowa?
- How well is IDB serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can IDB do to improve services to youth in transition?

**Needs of individuals served through the IowaWORKS Centers or WIOA system**

- How effectively does the IowaWORKS Center system serve individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with blindness or other visual impairments accessing services through the IowaWORKS Centers? If so, what are they and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is IDB working in partnership with the IowaWORKS Centers? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the IowaWORKS Centers' ability to serve individuals with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa?

**Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs**

- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

**Orientation Center**

- Have you referred clients to attend the Orientation Center?
- What is your assessment of the value of the program?
- How prepared were your clients to live independently and to work as a result of their participation in the Center?
- What recommendations do you have to improve the Center?

**Need for improvement of services or outcomes**

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?

**Focus Group Protocol – Businesses**

**Please discuss your familiarity with IDB and the services they provide to people with blindness or other visual impairments and to businesses**

**What needs do you have regarding recruiting people with blindness or other visual impairments for employment?**

- Do you do anything specific to attract candidates with blindness or other visual impairments? Please describe

**Please discuss how qualified and prepared individuals with blindness or other visual impairments are when they apply for employment with your business**

**What needs do you have regarding applicants with blindness or other visual impairments?**

- Are you aware of the incentives for hiring people with blindness or other visual impairments? Would these incentives influence your decision to hire?

**What are the qualities you are looking for in an applicant for a given job and an employee?**

**What needs do you have regarding employees with blindness or other visual impairments?**

- Sensitivity training?
- Understanding and compliance with applicable laws?
- Reasonable accommodations?

**What challenges do employees with blindness or other visual impairments face with job retention?**

**What services can IDB provide to you and to other businesses to increase employment opportunities for people with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa?**

## Appendix B: Individual Interview

# Iowa Blind 2019 CSNA - Individual Survey

1. The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is working collaboratively with the Iowa Commission for the Blind and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University in order to conduct an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness or other visual impairments who live in the state of Iowa. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the Iowa Unified State Plan for providing rehabilitation services and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with blindness or other visual impairments. The following survey includes questions that ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with blindness or other visual impairments. We anticipate that it will take about 20 minutes of your time to complete the survey.

If you prefer, you may ask a family member, a personal attendant, or a caregiver to complete the survey for you. If you are a family member, personal attendant or caregiver for a person with blindness or other visual impairments and are responding on behalf of an individual with blindness or other visual impairments, please answer the survey questions based upon your knowledge of the needs of the person with the disability.

Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous, that is, recorded without any identifying information that is linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey.

If you have any questions regarding this survey or if you would prefer to complete this survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address:

[ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu](mailto:ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu)

2. Which statement best describes your association with IDB? (select one response)

- I have never used the services of IDB
- I am a current client of IDB and I have never been a client before
- I am a current client of IDB and I am a repeat client
- I am a previous client of IDB, my case has been closed
- I am not familiar with IDB
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

3. Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).

- I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
- I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)
- I do not receive Social Security disability benefits
- I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits
- 

4. **Employment-Related Needs**

The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

---

5. Do you need further education or training to achieve your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
-

6. Do you have the job skills to achieve your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

7. Do you have the job search skills to achieve your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

8. Have you been prevented from achieving your employment goals because of prior convictions for criminal offenses?

Yes

No

---

9. Do you have the language skills to achieve your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

10. Have you been prevented from achieving your employment goals because there were not enough jobs available?

Yes

No

---

11. Have employers' perceptions of people with blindness or visual impairments prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

12. Has a lack of independent living skills prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

13. Has a lack of assistive technology prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

14. Has a lack of disability-related personal care prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

15. Has a lack of accessible transportation prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

16. Have other transportation issues, such as not having a reliable means to go to and from work, prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

17. Have mental health issues prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

18. Have substance abuse issues prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

19. Besides mental health and substance abuse issues, have any other health issues prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

No

---

20. Have issues with childcare prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

21. Have issues with affordable housing prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

22. Have issues with accessible housing prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---



23. Have concerns regarding the possible impact of employment on your Social Security benefits prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

Yes

No

---

24. Is there anything else that has prevented you from achieving your employment goals or that you need to achieve your employment goals?

