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Feb. 22, 2016

RespectAbility – Public Comments – Iowa Unified State Plan

“Every citizen has skills to contribute to the state’s economy.” – Gov. Terry Branstad at the 2013 NGA Winter Meeting

“We have barely seen any increase in employment of people with disabilities since 1990 despite what every survey and study says – that people with disabilities want the benefits, dignity and power of work. But I have hope we can build a better future for those who want and can work.”
– Former Iowa Senator Tom Harkin

Introduction:

RespectAbility is honored to have the opportunity to submit the following comments to the second draft of the State of Iowa’s Unified State Plan as required under Section 102 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We are pleased to have the chance to review the progress that Iowa has made in revising the State Plan and we are pleased to have the chance to once more submit our comments. We have visited Iowa to view best practices and met with Gov. Branstad multiple times. We also have great respect for David Mitchell, who is one of the finest leaders on disability employment in the nation.

As we stated before in our previous comments, the Hawkeye State has already achieved a great deal in terms of employment for people with disabilities. Since we submitted those comments more recent data has become available and the new data shows that Iowans with disabilities are increasing entering the workforce. **Of the 176,576 working age people with disabilities in Iowa, fully 46.5% of them are now employed.** Clearly the work to pull down the full federal match, the partnership between Gov. Branstad and Sen. Harkin, and the talented team of Iowa’s public servants are bringing results forward. This number places Iowa 3rd in the nation, right behind South Dakota and North Dakota.

At the same time, however, there are approximately 14,500 youth with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 20. Each year a quarter of them will age out of the school system with high hopes for success. A lot of your success will be linked to how each cohort of young adults’ transition into the workforce.

Iowa is a model for the nation in terms of how committed leadership, coordinated resources, and best practices can empower more people with disabilities to pursue the American Dream. The Hawk Eye State has much to teach the rest of the nation about the successes that can be achieved. It’s excellent Project SEARCH programs, youth transition work in rural areas, support for small business start-ups, partnerships with great employers including Kwik Trip, Winnebago, Manpower, Unity Point and others is a role model for other states. **Likewise, we are also seeing pockets of excellence around innovative youth programs designed to address disability employment in Georgia, Nevada, and Kentucky.**

To help the states succeed in this process we developed a resource called the Disability Employment First Planning Tool. This document details best practices and effective models. This toolkit contains models that are proven to work, be cost effective to implement, and

be successful. We have developed an extensive collection of the new data on disability and employment in Iowa. That information is also attached to our comments.

Many of the critical issues that we raise in our comments concern the need for a more complete disability lens on the overall work of Iowa's workforce system and the need to better align programs. Thanks to WIOA, Iowa has the opportunity to do exactly that to ensure that good outcomes continue to be achieved. As such, we have reviewed this new draft of Iowa's Unified State Plan with an eye towards further improvements that can be made and steps that can be taken. **For example, there remains a 35.7 percentage point gap in the labor force participation rate (LFPR) between people with and without disabilities in Iowa. Closing this gap will require careful thought and thorough planning, but can absolutely be achieved.**

1. PERFORMANCE METRICS: Ensure that the great data included in Iowa's Unified State Plan are used as performance metrics moving forward:

As we expressed in our introduction, Iowa is already far ahead of the rest of the nation in terms of empowering more people with disabilities to pursue the American Dream. **Iowa now ranks 3rd in the nation on employment of people with disabilities with a 46.5% employment rate for its citizens with disabilities.** While Iowa has seriously invested in best practices and has committed leaders, there remains a gap however in terms people with and without disabilities and the workforce. **Iowa now has very low unemployment and a talent shortage in many areas. Thus, more can be done quickly to bring even more people with disabilities into the workforce as it still ranks 7th in the nation when you look at the 35.7 percentage point gap in labor force participation rate (LFPR) between those with and without disabilities.** This gap has critical implications for the WIOA work being done in your state. **Not only does this data need to be included directly in the Workforce Analysis sections of the State Plan, but such data also needs to propel the design of your performance metrics**

It is vital that the workforce system and the State Board include the labor force participation rates (LFPR) of people with disabilities on their state dashboards and performance metrics. Looking at unemployment information or job placements alone is not enough. Decision makers are missing the bigger picture of those individuals with barriers to employment who are not actively seeking work. **We know from reviewing the State Plan that the right data is available to Iowa's key state leaders.** For example, on pages 38 and 39, the State Plan explicitly references data points gathered from the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium and the Office of Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP). These are critical sources of the types of information that is needed to guide the WIOA process moving forward.

As such, we have several recommendations to make. First, we have a suggested revision for the section on the unemployment rate of individual with disabilities found on page 20 in the Workforce Analysis of the State Plan. We thrilled to see that state's workforce system is committed to resolving the "significant discrepancy" in employment rate of Iowans with disabilities and that "the core partners all agree must be addressed so that as the collaborative work continues." **We would add to this section the importance of tracking the labor force participation rate of people with disabilities as well as the inclusion of LFPR as a demonstrable "outcome" of Iowa's "system improvements expected with the WIOA Unified Plan."** There is also an additional caution we would like to add. As we said previously, unemployment statistics only include people who are actively seeking work. Counter intuitive

though it may be, a minor uptick in the unemployment rate might actually be a sign that more people with disabilities are trying to get into the workforce.

Second, because Iowa is 3rd in the nation in terms of the employment rate for people with disabilities, it is highly illustrative to look at the experience of those with disabilities who are succeeding in the world of work. **From the data, we find that fully 52.5% of the 13,600 Iowans who are blind or have vision loss are employed as are 58.5% of the 22,900 with hearing differences. Even in the cognitive category, we see Iowa outperforming the national average with 34.7% of their 26,400 people with intellectual or developmental disabilities employed.** While we are pleased to see these higher-than-average outcomes, we hope that Iowa will figure out what workforce solutions can empower more people through the independence that employment provides. In particular, we hope that Iowa will look closely at ways to improve outcomes for Iowans with intellectual or developmental disabilities. **For this population, there will be a considerable return on investment if Iowa's workforce system expands successful school to work transition programs such as Project SEARCH.** Iowa already has several such programs but there is a considerable need to expand the number, scope, and diversity of such sites. We have more to say on how to address disability as a part of the sector strategy process later in our public comments.

2. Busting Stigmas, Myths, and Misconceptions Should Be a Key Part of Iowa's Workforce Strategy:

Low expectations and misconceptions are critical barriers to employment for people with disabilities. [A Princeton study shows that while people with disabilities are seen as warm, they are not seen as competent.](#) Similarly, [a study published by Cornell Hospitality Quarterly found that companies share a concern that people with disabilities cannot adequately do the work required of their employees.](#)

Unfortunately, stigma is not addressed as a barrier to employment in the revised draft of Iowa's Unified State Plan. As such, we have several specific recommendations on how the Hawkeye State can address this gap and directly work to challenge the misconceptions which keep far too many from being able to pursue their full potential. **As such, we recommend that the Unified State Plan be amended to include a comprehensive proactive communications/public relations strategy for reducing such stigmas.** The best way to fight stigmas is to let employers see the facts from other employers who are already succeeding by hiring people with disabilities. **In order to ensure that such efforts have the biggest possible impact, it needs to be supported by a serious, systematic and ongoing communications campaign that highlights the benefits of inclusive hiring.**

One of the necessary first steps is to have key state leaders bring media attention to the value that employees with disabilities possess and who know how to communicate the business imperative for hiring diverse talent. [Back in 2013, Gov. Branstad and former Sen. Harkin co-hosted an event that showcased model employers.](#) More of that should be done. Two great examples of how this work can be done come from Wisconsin and Michigan. In Wisconsin, Governor Walker has actively championed the growth of Project Search and conducted regular site visits to model employers. [In Michigan, Lieutenant Governor Caley and Justice Bernstein have lead what they call "Hidden Talent Tours" that showcase the benefits to the bottom line that come from hiring people with disabilities.](#) Both of the example offer valuable insights in work that can be done in Iowa. We know that the Lieutenant Governor will be speaking at the

Governor's Conference on Aging and Disability in May. This event offers a natural starting point for such an effort and RespectAbility stands ready to support such a communications strategy.

