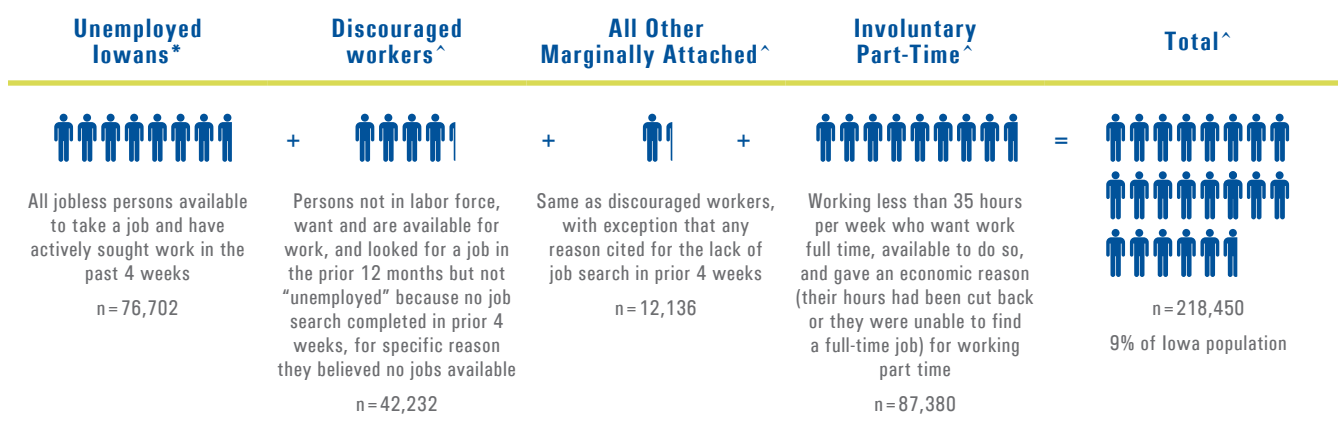


The Goal of the IowaWORKS Employment Office: *Rapidly Match Workforce to Careers*

BEYOND UNEMPLOYMENT: WORKFORCE SERVICES CUSTOMER BASE

Iowa’s workforce offices were traditionally known as the *Unemployment Office*: the place you go to apply for unemployment benefits. Today, Iowa’s IowaWORKS Employment Offices have become a much more critical service provider. While a large proportion of individuals served are currently receiving unemployment benefits, many others fit into categories of workers traditionally overlooked in the unemployment rate. These include the chronically unemployed – those no longer eligible for unemployment insurance – as well as individuals considered *underemployed*, or involuntarily part-time workers.

Customer Base of Un- and Under-Employed Iowans Seeking Employment Services



 = 10,000

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

*Out of total Iowa labor force; n = 1,702,994 as of August 2014

[^]Out of total Iowa civilian non-institutional population; n = 2,427,216 as of August 2014

With an improving economy, workforce offices are serving more of the Iowans with significant barriers to employment. These barriers may include:

- Lack of transportation
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Chronic disease
- Disability
- Criminal background
- Substance dependence
- Mental illness
- Lack of basic skills
- Any combination of barriers

Iowa businesses are also customers of the Employment Office. Workforce partners must consult closely with regional businesses to ensure individuals seeking employment know and are able to learn the skills necessary to fill available and/or anticipated positions. In many cases, there are large gaps between the skills needed by employers and the current skills of the workforce. This is a key role of the workforce center and its partners.