Yes (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

No

---

25. What is the most significant barrier to achieving your employment goals?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**26. Barriers to Accessing IDB Services**

The next several questions ask you about barriers to accessing IDB services.

---

27. Has limited accessibility to IDB via public transportation made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes

No

---

28. Have other challenges related to the physical location of the the IDB office made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes

No

---

29. Have IDB's hours of operation made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes

No

---

30. Has a lack of information about the services available from IDB made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes

No

---

31. Has a lack of disability-related accommodations made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes

No

---

32. Have language barriers made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes

No

---

33. Have difficulties scheduling meetings with your counselor made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes

No

---

34. Have other difficulties working with IDB staff made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

No

---

35. Have difficulties with the application process made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes

No

---

36. Have difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

Yes

No

---

37. Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access IDB services?

- Yes (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
  - No
- 

38. Where do you usually meet with your counselor?

- I usually meet with my counselor in my community
  - I go to a IDB office to meet with my counselor
  - I don't have a IDB counselor
- 

39. Have you received services from IDB?

- Yes
  - No
- 

40. In the space provided, please identify the services that were the most helpful in terms of either preparing you for work or helping get or keep a job. You may write as much or as little as you wish.

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41. What recommendations, if any, do you have for IDB to improve services for individuals with blindness or other visual impairments in South Carolina?

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**42. IowaWORKS Centers**

The next several questions ask you about experiences you may have had with the IowaWORKS Centers, sometimes referred to as Career Centers or One-Stops.

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43. Have you ever tried to use the services of the IowaWORKS Centers?

Yes

No

*Skip to Question 67 if you answered No to this question.*

---

44. Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?

Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)

---

No

---

45. Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the Center (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

Yes

No

---

46. Did you go to the Center to get training?

Yes

No

*Skip to Question 49 if you answered No to the above question*

---

47. Did you get the training that you were seeking?

Yes

No

---

48. Did the training result in employment?

Yes

No

---

49. Did you go to the Center to find a job?

Yes

No

*Skip to Question 51 if you answered No to the above question*

---

50. Did they help you find employment?

Yes

No

---

51. Please describe your opinion of the helpfulness of the staff at the Center.

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not helpful

---

52. Please describe your opinion of the value of the services at the Center.

- Very valuable
- Somewhat valuable
- Not valuable
- 

53. Please include any recommendations on how the IowaWORKS Centers can improve services to people with disabilities in the space provided.

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54. The next set of questions asks you about the Iowa Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center (the Center)

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55. Did you attend the Iowa Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center?

- Yes, and I completed the program
- Yes, but I did not complete the program
- No, I did not attend the Center

*Skip to Question 67 if you answered No to the above question.*

*Skip to Question 57 if you answered; Yes, and I completed the program*

---

56. Why did you not complete services at the Center?

- The program was too long
  - Health issues
  - I was dismissed from the program
  - Family issues
  - I was not pleased with the instruction
  - I had difficulty getting along with others
  - Mental health concerns prevented me from completing
  - Other (Please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

57. How would you rate the quality of the Orientation and Mobility training provided at the Center?

- Excellent
  - Good
  - Average
  - Poor
  - I did not receive Orientation and Mobility training
-



58. How would you rate the quality of the Braille training you received at the Center?

- Excellent
  - Good
  - Average
  - Poor
  - I did not receive Braille training
- 

59. How would you rate the quality of the computer and technology training you received at the Center?

- Excellent
  - Good
  - Average
  - Poor
  - I did not receive computer and technology training
- 

60. How would you rate the quality of the home and personal management training you received at the Center?

- Excellent
  - Good
  - Average
  - Poor
  - I did not receive home and personal management training
-

61. How would you rate the quality of the Industrial Arts training you received at the Center?

- Excellent
  - Good
  - Average
  - Poor
  - I did not receive Industrial Arts training
- 

62. How would you rate the quality of the Jobs Class you participated in at the Center?

- Excellent
  - Good
  - Average
  - Poor
  - I did not participate in the Jobs Class
- 

63. How helpful was the Business of Blindness course you participated in at Center?

- Very helpful
  - Somewhat helpful
  - Note helpful
  - I did not take the Business of Blindness course
-

64. How prepared are you to live independently as a result of the training that you received at the Center?

- Very prepared
  - Moderately prepared
  - Minimally prepared
  - Not at all prepared
- 

65. How prepared are you to go to work as a result of the training you received at the Center?

- Very prepared
  - Moderately prepared
  - Minimally prepared
  - Not at all prepared
- 

66. How can the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center improve their services?

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**67. Demographic Information**

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68. What is your gender?