Government action alone is insufficient to overcome the barriers to employment which impact the aspiration of people with disabilities. Indeed, the best way to fight stigmas is to let employers see the facts from other employers who are already succeeding by hiring people with disabilities. In terms of potential employer partners, we encourage your state plan to look at [Disability Equality Index that assesses the inclusion and hiring efforts of major employers](#). It was put together by the United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN) which operates [a network of affiliates across the country that can be an incredible resource for your work](#). However, it should be a much larger component of Iowa's planning and implementation of a serious business-to-business PR effort. The companies which scored 100% in the USBLN index can be a great resource. These are Ameren Corporation, AT&T, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., Capital One Financial Corporation, Comcast, NBCUniversal, Ernst & Young LLP, Florida Blue, Freddie Mac, Highmark Health, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Lockheed Martin Corporation, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), Procter & Gamble, Qualcomm Incorporated, Sprint Corporation, Starbucks Coffee Company, and TD Bank N.A. Beyond such name brand companies, it is also important to showcase Iowa-based companies that can make great partners in this process. Specifically, Kwik Trip, Unity Point, Winnebago and Manpower are key in Iowa.

Polls and focus groups show that there are three types of messages and audiences that are needed to expand employment for people with disabilities. Serious communications campaigns are needed for all three:

- A. CEOs/business leaders need to understand the value proposition/business case for their specific company as to why they should focus on putting people with disabilities into their talent pipelines.** This is best done through business-to-business success stories. People with disabilities can work successfully in hotels, healthcare, tend our parks and facilities, assist aging seniors, and be super talents in developing computer software and engineering solutions. CEOs and business leaders need to know that people with disabilities can be the BEST people to get a job done.
- B. Human resources professionals and on-the-ground supervisors need to understand that hiring people with disabilities is generally easy and inexpensive, and that any costs incurred are more than offset from increased loyalty.** Hiring managers and supervisors are key players who can turn high minded policy and business goals into action at the ground level. However, studies show that many are uninformed about people with disabilities. They are afraid of potential legal action, costs, or other failures. They need supports that will empower to overcome their own fears and to excel at recruiting, hiring, supervising or working with teammates who have disabilities. Iowa's VR staff and community agencies can fully support human resources professionals and managers in dealing with their own specific fears and stigmas surrounding hiring people with disabilities, and should do so, given that they are one of the few states who have opted to go for a dual-customer approach at their program centers. Moreover, online and in-person training is readily available to help from a variety of sources. RespectAbility has online webinars, as [does ASKJAN.org](#), USDOL and others. Partners like [the Poses Family Foundation Workplace Initiative](#) can provide training to the workforce staff and volunteers systems-wide as well as to community agencies in supporting companies

through messaging efforts around related to fear and stigma. [The National Organization on Disability](#) and [the U.S. Business Leadership Network](#) offer strong resources as well.

- C. People with disabilities and their families need high expectations. From the time of diagnosis, education for high expectation must begin. Iowa needs a public relations campaign that will inspire Iowans with disabilities to set their hopes high, as low expectations and low self-esteem are a barrier to employment.** For example, Virgin Airways founder Sir Richard Branson and finance wizard Charles Schwab are also dyslexic. Scientist Stephen Hawking and multi-billionaire businessman Sheldon Adelson, like Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas and President Franklin D. Roosevelt before them, are wheelchair/mobility device users. The CEO of Wynn Casinos, Steve Wynn, is legally blind. Arthur Young, co-founder of the giant EY (formerly Ernst & Young) was deaf. Success sells success and that is something the workforce system should seriously utilize in order to motivate and inspire in an intentional manner moving forward.
- D. Showcase local success stories like Kwik-Trip and Em's Coffee.** As an example of the power and value of making the business care for hiring people with disabilities, we offer Iowa the insights gained from our [#RespectTheAbility](#) campaign. The campaign focused on how hiring people with disabilities can make organizations stronger and more successful. It highlights the benefits to employers that look beyond the disability and imagine the possibility when hiring talented employees with disabilities. Some of our best profiles showcase specific, Iowa businesses that have tremendously benefitted from the talents of people with disabilities. First, we suggest that key leaders in your state's workforce system look at the example of Kwik-Trip and their Retail Helpers program. [The success of this program and Kwik-Trip's employees with disabilities offer considerable insight in how to train people to succeed in high turnover jobs.](#) The [experiences of the Spece brothers](#) and [their agricultural businesses](#) are [success stories that can inspire others and break down stigmas.](#) They show the difference that VR can make and the power of harnessing entrepreneurship for people with differences. [Lastly, we direct special attention to Independence, Iowa and Em's Coffee Company.](#) Emilea Hillman's story is incredible and we hope to see more people with disabilities follow her example of success.

3. Ensure that Iowa's Sector Strategies identify Iowans with disabilities as an untapped labor resource:

As required by WIOA Sec. 102(b)(1)(A), Iowa's state plan must and does include a detailed analysis of the economic sectors of the state economy that are growing and are forecasted to grow in the future. The success of WIOA depends on being an employer driven paradigm shift. Expanding opportunities for people with barriers to employment such as disability requires strong partnerships with employers in those sectors which are rapidly expanding.

In terms of the planning elements of Iowa's Unified State Plan, we would emphasize the critical importance of ensuring the people with disabilities are viewed as an untapped labor resources ready to be trained to meet Iowa's current and growing talent needs. For example, on page 11, the State Plan reports that "Healthcare and social assistance is the second largest industry in Iowa." This sector alone "accounts for 7 percent of output and 14 percent of employment." Behind healthcare in terms of size and importance to the state economy are

“finance and insurance industry, retail trade, and government” all of which “employ significant numbers of Iowans and contribute substantially to the state’s GDP.”

People with disabilities represent an untapped labor resource that can meet the diverse talent needs of Iowa’s growing job sectors. The jobs gains in these sectors offer a great opportunity for focused sector strategies sustain and build on employment outcomes being achieved among people with disabilities in Iowa.

a. Healthcare and Social Assistance:

On page 13, the State Plan reports that “The healthcare and social assistance industry will account for 16 percent of all job growth through 2025.” On Table 3, the Plan estimates this job sector will add 40,500 jobs in the next ten years for 23% growth rate. This means that Healthcare in Iowa will account for 16.2% of job growth. **People with disabilities can and should be part of the solution to this critical demand in the labor market.** To quote [a 2014 report from the Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\)](#), “[people with disabilities] not only represent an untapped talent pool, but also offer significant value and insight” in the field of healthcare. It is important for healthcare institutions to reflect their customers, and people with disabilities interface more with the healthcare system. There are [numerous examples of young people with disabilities doing incredible work in the fields of healthcare, elder care, and in assisted living](#). **Employers working in health and elder care can greatly benefit from the loyalty, dedication, and retention rates of employees with disabilities.**

Iowa already has several outstanding Project Search worksites that are creating successful pathways for students with intellectual and development disabilities to successfully transition into the workforce. At the Lucas County Health Center in Chariton, Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines, and University Point Health Saint Luke’s Hospital in Cedar Rapids, Project Search interns are learning critical skills and gaining needed experience for them to ultimately become successful. **These worksites all showcase how the Project Search model is well suited to meeting Iowa’s growing talent needs in health care.** We are pleased to see Project Search referenced in several sections of the revised draft of the State Plan such as on page 164 in the section on “Waiver Continuations and New Requests.” We congratulate IVRS for their incredible work and look forward to see the continuing success they are achieving at these worksites. However, we would recommend that Iowa follow this commitment with greater ambition and effort. **We recommend that Project Search be significantly expanded as they have done in Wisconsin, Florida and other states.** In the specific context of Iowa, there are two specific steps to be taken. **First, we encourage Iowa to collaborate on recruiting additional hospitals as worksites for Project Search. Second, we also encourage IVRS to look beyond just hospital settings and consider the potential of placing Project Search interns in either elder care facilities or in hotels.**

Nationally, Project Search sites overall have been achieving outstanding results for people with disabilities, employers, and taxpayers alike. For example, [the first longitudinal study of the program found “a 68% success rate in transitioning students from high school into competitive employment” and “Project SEARCH sites in Upstate New York that have an impressive 83% success rate overall.”](#) The goal for each program participant is competitive employment.

