

# Iowa Gets Best Value in Workforce Services with Strong Regional Infrastructure

Even with our relatively low unemployment rate (compared with national numbers) and positive indicators of economic recovery, Iowa still needs a strong local infrastructure for the delivery of workforce services.

Jobs in Iowa are going unfilled because job-seekers do not have the skills needed for jobs available. Iowa's economic recovery and long-term strength and growth will require a workforce that can attain new skills and advance their skills to meet industry demands.

- »  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the people who will make up Iowa's workforce in 2025 have already left K-12 schools.
- » 1.2 million of Iowa's 1.8 million working-age adults have not completed any post-secondary education. More than 165,000 have no high school diploma or GED.
- » 62% of all jobs in Iowa will require some postsecondary training beyond high school in 2018.
- » Over a lifetime of earnings, an Iowa worker with less than a high school degree will earn 35% less than a worker with an associate's or technical degree.

With two-thirds of our future workforce beyond the reach of K-12 schools, focusing resources solely on the next generation is not enough. It will fall to community colleges and workforce centers to ensure that current working-age adults have the skills to succeed. **Iowa's regional workforce infrastructure and One-Stops** are crucial pieces of the puzzle.



## **IOWA'S REGIONAL WORKFORCE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Iowa's 15 workforce regions create a framework for regional collaboration and community input. Each region has a Regional Workforce Investment Board (RWIB), which provides communities direct input and decision-making ability to address local workforce needs and priorities. The active role of the local board provides a structure to address the needs of the local economy.

## **ONE-STOPS AND IOWAWORKS**

In 2008, the Iowa General Assembly passed legislation setting a goal to establish a One-Stop service center in each of the 15 workforce regions by 2012. Integration is occurring as Iowa Workforce Development staff and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) service providers consolidate services and come together to form Iowa*WORKS* offices. Currently, there are 11 integrated One-Stop service centers, with 5 more scheduled to open by Fall of 2012.

## VALUE OF ONE-STOPS

In this time of limited resources, the One-Stop approach provides the best value to Iowans by capitalizing on **partnerships and collaboration** to most effectively use the resources available. One-Stops provide quality services designed to connect job-seekers and employers as quickly as possible.

Services are integrated with local economic development strategies and job training planning. This approach represents the most **efficient, cost-effective, value-added, and customer-focused** strategies. Through One-Stops, employers can obtain skilled employees, and job-seekers are matched with employment opportunities.

The integration of IWD and WIA staff leverages the training expertise of approved training providers and other available partner resources. Customers benefit from the skilled facilitators and trainers, classrooms, computer labs, and meeting spaces made available through collaboration with partners.

More than 76,000 Iowans have become members of their integrated workforce centers since the start of Iowa*WORKS* in July 2009.

**One-Stops add value to the local economy by supporting the needs of the businesses in the community in addition to meeting the needs of job-seekers.**



## NEXT STEPS

To ensure that workers have access to high-quality services, and that the skill needs of businesses are met, AIWP recommends the following:

- » 36 Workforce Development offices were closed in 2011. Support of the remaining offices is vital in order to maintain an infrastructure to support lowans seeking jobs, skill advancement and training.
- » Provide resources for the gap tuition assistance program, to give more lowans access to short-term skills training that is not eligible for traditional financial aid. The most successful programs link adult basic education and workforce skills training.
- » Federal reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act is pending; federal lawmakers are urged to continue their efforts to strengthen and modernize the nation's workforce investment system.

## ABOUT AIWP

The Association of Iowa Workforce Partners (AIWP) is an assembly of direct workforce service providers. AIWP strives to enrich Iowa's economic development through the delivery of innovative workforce services. AIWP works to provide the link between people, communities, and industry.