- Male
  - Female
  - Transgender
  - Prefer not to say
- 

69. What is your age group?

- Age 24 or younger
  - Age 25 - 64
  - 65 or older
- 

70. What is your race or ethnic group?

- African American/Black
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Caucasian/White
  - Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Multi-Race
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
  - I don't know
-

71. Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disabling condition?  
(select one)

- Blindness or visual impairment
  - Cognitive impairment
  - Communication impairment
  - Deaf-blindness
  - Deafness or hearing impairment
  - Mental health impairment
  - Mobility impairment
  - Physical impairment
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
  - No impairment
-

72. If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- Blindness or visual impairment
  - Cognitive impairment
  - Communication impairment
  - Deaf-blindness
  - Deafness or hearing impairment
  - Mental health impairment
  - Mobility impairment
  - Physical impairment
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
  - No impairment
- 

73. Is there anything else you would like to add about IDB or its services?

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In addition to the survey, Iowa Department for the Blind is conducting focus groups interviews for this assessment. If you are interested in participating in a focus group, please contact Chaz Compton at 619-594-7935.

This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback is valuable to IDB, thank you for completing the survey.

## Appendix C: Partner Survey

# Iowa Blind 2019 CSNA - Partner Survey

### 1. Iowa Department for the Blind - Community Partner Survey

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is working collaboratively with the Iowa Commission for the Blind and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University in order to conduct an assessment of the needs of individuals with blindness or other visual impairments who live in the state of Iowa. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the Iowa Unified State Plan for providing rehabilitation services and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with blindness and visual impairments. The following survey includes questions that ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with blindness or other visual impairments. You will also be asked about the type of work you do and whether you work with specific disability populations. We anticipate that it will take about 20 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous; that is, recorded without any identifying information that is linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey.

If you have any questions regarding this survey or would like to request the survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address or phone:

[ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu](mailto:ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu)

(619) 594-7935

2. In what County or Counties do you provide services to individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?

- 
3. Does your organization provide services exclusively to individuals with blindness or visual impairments?

- Yes
- No, we provide services to individuals with other disabilities
-

4. Please indicate which of the following services are available to individuals with blindness or other visual impairments in the geographic area(s) where you work (check all that apply).

- Job search services
- Job training services
- Other education services
- Assistive technology
- Low vision services
- Vehicle modification assistance
- Other transportation assistance
- Income assistance
- Medical treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Housing
- Benefit planning assistance
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_



5. In your experience, is the network of rehabilitation service providers in the state of Iowa able to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of IDB clients?

Yes

No

*Skip To: Q8 If In your experience, is the network of rehabilitation service providers in the state of Iowa able... = Yes*

---

6. What service needs are the network of rehabilitation service providers in the state of Iowa unable to meet (check all that apply)?

- Job search services
- Job training services
- Adjustment to blindness
- Other education services
- Assistive technology
- Low vision services
- Vehicle modification
- Transportation
- Income assistance
- Medical treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Housing
- Benefits planning
- Other (please describe)

7. What are the primary reasons that vocational rehabilitation service providers are generally unable to meet clients' service needs?

- Not enough providers available in area
- Low quality of provider services
- Services take too long to provide
- The rates of payment for services are too low
- Client barriers prevent successful interactions with providers
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

8. What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues

- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients that require supported employment services different from the overall population of clients served by IDB?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: Q11 If Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients that require supported employmen...  
= No*

---

10. What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients that require supported employment services (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues

- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition different from the overall population of individuals served by IDB?

Yes

No

*Skip To: Q13 If Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition different from the overall... = No*

12. What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues



- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients who are racial or ethnic minorities different from the overall population of clients served by IDB?

Yes

No

*Skip To: Q15 If Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients who are racial or ethnic minorit... = No*

14. What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients who are racial or ethnic minorities (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues

- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Is there anything else we should know about the primary barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients?