We suggest that you look to follow the example set by the state of Wisconsin where they started with just three Project Search sites and are rapidly expanding to 27 worksites by the end of this year. The experiences of the dedicated state officials, VR counselors,

workforce professionals, and special educators who have increased Wisconsin's Project Search programs offer profound insights in the steps necessary to make rapid expansion a reality. Thinking long-term, investments in Project Search and other such programs will save big money for taxpayers while also strengthening the talent pool for employers.

The work Iowa is doing in Unity Point should be mentioned in the plan as it is a model of success in bringing individuals with disabilities into jobs there, and helping aging workers who are acquiring disabilities to "re-home" into other jobs.

b. Science, Tech, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and The Autism Advantage

When talking employment opportunities for people with disabilities careers in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields may not immediately come to mind. However, there are significant and exciting opportunities to ensure that people with difference can succeed in this dynamic career field. Indeed, ensuring the accessibility of STEM careers offers Iowa a significant opportunity to innovate and lead. STEM is a broad category and one that directly touches on the "finance and insurance" sector discussed in the State Plan. As stated on page 13, "the finance and insurance industry will account for 11 percent of the job growth" for the next 10 years. This growth offers Iowa a unique chance to better train people with disabilities to fill these roles.

As has been documented in many cases, there can be an "Autism Advantage" in the STEM space. Indeed, some people on the Autism spectrum can have the very best skills in science, math and engineering. [Microsoft](#), [SAP](#), and [Specialisterne](#) have committed themselves to "[provide employment opportunities for people on the autism spectrum in roles such as software testers, programmers, system administrators, and data quality assurance specialists.](#)" [The Israeli Defense Forces recruits and trains their citizens on the Autism spectrum for work in their elite intelligence unit.](#)

Delaware's Governor Jack Markell is partnering with companies to employ more people on the Autism spectrum in STEM jobs. Such examples need to be implemented by Iowa as well. This issue of STEM and access for student with disabilities is a natural point of partnership between the workforce system and the educational system. That work needs to start young, be matched with high expectations for success, and designed to ensure people with disabilities have the chance to become future scientists, engineers, doctors and mathematicians.

Ensuring the Accessibility of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Programs and Careers for People with Disabilities, especially Students with IEPs, is vital. As Carol Glazer of the National Organization on Disabilities wrote in *Huffington Post*, "[America is already lagging when it comes to STEM-skilled workers. The U.S. will have more than 1.2 million job openings in STEM fields by 2018.](#)" Governors in other states have looked at STEM needs and begun to develop solutions. For example, [in New York State Governor Cuomo has ensured that magnet schools for STEM are located near IBM, a major STEM employer in their state.](#) Iowa could investigate ways to follow this model. Together, Iowa's workforce system and educational system can look to supported-employment programs such as Project Search, Specialisterne, and [the Marriot Foundation's Bridges to Work Program](#) as models for developing a systematic approach to providing the supports necessary for our students on the autism spectrum to excel in STEM.

c. High turnover jobs: Accommodation, Food Prep, and Retail Trade

Millions of dollars are lost each year due to employee turnover. [For all jobs earning less than \\$50,000 per year, the average cost of replacing one employee is between \\$6,000 and \\$20,000.](#) Research shows that employees with disabilities, when their interests and abilities are aligned with the needs of employers, are more productive and loyal than their non-disabled peers. Company records show that even when the relatively more expensive accommodations were factored in, the overall costs of disability accommodations were far outweighed by the low turnover rates and better tenures of the employees with disabilities.

A great example of an employment sector where employees with disabilities can be tremendously successful is the hospitality industry. Accommodations and food service are extremely high turnover jobs and numerous studies show that people with disabilities can be outstanding in those fields and have significantly higher employer loyalty.

An outstanding example of the type of work needed is found in Missouri. As part of the Poses Family Foundation's Workplace Initiative, a coalition of employment service providers has launched a successful training and placement program with the hospitality sector in St. Louis. This training runs for up to 12 weeks, and takes place on site at the hotel; all participants are paid by the hotel for the duration of training. Since the summer of 2015, two cohorts of trainees have completed training at the Hyatt Regency. Trainees have gone on to permanent employment at the Hyatt and other hotel partners in a range of departments—culinary; auditing; and customer service. This type of training and Poses' Workplace Initiative could easily be part of your overall Sector Strategies.

Likewise, in other states, [hotels and other hospitality, and food service employers have found Project SEARCH to be an amazing source of talent.](#) [The work done by Embassy Suites and David Scott](#) in Omaha, Nebraska offers [valuable lessons that can enable Massachusetts to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities.](#) Massachusetts State Board, along with other components of the workforce system, should connect with employers in the hospitality sector to begin figuring out how to benefit from these models.

Another sector with high turnover and big potential is retail trade. As such, we are very pleased to see the reference made in the State Plan to the "Walgreens Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI)" on pages 189 and 192. Many companies, including [UPS](#), [Wal-Mart](#), and [OfficeMax have proven records of success.](#) These efforts have taken the logistics sector by storm with [Lowe's, OfficeMax, Pepsi](#), as well as [P&G](#) are all launching their own successful disability hiring initiatives. For example, [as reported by the National Organization on Disability, "Lowe's hired more than 150 new workers with disabilities in the first year, and an additional 250 workers in the following 18-month period."](#) They can be outstanding partners for disability employment as these industries suffer from high turnover rates and employees with disabilities are proven to have significantly higher retention rates. It is important to identify more specific opportunities with employers and to site them inside the plan, as well as the criteria by which to continue and to expand such partnerships in the future.

d. Jobs with State Government and State contracting can also be sources of opportunity:

While the focus of our comments on Iowa's Unified State Plan are around aligning the workforce system to create opportunities for Iowans with disabilities in the private sector, public sector employment should not be neglected. After all, as reported on page 14, "government" is projected to account for 23,000 jobs between now and 2025, fully 9.3% of job growth in Iowa.

In the year ahead, the workforce of Iowa's state government is likely to be impacted by the cresting wave of Baby Boomers retiring just as other sectors are being shaken. As such, adopting affirmative actions to hire people with disabilities could be a solution to this coming challenge. Other states have adopted such steps as an opportunity measure in their state hiring policies.

This was first discussed in Governor Markell's Better Bottom Line Initiative and later in RespectAbility's Disability Employment First Planning Toolkit. [In Governor Markell's own words, "One key action is to set a state goal for hiring people with disabilities through an executive order and hold agencies accountable for achieving that goal."](#)

Iowa should explore the feasibility of Affirmative Action hiring of people with disabilities for jobs in state government plus expanding state contracting obligations similar to the model we see in Section 503 for Federal contractors. [Governor Inslee in Washington State](#) and [Governor Dayton in Minnesota](#) have been working to implement such measures for people with disabilities through executive orders. [Likewise, we are also seeing great success with governmental hiring of people with disabilities at the local level in Montgomery County Maryland.](#) The untapped potential of Iowans with disabilities is such that a full-spectrum, all-of-the-above-and-more approach is needed. Even if you do not choose to have affirmative action it is vital to ensure that your state's human resources teams are fully prepared to recruit and accommodate fully qualified job applicants and employees with disabilities.

4. Applying the Disability Lens to Future Ready Iowa:

As we stated before, there is a critical need to apply the disability lens to the overall efforts of the workforce system across the country. Our perspective as an organization is that each of the Title programs of WIOA, from Adult Education to Wagner-Peyser, to connected programs such as SNAP and TANF, need to be viewed with an eye towards improving their services to job seekers with disabilities. Fortunately, IVRS and their expertise are more closely connected throughout the system and throughout the revised draft of the Unified State Plan.

That said, we would like to discuss a critical program with significant implications for the future of Iowa. Specifically, we want to discuss how to ensure that the Future Ready Iowa initiative is fully inclusive of people with disabilities. [Further, we want to help to ensure that Iowans with disabilities are empowered to be part of "Iowa's talent pipeline for the careers of today and tomorrow."](#) As such, we have several recommendations related to the program design, development, and integration of this effort.