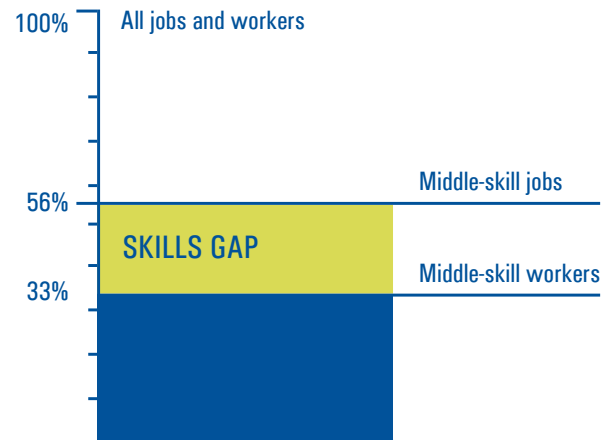
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WORKFORCE SERVICES MATCH AND PREPARE IOWANS TO FILL AVAILABLE AND ANTICIPATED JOB OPENINGS

Today's IowaWORKS Employment Offices are comprised of regional networks of partnerships established to ensure pipelines between individuals seeking jobs and employers, and vice versa. A plethora of challenges threatens to break these pipelines, the most significant being Iowa's Skills Gap. According to Iowa Workforce Development, more than half of Iowa jobs are considered "middle skill," meaning they require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree. The problem? Only a third of Iowa's workers have the skills to fill these positions.

Iowa's workforce partners are striving to meet not only those demands for middle skill workers, but also other critical sector demands. Many Iowans lack basic skills, from literacy to computer knowledge, basic skills that are required to fill any position, let alone middle or high skill positions. With a focus on getting individuals quickly prepared to enter the workforce, access to training and credentialing is more important than ever. With new federal workforce legislation going into effect in 2015, there will be even greater emphasis on these rapid reemployment strategies.

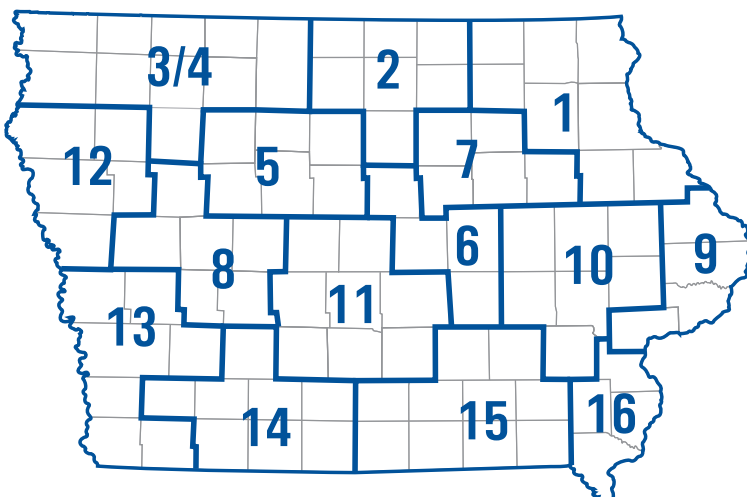
THE SKILLS GAP



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO BETTER SUPPORT RAPID RE-EMPLOYMENT

1. Ensure timely and cost effective services and training through maintenance of the current regional workforce infrastructure.
2. Continue to fund Pathways for Academic Career Employment (PACE), Gap Tuition Assistance, and Adult Basic Education (ABE).
3. Require individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance to complete a standard skills assessment in-person or online to increase timeliness of re-employment.
4. Adopt a graduated eligibility structure for child care assistance so individuals with children are not financially discouraged from taking employment for which they are the most qualified.
5. Maintain state investment in workforce and community college partnerships that ensure access to high-quality, low-cost training that meet local workforce and industry needs.
6. Encourage further expansion of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and workforce partnerships.

Workforce Development Regions



ABOUT AIWP

The Association of Iowa Workforce Partners (AIWP) is a statewide organization of regional Workforce Investment Act partners that provide specialized workforce services to Iowans, including hard-to-place, at-risk, low-income adults, low-income youth, and dislocated and unemployed individuals. The mission of AIWP is to advance the quality and availability of workforce services in Iowa through education, advocacy, and professional development. AIWP members efficiently serve both jobseekers and employers through a regional system, matching Iowans with training and skills to meet the unique needs of local employers.