---

---

16. What would you say are the top three reasons that individuals with blindness or other visual impairments find it difficult to access IDB services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- IDB staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

17. Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by individuals that require supported employment services disabilities different from the general population of individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?

- Yes
- No

18. What would you say are the top three reasons that individuals that require supported employment services find it difficult to access IDB services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- IDB staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

19. Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by youth in transition different from the general population of individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: Q21 If Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by youth in transition different... = No*

---

20. What would you say are the top three reasons that youth in transition find it difficult to access IDB services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- IDB staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

21. Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by clients who are racial or ethnic minorities different from the general population of individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: Q23 If Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by clients who are racial or et... = No*

---

22. What would you say are the top three reasons that clients who are racial or ethnic minorities find it difficult to access IDB services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate accessing assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- IDB staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

23. Is there anything else we should know about why individuals with blindness or other visual impairments find it difficult to access IDB services?

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24. What is the most important change that IDB could make to support clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

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25. What is the most important change that the network or rehabilitation service providers in the State of Iowa could make to support clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

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In addition to surveys, IDB is conducting individual and focus groups interviews for this assessment. If you would like to participate in either an individual interview or a focus group interview, please contact XXX at XXX.

This is the end of the survey. Your feedback is valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey! Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.



## Appendix D: Staff Survey

# Iowa Blind 2019 CSNA - Staff Survey

### 1. Iowa Department for the Blind Staff Survey

The Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) is working collaboratively with the Commission for the Blind and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University in order to conduct an assessment of the needs of individuals with blindness or other visual impairments who live in the State of Iowa. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the Iowa Unified State Plan for providing rehabilitation services and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with disabilities. The following survey includes questions that ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with blindness or other visual impairments. You will also be asked about the type of work you do and whether you work with specific disability populations. We anticipate that it will take about 20 minutes of your time to complete the survey.

Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous; that is, recorded without any identifying information that is linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey.

If you have any questions regarding this survey or would like to request the survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address:

[ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu](mailto:ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu)(619)594-7935

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

### 2. How would you classify your job?

Counselor

Support Staff

Supervisor or Manager

Instructor

Other (please generally classify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. How long have you worked in the job that you have now?

- Less than one year
  - 1-5 Years
  - 6-10 Years
  - 10-20 Years
  - 21+ Years
- 

4. Please indicate which client populations you work with on a regular basis (please check all that apply).

- Individuals who are blind
- Individuals with visual impairments other than blindness
- Individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Individuals that need supported employment services
- Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities
- Individuals from unserved or underserved populations
- Transition-aged youth (14 - 24)
- Individuals served by the IowaWORKS Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers).
- I am in a position that does not work directly with IDB clients

5. Please indicate which of the following services are readily available to IDB clients in the geographic area where you provide services. By readily available, we mean that you can either provide the service directly or purchase the service from the available network of service providers in the area. Please check all that apply.

- Job search services
- Job training services
- Other education services
- Assistive technology
- Vehicle modification assistance
- Other transportation assistance
- Income assistance
- Medical treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Housing
- Benefit planning assistance
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

6. In your experience, are Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), other service providers or vendors able to meet the vocational rehabilitation service needs of IDB clients in your geographic area?

Yes

No

*Skip To: Q9 If In your experience, are Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), other service providers or vend...  
= Yes*

---

7. What service needs are CRPs, other service providers or vendors unable to meet? (check all that apply)

- Job search services
  - job training services
  - Adjustment to blindness training
  - Other education services
  - Assistive technology
  - Low vision services
  - Other transportation assistance
  - Income assistance
  - Medical treatment
  - Mental health treatment
  - Substance abuse treatment
  - personal care attendants
  - Health insurance
  - Housing
  - Benefits planning assistance
  - Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
-

**8.** What are the primary reasons that CRPs, other service providers or vendors are generally unable to meet clients' service needs?

- Not enough CRPs, other service providers or vendors available in area
- Low quality of CRP, other service provider or vendor services
- Low rates paid for services
- Services take too long
- Low levels of accountability for poor performance by CRPs, other service providers or vendors
- Client barriers prevent successful interactions with CRPs, other service providers or vendors
- IDB does not purchase the full range of services from CRPs, other service providers or vendors
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Please identify which of the following are barriers to employment for individuals with blindness or visual impairments in Iowa (Please choose as many as apply).