First and foremost, we commend the Governor for leading on the issue of expanding education and training beyond high school. The goal to have "70% of Iowans" equipped with "education or training beyond high school by 2025" is ambitious and critical to ensuring a strong state economy well into the future. Given the scope of this goal, it is critical that the needs of students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) can be met through such training or education. A good model of how this can be done, comes from [the Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income \(PROMISE\) grants](#) from the Department of Education. On page 44, the State Plan discusses how Future Ready will bring "together education, rehabilitation, workforce, and economic development resources" as well as ensure that "all Iowans have access to an integrated and efficient workforce delivery system." Making this vision a reality will depend on resolving such issues as high expectations, encouraging family engagement, and early work experiences.

Second, we look forward to seeing how this initiative will use pre-employment transition services to prepare students with disabilities for the opportunities of the future. As discussed on page 221, we look forward to seeing how IVRS will “serve the potentially eligible using the Multi-tiered System of Supports.” Implementing this model well will inform the work being done in the years ahead by Future Ready Iowa.

To support this work, we would seriously encourage Iowa to Massachusetts examine how to support disability employment efforts through establishment of public/private partnerships in local communities. These types of partnerships could focus on the “cluster” model, started by Poses Family Foundation that is having tremendous success in diverse states as Nevada, Georgia, and Ohio. [This model depends on “consortium of employers committed to implement or expand programs”, “a public/private partnership to coordinate services for job-seekers with disabilities, with a single point of contact for employers”, and “Connections among employers, public and private agencies, and schools to reach young adults with disabilities who are in transition from school to work.”](#)

5. Adding the Disability Lens to Corrections Education and Criminal Justice System Reform:

There are several points where the current draft of Iowa’s Unified State Plan addresses the unique workforce challenges facing ex-offenders as they attempt to reenter society. For example, page 325 discusses how Corrections Education programs in Iowa will satisfy the requirements laid out under Section 255 of WIOA. This section states that “Iowa Department of Corrections has been an excellent partner with Iowa’s adult education and literacy programs.” We are glad to see the commitments made and programs developed to address the “education levels and self-sufficiency of inmates, while reducing the recidivism rate in Iowa.” **The discussion of such efforts shows that Iowa’s workforce system is aligning to improve outcomes for people transitioning out of prison and back into society.** This is good work, worth doing. **However, these educational programs and efforts to serve ex-offenders need to be viewed through the lens of disability for several critical reasons.**

[According to recently published data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, “An estimated 32% of prisoners and 40% of jail inmates reported having at least one disability.” This issue is a serious one and it needs to be addressed at the state level.](#) Frequently people are involved in the criminal justice system because they have disability issues, including learning differences, ADHD, executive function, and mental health issues that went undiagnosed and/or unaddressed through childhood and into the school years. Given these statistics from the BJS, it is vital that your state identify how many of the individuals in the ex-offender pipeline have disabilities. Serving ex-offenders is a critical workforce development challenge and one that can only increase when disability is a factor and it is not addressed appropriately. The price paid for ignoring this issue are higher rates of recidivism and greater costs to society. Assessment tools are needed to identify disability issues as people enter the prison system. Doing so creates opportunities to address those issues productively. If people in the corrections system who will be released eventually are to be well served by Iowa’s workforce system, then it is vital that disability issues be identified and addressed in a way that will help work successfully in the future.

[Additionally, we want to circle back to Governor Branstad’s recent Condition of the State Speech.](#) It in, the Governor spoke about [his participation in a panel at](#) “the NAACP’s Iowa Summit on Justice and Disparities” and [how subsequently created his subsequent creation of a](#) “a

bipartisan working group on justice policy reform.” This work is critical important and will have a lasting impact on Iowa. However, this work needs to be cognizant of how disabilities, often invisible and unidentified, are a factor in the criminal justice system. In particular, the working group has discussed examining “the funding model for drug and mental health courts” as an element of these reforms. Such courts serve people with disabilities. We hope that they make concerted effort to address the intersectional of criminal justice and disability rights.

6. Establishing an Iowa Business Leadership Network (IA-BLN) could help enhance Iowa’s workforce system and continue your impressive employment outcomes:

Improving employment outcomes in Iowa very much depends on being an employer driven paradigm shift. As we mentioned above, it is vital to emphasize the business case for hiring people with disabilities again and again for a simple reason. **Government action alone-- even through vocational rehabilitation -- is insufficient to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities.** The necessary condition for achieving greater competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities is engaging employers and meeting their talent needs.

One section of the Unified State Plan in particular discusses different efforts related to employer engagement. For example, on page 193, in the section about “Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and SRC Operations”, there is a discuss about how the State Rehab Council and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services have collaborated around employer engagement. Among those efforts are such things as “shared training” to IVRS’ “expectation for all field staff to be involved in business development.” These are all critical efforts and we commend IVRS for their leadership on this point.

We want to add a recommendation regarding potential next steps to enhance these efforts and to ensure employer engagement is a key component of Iowa’s continuing efforts to support employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Currently, Iowa does not have an affiliate chapter of the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN). This limits the flexibility and capability of Iowa to engage employers around hiring people with disabilities. As such, we highly recommend that the appropriate staff both in the workforce system and IVRS work with their existing employer partners to formalize their intersections through the establishment of an affiliate chapter. Establishing a BLN Chapter in Iowa would help to organize the “knowledge of community outreach, recruiting and interviewing, the accommodation process and barriers” needed to sustain improved outcomes.

Additionally, we would direct Iowa’s attention to the successes achieved in Wyoming, which possesses one of the most effective, engaged, and active affiliate chapters in the country. The Wyoming BLN, despite the challenges of a largely rural population and limited resources, has been achieving outstanding employment outcomes. We would be happy to provide Iowa’s WIOA team with an introduction to Lynn Kirkbride the USBLN’s Director of Affiliate Relations. She is an incredible asset and has extensive experience around overcoming barriers to employment. Her email is lynn@usbln.org and she can be reached by phone at (307) 631-0894. Her efforts, and those of the Wyoming BLN, offer profound insights into how to effectively engage employers around the business case for hiring people with disabilities.

7. “Nothing About Us, Without Us” and Iowa’s workforce boards:

“Nothing About Us without Us” has long been a rallying cry for the one in five American who have a disability and it has implications for the workforce system. Even a

non-voting member of a WIB can bring critical perspectives that improve the WIB's efforts. From our review of the text of the Unified State Plan, there is some flexibility in terms of membership on the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB). **As such we recommend that your state plan look at adopting language which would include the placement of a representative from the disability community and a representative of your state's VR system on your State Board.** Second, the State Plan could also direct local workforce boards to connect with local community organizations to recruit self-advocates to add their perspectives. Our work around the Caucus connected us to many incredible self-advocates and leaders in the community in Iowa. They are ready and committed to helping build a better future for all.

8. Transportation remains a critical barrier to employment for many people with disabilities:

Public Transportation and accessibility to methods of transportation for people with disabilities is an issue in need of specific solutions in the revised draft of Iowa's Unified State Plan. As stated on page 45, "geographic hindrances and other location-based obstacles are inherent within the workforce delivery system." Further, [people living in Iowa's](#) many rural communities experience higher levels of ~~isolation~~ [isolation](#) have limited access to available and affordable transportation." We are glad to see the recognition of this challenge and we have a few ideas of how to better address this issue.

Many people with disabilities do not drive. Others cannot afford private transportation. It is vital to work with public transportation to ensure that there are transportation routes to places where there are work opportunities. In places where that are not possible, Iowa could look at partnering with UBER, Lyft, and other new transportation solutions. People with disabilities who drive can also provide a way to enter into the workforce with flexible hours.