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Inability to advocate for oneself
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues

- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_



**10.** What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues

- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**11.** Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients that require supported employment services different from the overall population?

Yes

No

*Skip To: Q13 If Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients that require supported employmen...  
= No*

**12.** What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients that require supported employment services (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues

- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**13.** Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition different from the overall population of clients served by IDB?

Yes

No

*Skip To: Q15 If Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition different from the overall... = No*

**14.** What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues

- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**15.** Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients who are racial or ethnic minorities different from the overall population clients served by IDB?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: Q17 If Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients who are racial or ethnic minorit... = No*

**16.** What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients who are racial or ethnic minorities (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues

- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**17.** Is there anything else we should know about the primary barriers to achieving employment goals for IDB clients?

---

---



**18.** What would you say are the top three reasons that people with blindness or other visual impairments find it difficult to access IDB services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation
  - Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office
  - Inadequate disability-related accommodations
  - Language barriers
  - Difficulties completing the application
  - Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
  - Inadequate assessment services
  - Slow service delivery
  - Difficulties accessing training or education programs
  - IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**19.** Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by individuals that require supported employment services different from the general population of people with blindness or other visual impairments?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: Q21 If Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by individuals that require suppo... = No*

**20.** What would you say are the top three reasons that individuals that require supported employment services find it difficult to access IDB services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**21.** Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by youth in transition different from the general population of individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: Q23 If Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by youth in transition different... = No*

**22.** What would you say are the top three reasons that youth in transition find it difficult to access IDB services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**23.** Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by clients who are racial or ethnic minorities different from the general population of individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: Q25 If Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access IDB services by clients who are racial or et... = No*

---

**24.** What would you say are the top three reasons that clients who are racial or ethnic minorities find it difficult to access IDB services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of IDB via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the IDB office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- IDB staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**25.** Is there anything else we should know about why individuals with blindness or other visual impairments find it difficult to access IDB services?

---

**26. IowaWORKS Centers**

The next set of questions ask you about the effectiveness of the IowaWORKS Centers (previously referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers) in serving individuals with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa.

**27.** Have you ever referred one of your clients to an IowaWORKS Center?

Yes

No

*Skip To: Q37 If Have you ever referred one of your clients to an IowaWORKS Center? = No*

**28.** Has the IowaWORKS Center helped any of your clients to get training for a job?

Yes

No

I have never referred anyone for training

---

**29.** Has the IowaWORKS Center helped any of your clients to get a job?

Yes

No

I have never referred a client for employment

---

**30.** In your opinion, how effectively do the IowaWORKS Centers serve individuals with blindness or other visual impairments?

Very effectively

Somewhat effectively

Not effectively

They do not serve individuals with blindness or other visual impairments

Unsure

---

**31.** What can the IowaWORKS Centers do to more effectively serve individuals with blindness or other visual impairments in Iowa (select all that apply)?

- Improve physical accessibility
  - Improve programmatic accessibility
  - Train their staff on how to work with people with blindness or other visual impairments
  - Include individuals with blindness or other visual impairments when they fund for training for clients
  - Partner more effectively with IDB
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**32.** The next set of questions asks you about the  
**Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center**

**33.** Have you ever referred a client to the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: Q37 If Have you ever referred a client to the Adult Orientation and Adjustment Center? = No*

---

**34.** How effectively does the Center prepare your clients to live independently?

- Very effectively
  - Somewhat effectively
  - Not effectively
-

**35.** Upon completion of the Center, how prepared are your clients to go to work?

- Very prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not at all prepared
- I do not send my clients to the Center to prepare for employment

---

**36.** Please identify at least two ways that the Center can improve services to your clients. You may include as many suggestions as possible, but please include at least two. \_\_\_\_\_

---

**37.** What is the most important change that IDB could make to support clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals? \_\_\_\_\_

---

**38.** What is the most important change that CRPs, other service providers or vendors could make to support clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

---

---

**39.** What are the top three changes that would enable you to better assist your IDB clients (please select a maximum of three changes)?