9. Getting Out the Word on Free and Accessible Services and Resources:

There are many online and in person resources to help employers and people with disabilities come together to build success. However, all the stakeholders need to be educated to know that these resources exist, and that they are free and user-friendly. These resources must also all be accessible. **Iowa needs to make an effort to demonstrate to employers and prospective employees that these services exist. Doing so by coordinating it with the possible public relations campaign is one way to go about this. Also, Iowa should be careful not to waste money trying to re-invent the wheel in creating online resources as** [ASKJAN.org](#), [the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment](#) Policy, [our organization](#) and others also offer free toolkits, [webinars and training opportunities](#). [Another resource is Understood.org](#). This is a comprehensive resource to help families and individuals with learning and attention issues build their educational and career plans. It will be helpful to collaborate with those groups however to ensure that the best tools are created to fit the training and information needs on these issues.

10. Strategic Engagement to Build a Mentor System for Customers of the Workforce System:

Government can't and shouldn't do everything. There is a massive role that can be played by volunteers who are willing to help people with barriers to work, including people with disabilities, find and keep jobs. There is a critical, cooperative role for non-profits and faith-based organizations to play. Local workforce development areas, for example, could be

encouraged to recruit volunteers from local faith communities or local non-profits. However, much more can and should be done to work with parents of teens and young adults with disabilities, and to create volunteer mentorships for people with disabilities who are looking for work or need supports to stay employed and/or grow their careers.

Faith-based organizations and many others can fill massive gaps. [There is a terrific booklet, Clearing Obstacles to Work, put out by the Philanthropy Roundtable that is rich with potential partners and proven programs.](#) This is a huge missed opportunity as you will see in the booklet we just mentioned above. It's all about teaching people to fish (helping them get and keep a job) rather than just giving them fish. It is also important to note in terms of the SNAP and TANF programs that too many faith-based programs focus on giving out food without giving out the volunteer support to help people sustain themselves through gainful employment. [In looking to rethinking policies around SNAP funding, we suggest looking at the innovative efforts of the Seattle Jobs Initiative \(SJI\) to realign that funding into more productive, employment outcomes.](#)

Some of the local synagogues in Des Moines have anti-poverty initiatives and disability outreach efforts that could potentially yield good volunteers for a mentor program.

11. Build on IVRS's successes helping Aging Workers with Acquired Disabilities

As we mentioned in the introduction to our comments, we have visited Iowa to view best practices. Among the most interesting and innovative best practices that we observed where located in the Unity Point Hospital system. IVRS' collaboration to "re-home" employees to other jobs within the same company when good workers can no longer do physical jobs is a fascinating example of how to collaborate and innovate with a major employer. This is remarkable work and we have not found anything like it in other states. One question we would raise about this model is whether the lessons learned from working with Unity Point Hospital can be applied to other employers in other sectors. Our nation's economy will evolve rapidly in the next few years as more and more Baby Boomers age out of the workforce system. While we emphasize the critical importance of empowering youth with disabilities to succeed, we are fascinated by innovative ways of retaining and passing on the experiences of aging workers. Would it be possible to build a mentoring function into the re-homing process to institutionalize experience in some way? Alternatively, what would a re-homing program look like in non-healthcare related jobs? We hope that raising these questions will enhance and build on the successes Iowa has already achieved in supporting aging workers.

Conclusion:

In all of our work around WIOA, we have emphasized the fact that this new law represents the intersection of hope and history for people with disabilities. Iowa's Unified State Plan is a great example of the hard work, dedicated effort, and specific policies needed to realize those hopes. People with disabilities want to pursue the American Dream, just like everyone. Making sure there are pathways for their talents to meet employer talent needs is a win-win-win for people, taxpayers, and businesses alike. Iowa is already a living embodiment of how to create such pathways and how the economy benefits overall. We are excited by the opportunities created by the revised draft of your Unified State Plan. We want to be a resource to your state and your efforts in the months ahead. Let us know how we can help.

Table 1 Ranking 50 States by Employment Rates and Employment Gap

Data Source- Column 1: Table 2.1: Employment—Civilians with Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the United States and States: 2013 from the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium

Data Source-Column 2: Table 2.9: Employment Gap—Civilians Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community for the United States and States, by Disability Status: 2013 from the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium

Link: <http://disabilitycompendium.org/compendium-statistics/employment>

Column 1 Ranking of States by Employment Rate of People with Disabilities			Column 2 Ranking of States by the Employment Gap between People with disabilities and people without disabilities				
#	State	% of PWDs Employed	#	State	% of PWDs Employed	% of People without Disabilities Employed	Employment Gap as a %
1	South Dakota	50.1	1	North Dakota	49.9	82.0	32.1
2	North Dakota	49.9	2	Nevada	40.9	74.3	33.4
3	Iowa	46.5	3	Utah	44.0	77.4	33.5
4	Nebraska	46.0	4	South Dakota	50.1	83.7	33.6
5	Wyoming	45.2	5	Hawaii	42.4	76.6	34.2
6	Minnesota	44.4	6	Alaska	40.8	76.0	35.3
7	Utah	44.0	7	Iowa	46.5	82.2	35.7
8	Hawaii	42.4	8	Wyoming	45.2	81.0	35.9
9	Colorado	41.6	9	Idaho	38.8	75.7	37.0
10	Nevada	40.9	10	Montana	40.5	77.7	37.3
11	Alaska	40.8	11	New Jersey	39.2	76.5	37.3
12	Montana	40.5	12	Texas	38.0	75.3	37.3
13	Connecticut	40.2	13	Colorado	41.6	79.1	37.4
14	New Hampshire	40.0	14	Connecticut	40.2	77.9	37.7
15	Kansas	39.8	15	Nebraska	46.0	83.9	37.9

16	Wisconsin	39.8	16	Washington	37.7	76.0	38.3
17	New Jersey	39.2	17	Minnesota	44.4	82.9	38.5
18	Maryland	39.1	18	Oregon	36.4	74.9	38.5
19	Idaho	38.8	19	California	33.3	72.2	38.9
20	Texas	38.0	20	Maryland	39.1	78.2	39.1
21	Washington	37.7	21	Oklahoma	36.4	75.6	39.2
22	Virginia	37.6	22	Arizona	32.8	72.5	39.7
23	Oklahoma	36.4	23	Kansas	39.8	79.7	39.9
24	Oregon	36.4	24	Illinois	35.7	75.7	40.0
25	Indiana	36.2	25	Virginia	37.6	77.6	40.0
26	Vermont	36.2	26	Louisiana	32.1	72.4	40.3
27	Illinois	35.7	27	New York	33.6	74.0	40.4
28	Delaware	35.6	28	Delaware	35.6	76.3	40.7
29	Massachusetts	35.5	29	Indiana	36.2	77.0	40.7
30	Ohio	34.6	30	New Mexico	30.4	71.2	40.8
31	Pennsylvania	34.5	31	New Hampshire	40.0	81.3	41.3
32	Rhode Island	33.9	32	Wisconsin	39.8	81.1	41.4
33	New York	33.6	33	Pennsylvania	34.5	76.5	42.0
34	California	33.3	34	Ohio	34.6	77.0	42.5
35	Arizona	32.8	35	North Carolina	31.3	74.3	43.0
36	Missouri	32.8	36	Mississippi	27.4	70.4	43.1
37	Maine	32.5	37	Florida	30.1	73.4	43.3
38	Louisiana	32.1	38	Georgia	29.6	73.1	43.5
39	North Carolina	31.3	39	Massachusetts	35.5	79.0	43.5
40	New Mexico	30.4	40	Rhode Island	33.9	77.7	43.8
41	Florida	30.1	41	Alabama	27.3	71.3	44.1
42	Tennessee	29.9	42	Vermont	36.2	80.4	44.2

43	Georgia	29.6	43	Missouri	32.8	77.2	44.4
44	Michigan	29.6	44	Tennessee	29.9	74.4	44.5
45	Arkansas	29.2	45	Arkansas	29.2	73.8	44.6
46	South Carolina	29.0	46	West Virginia	25.6	70.5	44.9
47	Mississippi	27.4	47	Michigan	29.6	74.6	45.0
48	Kentucky	27.3	48	South Carolina	29.0	74.0	45.0
49	Alabama	27.2	49	Kentucky	27.3	74.4	47.1
50	West Virginia	25.6	50	Maine	32.5	79.9	47.4

Table 2

From 2012 to 2013, the employment gap closed by one percentage point or more in 22 states.

The top four states with the greatest reductions (AK, RI, WY, and NH) were small states-- with working-age populations under one million persons. It is hard to make comments about small states, because these statistics are estimates based on state-level samples. Smaller states have smaller samples and thus have a higher degree of year-to-year variability. I am hesitant to read too much into reductions and expansions in the employment gap for small states.

Looking at large states-- with working-age populations over 5 million persons--Illinois (a 2.3 percentage point reduction) and New Jersey (a 1 percentage point reduction) stand out. These are two large industrial states

All of the states that experienced reductions greater than one percentage point also experienced increases in employment rate of people with disabilities, so none of these reductions were due a reduction in the employment rate of people without disabilities.

The state that really stands out is South Carolina, with a 2.3 point reduction, while also having a 1.3 point increase in the employment rate of people without disabilities. The big question is whether we can attribute success, like the success in South Carolina to changes in policy or new innovative approaches to employing people with disabilities.

Working-age population under 1 million
Working-age population over 5 million
Increase in no dis employment

State	2012			2013			Change in Gap		Pop in 2013			Increase in Dis. Emp.	Increase in Non-PWD Emp.
	Dis.	No Dis.	Gap	Dis.	No Dis.	Gap	Pct. Points	Rank	Number	Rank	Size		

AK	39.0	76.3	37.3	47.8	75.2	27.4	-9.9	50	459,776	47	Working-age pop. under 1 million	8.8	-1.1
RI	28.7	77.0	48.3	34.3	76.3	42.0	-6.3	49	668,448	43	Working-age pop. under 1 million	5.6	-0.7
WY	43.9	78.5	34.6	50.7	79.4	28.7	-5.9	48	358,526	50	Working-age pop. under 1 million	6.8	0.9
NH	37.9	80.5	42.6	41.8	80.3	38.5	-4.1	47	842,880	40	Working-age pop. under 1 million	3.9	-0.2
MN	42.1	81.6	39.6	46.0	82.1	36.1	-3.5	46	3,357,171	21		3.9	0.5
NV	35.5	72.2	36.7	39.2	73.1	33.9	-2.8	45	1,719,885	34		3.7	0.9
WI	37.6	79.5	41.9	40.9	80.1	39.2	-2.7	44	3,544,103	20		3.3	0.6
SC	27.0	71.4	44.4	30.7	72.7	41.9	-2.5	42	2,893,842	24		3.7	1.3
NM	33.1	70.4	37.3	35.3	70.1	34.8	-2.5	42	1,243,353	36		2.2	-0.3
IL	33.4	74.6	41.2	36.1	75.0	38.9	-2.3	41	8,010,771	5	Working-age pop. over 5 million	2.7	0.4
IA	42.0	81.4	39.5	44.8	82.1	37.2	-2.3	40	1,868,852	30		2.8	0.7
UT	41.1	77.2	36.1	42.5	76.6	34.1	-2.0	39	1,701,705	35		1.4	-0.6
DE	34.6	75.1	40.6	36.4	75.1	38.7	-1.9	38	565,138	45	Working-age population under 1 million	1.8	0
CO	40.3	77.1	36.8	42.3	77.3	35.0	-1.8	36	3,304,940	22		2.0	0.2
HI	37.3	75.6	38.3	39.1	75.7	36.5	-1.8	36	822,542	42	Working-age population under 1 million	1.8	0.1
NE	43.5	82.2	38.7	45.5	82.6	37.1	-1.6	35	1,125,425	38		2.0	0.4
ND	51.6	83.3	31.7	52.8	83.1	30.2	-1.5	34	451,304	48	Working-age population under 1 million	1.2	-0.2
KS	40.1	78.8	38.7	41.7	79.0	37.3	-1.4	33	1,730,369	33		1.6	0.2
MA	33.0	77.2	44.2	34.9	77.9	42.9	-1.3	31	4,272,843	14		1.9	0.7
OK	34.4	75.1	40.7	35.8	75.2	39.4	-1.3	31	2,295,734	28		1.4	0.1
TN	28.0	73.2	45.2	29.9	74.1	44.1	-1.1	30	3,983,560	16		1.9	0.9
NJ	35.0	74.5	39.5	36.6	75.1	38.5	-1.0	29	5,528,837	11	Working-age pop. over 5	1.6	0.6

											million		
TX	37.0	73.8	36.9	38.7	74.7	36.0	-0.9	28	#####	2	Working-age pop. over 5 million	1.7	0.9
FL	28.9	71.4	42.5	30.5	72.2	41.7	-0.8	27	#####	4	Working-age pop. over 5 million	1.6	0.8
NY	30.9	72.7	41.8	32.2	73.3	41.1	-0.7	26	#####	3	Working-age pop. over 5 million	1.3	0.6
AL	26.8	70.8	44.0	27.1	70.5	43.4	-0.6	25	2,945,466	23		0.3	-0.3
GA	30.3	70.8	40.5	31.5	71.5	40.0	-0.5	22	6,151,890	8	Working-age pop. over 5 million	1.2	0.7
CT	39.7	76.6	36.9	40.0	76.4	36.4	-0.5	22	2,235,695	29		0.3	-0.2
WV	24.3	70.1	45.8	25.3	70.6	45.3	-0.5	22	1,132,703	37		1.0	0.5
WA	35.7	74.3	38.7	36.4	74.7	38.3	-0.4	21	4,339,199	13		0.7	0.4
PA	33.0	75.1	42.1	33.9	75.6	41.7	-0.4	20	7,849,516	6	Working-age pop. over 5 million	0.9	0.5
MT	38.7	76.4	37.7	39.4	76.8	37.4	-0.3	19	616,125	44	Working-age pop. under 1 million	0.7	0.4
MI	27.9	71.7	43.8	29.9	73.4	43.5	-0.3	18	6,096,761	9	Working-age pop. over 5 million	2.0	1.7
MS	26.4	69.6	43.3	26.3	69.4	43.1	-0.2	17	1,790,746	31		-0.1	-0.2
CA	31.8	70.2	38.5	32.7	71.1	38.4	-0.1	15	#####	1	Working-age pop. over 5 million	0.9	0.9
VA	36.3	76.5	40.1	36.9	76.9	40.0	-0.1	15	5,112,923	12	Working-age pop. over 5 million	0.6	0.4
KY	26.2	72.9	46.7	26.9	73.7	46.8	0.1	14	2,687,179	26		0.7	0.8
OH	32.8	75.1	42.2	33.5	75.9	42.4	0.2	13	7,072,114	7	Working-age pop. over 5 million	0.7	0.8
MO	32.2	76.2	44.0	33.0	77.1	44.2	0.2	12	3,666,019	19		0.8	0.9
MD	39.5	77.4	37.9	40.0	78.3	38.2	0.3	11	3,722,201	18		0.5	0.9
IN	33.5	75.5	41.9	33.8	76.0	42.3	0.4	10	4,008,950	15		0.3	0.5

VT	34.3	79.8	45.5	33.3	79.6	46.3	0.8	9	397,726	49	Working-age pop under 1 million	-1.0	-0.2
AZ	34.2	71.0	36.8	33.6	71.3	37.7	0.9	8	3,900,900	17		-0.6	0.3
OR	34.3	72.1	37.8	35.2	73.9	38.8	1.0	7	2,440,752	27		0.9	1.8
NC	30.2	72.2	42.0	30.3	73.5	43.2	1.2	6	6,000,202	10	Working-age pop. over 5 million	0.1	1.3
ID	38.6	74.8	36.2	36.7	75.2	38.5	2.3	5	946,943	39	Working-age pop. under 1 million	-1.9	0.4
ME	33.2	78.1	44.8	31.2	78.8	47.6	2.8	4	825,507	41	Working-age pop. under 1 million	-2.0	0.7
LA	34.4	72.6	38.2	31.3	72.4	41.1	2.9	3	2,825,101	25		-3.1	-0.2
AR	31.4	72.7	41.3	28.2	72.7	44.5	3.2	2	1,759,900	32		-3.2	0
SD	52.0	81.8	29.8	48.1	83.0	34.9	5.1	1	501,769	46	Working-age pop. under 1 million	-3.9	1.2