- Smaller caseload
  - More streamlined processes
  - Better data management tools
  - Better assessment tools
  - Additional training
  - More administrative support
  - More supervisor support
  - Improved business partnerships
  - Decreased procurement time
  - More effective community-based service providers
  - Increased outreach to clients in their communities
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**40.** Your feedback is valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey! Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.



## Appendix E: Business Survey

# Iowa Blind 2019 CSNA - Business Survey

### 1. Iowa Department for the Blind - Business Survey

The purpose of this survey is to learn more about the needs of businesses and employers with respect to partnering with the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) and employing and accommodating employees who are blind or who have visual impairments. The information that you provide will help IDB to more effectively respond to the needs of businesses and will influence the planning and delivery of vocational services to persons with blindness and visual impairments.

This survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential and you will not be asked for your name or the name of your organization anywhere in the survey. Please select the response to each question that best describes your needs at this time.

If you need this survey provided in an alternate format or have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at the following email or phone number:

[ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu](mailto:ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu)

(619) 594-7935

**Thank you** for your time and input!

2. Disability in the Workplace: Does your business need help... (select one response for each)

	Yes	No
Understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying job accommodations for workers with blindness or other visual impairments?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting job applicants who are people with blindness or other visual impairments?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping workers with blindness or other visual impairments to retain employment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining training on the different types of visual impairments?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with blindness or other visual impairments?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining diversity training for leadership and/or employees related to hiring employees with blindness and visual impairments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with blindness or other visual impairments?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with blindness or other visual impairments?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. IDB can help your business with recruiting, hiring, accommodating or retaining individuals with blindness or visual impairments. If you would like to help in any of these areas, please leave your name and number in the box below and someone from IDB will contact you.

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4. If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding blindness or other visual impairments in the workplace, please describe them in the space below.

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5. Applicants with blindness or other visual impairments: With respect to applicants with blindness or other visual impairments, does your business need help... (select one response for each)

	Yes	No
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessing Applicants' skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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6. If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding applicants with blindness or other visual impairments, please describe them in the space below. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Employees with blindness or other visual impairments: With respect to employees with blindness or other visual impairments you have now or have had in the past, what are the top three challenges you have experienced with them regarding job retention (select a maximum of three items)?

- We have not experienced any challenges
  - Poor attendance
  - Difficulty learning job skills
  - Slow work speed
  - Poor work stamina
  - Poor social skills
  - Physical health problems
  - Mental health concerns
  - Language barriers
  - Identifying effective accommodations
  - No promotional opportunities
  - Family concerns
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
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8. If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding employees with blindness or other visual impairments, please describe them in the space below.

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9. Have you utilized any of the services provided to businesses by IDB?

Yes

No

*Skip To: Q12 If Have you utilized any of the services provided to businesses by IDB? = No*

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10. Which of the following services did IDB provide to your business (please select all that apply)?

- Training in understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act
  - Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with blindness or other visual impairments
  - Recruiting job applicants who are people with blindness or other visual impairments
  - Helping workers with blindness or other visual impairments to retain employment
  - Obtaining training on the different types of visual impairments
  - Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with blindness or other visual impairments
  - Obtaining incentives for employing workers with blindness or other visual impairments
  - Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with blindness or other visual impairments
  - Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications
  - Recruiting applicants with good work habits
  - Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills
  - Assessing Applicants' skills
  - Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants
  - Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
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11. How satisfied were you with the services you received from IDB?

- Very satisfied
  - Satisfied
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  - Dissatisfied
  - Very dissatisfied
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12. Which of the following best describes your type of business? (select one response)

- Service
  - Retail
  - Manufacturing
  - Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing
  - Construction
  - Government
  - Education
  - Health care
  - Banking/Finance
  - Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
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13. If your business has any needs related to applicants or workers with blindness or other visual impairments that are not currently being met please describe them here:

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14. How many people are employed at your business? (select one response)

- 1 - 15
  - 16 - 50
  - 51 - 250
  - 251 - 999
  - 1,000 or more
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15. In addition to surveys, IDB is conducting individual and focus groups interviews for this assessment. If you would like to participate in either an individual interview or a focus group interview, please contact XXX at XXX.

This is the end of the survey. Your feedback is valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey! Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.