##



RESPECTABILITY

Iowa and Jobs for PwDs

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, President

www.RespectAbilityUSA.org

Iowa



Gov. Terry Branstad (R)

- ❖ 82.2% of persons without disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed.³
- ❖ 46.5% of Iowans with disabilities (PWDs) aged 18 to 64 are employed.³
- ❖ Iowa ranks 3rd in the nation in terms of employment for PWDs.
- ❖ **There remains a 35.7 percentage point gap in the labor force participation rate (LFPR) between people with and without disabilities.**
- ❖ 14,500 persons aged 16 to 20 have a disability.¹
- ❖ 179,300 persons aged 21 to 64 have a disability.¹
- ❖ 353,430 civilians living in Iowa have a disability.³
- ❖ The employment gap between PwDs and people without disabilities decreased 1.6% between 2013 and 2014.³
- ❖ 91,864 people 18-64 received SSDI or SSI benefits in IA December 2014.³
- ❖ In 2014, the total expenditure on SSDI benefits for PwDs in IA was \$1,160,436,000.³
- ❖ Voc. Rehab. obtained 3,637 jobs for PwDs in IA (out of 6,114 total applicants) in 2012.³

1. 2014 Disability Status Report: Iowa, disabilitystatistics.org
2. StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2014
3. [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

Iowa Data

		People with Disabilities (%)		People without Disabilities (%)	
		<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
Poverty ¹	US	28.7	28.2	13.6	13.0
	IA	27.2	25.4	10.9	10.9
Smoking ¹	US	25.4	24.5	16.2	15.3
	IA	27.5	23.8	17.3	16.9
Obesity ¹	US	40.1	41.1	25.0	25.2
	IA	43.0	45.2	28.1	27.0
Employment ¹	US	33.9	34.4	74.2	75.4
	IA	44.8	46.5	82.1	82.2

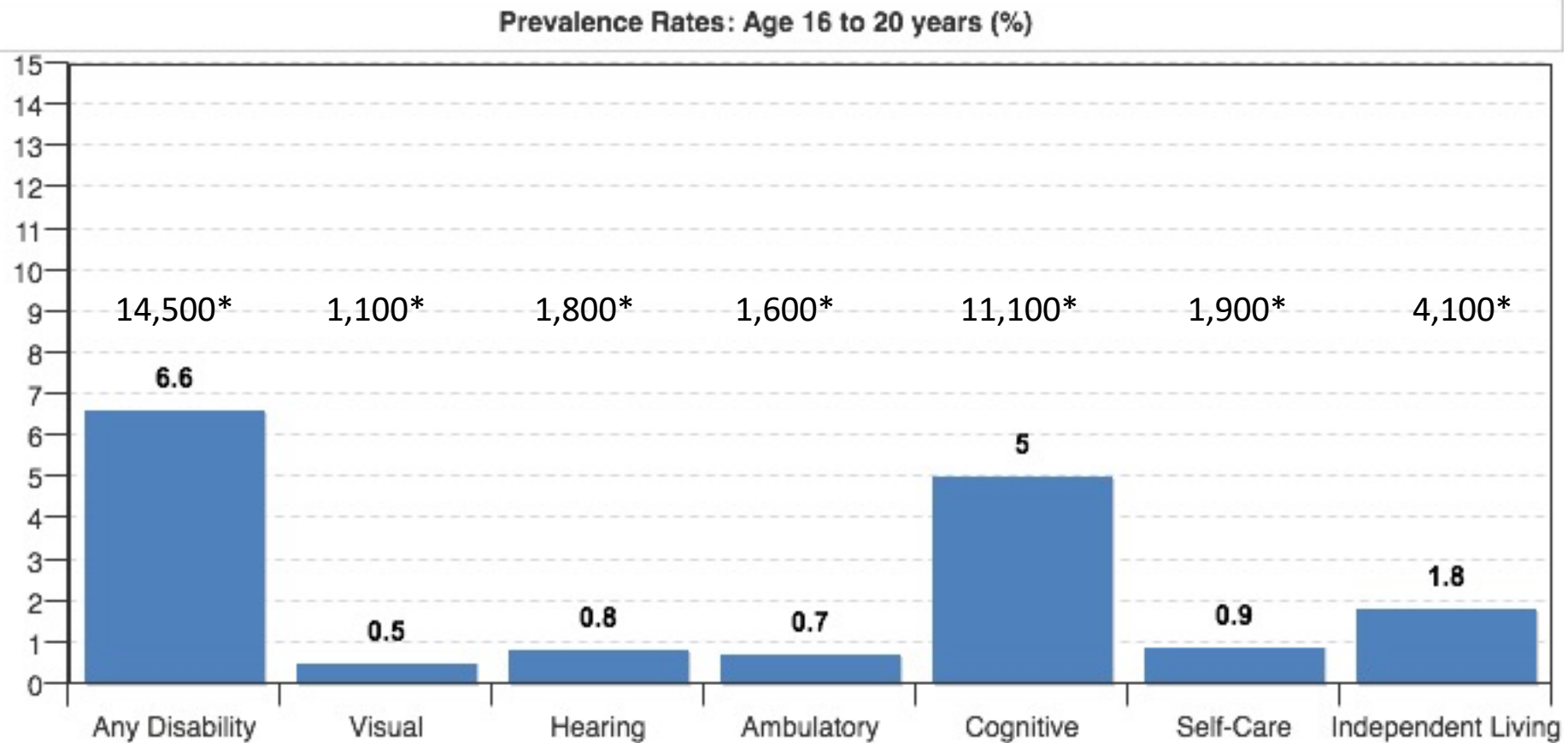
1. [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#). Pg 84, 88, 128, 45-46

Ages 6 to 21 IEPs by Category IA

	2012	2013
All Disabilities	58,773	58,170
Specific Learning Disability	35,490	35,121
Speech or Language Impairment	5,062	5,012
Intellectual Disability	10,132	10,029
Emotional Disturbance	5,725	5,666
Multiple Disability	321	315
Hearing Impairment	410	408
Orthopedic Impairment	659	651
Other Health Impairment	78	79
Visual Impairment	78	79
Autism	659	651
Deaf Blindness	0	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	159	159
Developmental Delay	---	---

Source: [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 16 to 20 in Iowa in 2013

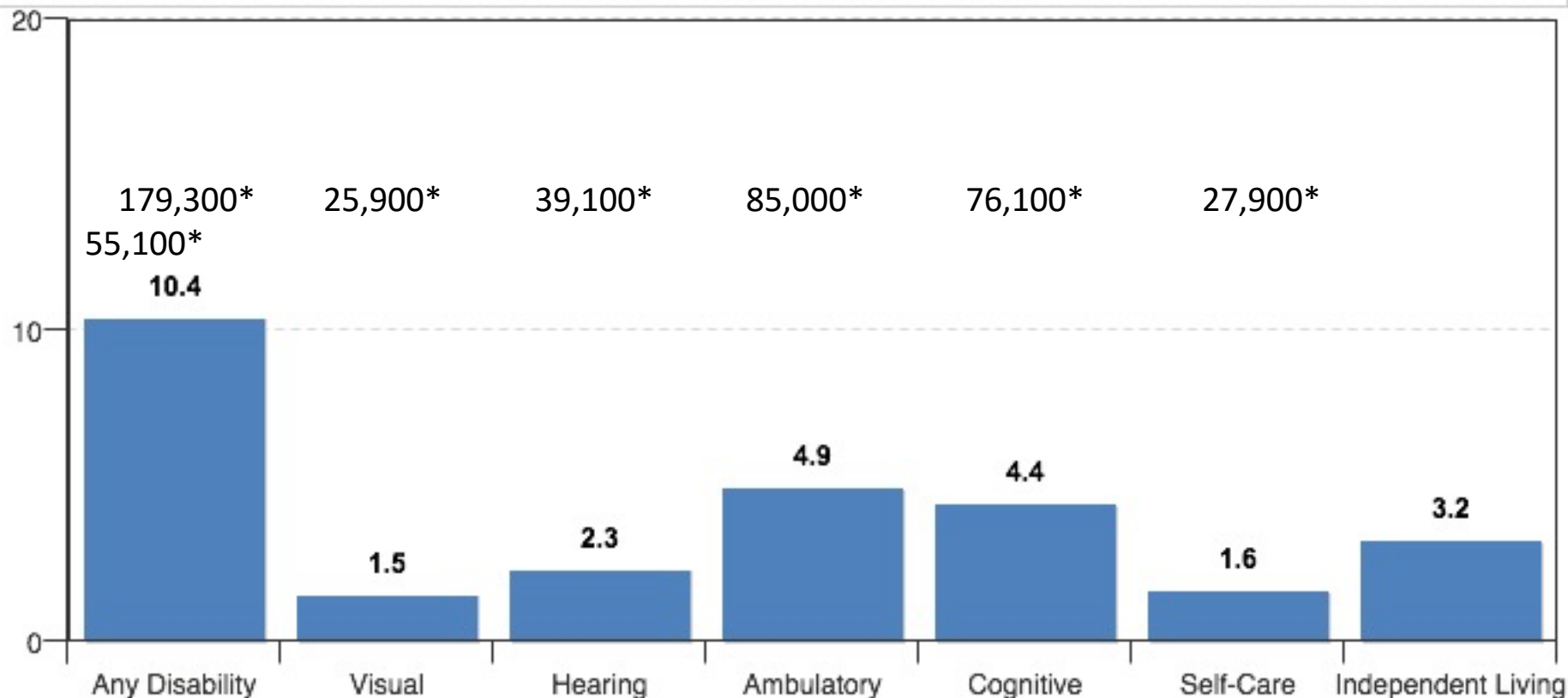


*Total numbers reported

Source: [Cornell University](#)

Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 21 to 64 in Iowa in 2013

Prevalence Rates: Age 21 to 64 years (%)

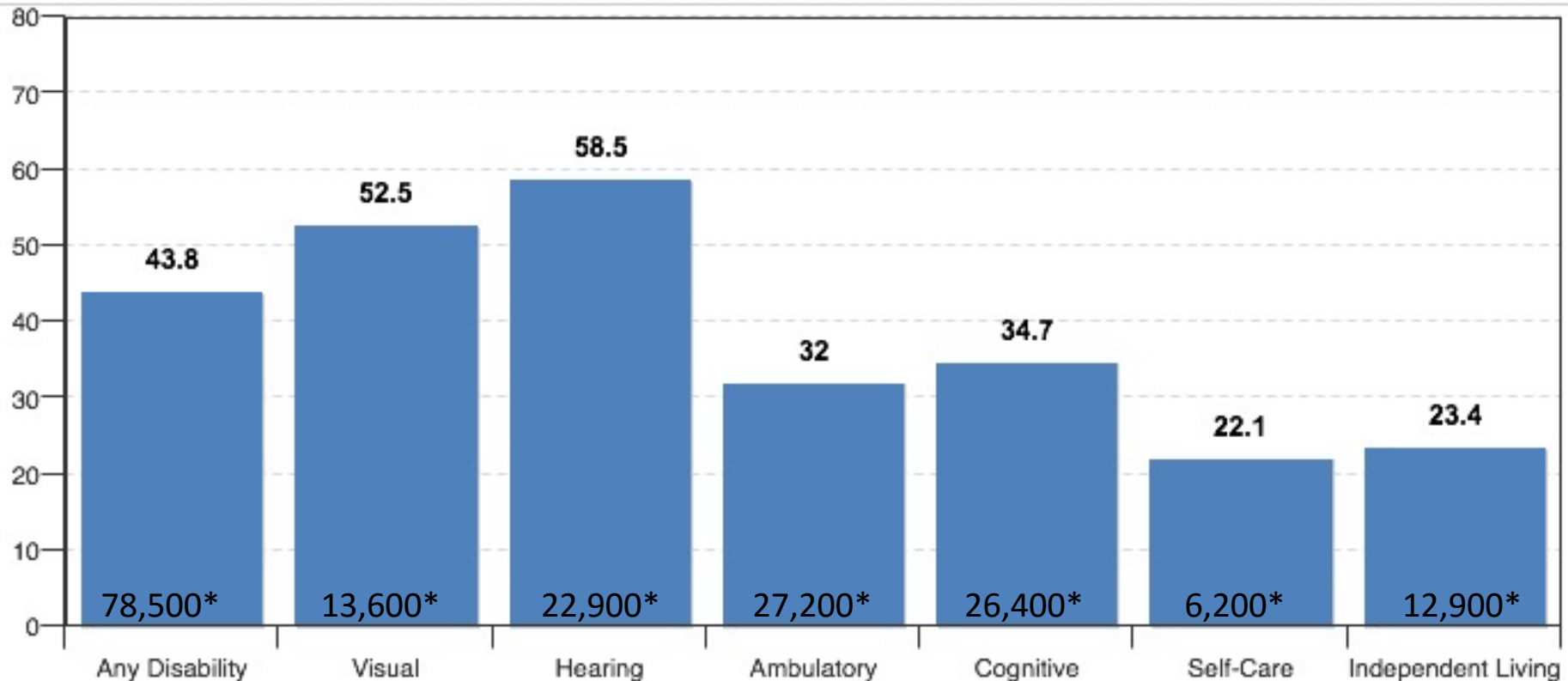


*Total numbers reported

Source: [Cornell University](#)

Employment of Non-Institutionalized Working-Age People (Ages 21 to 64) by Disability Status in Iowa in 2013

Employment Rates (%)



*Total numbers reported

Source: [Cornell University](#)

Governor Terry Branstad (IA, R)

❖ **Governor Terry Brandstad (IA)** has been working with Senator Tom Harkin on [solutions](#). He hosted a [statewide summit](#) on jobs for people with disabilities and is working systematically to make progress possible.

Sources:

<http://www.shreveporttimes.com/article/D2/20140217/OPINION02/302170021/Another-View-Iowa-should-help-disabled-find-work>

<https://governor.iowa.gov/2013/09/gov-branstad-It-gov-reynolds-and-sen-harkin-to-co-host-forum-on-%E2%80%99Cempowering-individuals-with-disabilities-through-employment%E2%80%9D/>

Iowa Project SEARCH Sites

- ❖ ChildServe, Johnston
- ❖ Des Moines Community College, Des Moines
- ❖ Hy-Vee, Des Moines
- ❖ Lucas County Health Center, Chariton
- ❖ Mercy Medical Center, Des Moines
- ❖ Mercy Medical Center (North Iowa), Mason City
- ❖ University Point Health Saint Luke's Hospital, Cedar Rapids
- ❖ University Point Methodist Hospital, Des Moines

Project SEARCH: www.projectsearch.us

Contact Paula Johnson at paula.johnson@cchmc.org

Which Employers in Your State Must Meet 503 Rules (Hire PwDs)?

❖ Top contractors:

- Rockwell Collins Inc.
- Weston Solutions Holdings Inc.
- Data Link Solutions LLC
- Poongsan Corp.
- Poongsan Holdings Corp.

For the complete list see the [fed spending website](#)

How to get started: Job Accommodation Network → <https://askjan.org/>

US Business Leadership Network → <http://usbln.org/>

Jobs in Iowa

- ❖ Iowa's high-growth industries for the 2008-2018 period:
 - Internet Service Providers (Web Search), Other Information Services; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Ambulatory Health Care Services, and Social Assistance.
- ❖ According to the state's industry employment projections for 2008-2018, all industries are expected to grow by 10.5% over the ten-year period
- ❖ [Click for your State Development Plan](http://www.iowaworkforce.org/centers/planreview.htm)
<http://www.iowaworkforce.org/centers/planreview.htm>
- ❖ [Click for your State Development Board](http://workforceinvestmentworks.com/workforce_board_info.asp?st=IA)
http://workforceinvestmentworks.com/workforce_board_info.asp?st=IA

Resources

- ❖ StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2014 (data from 2013)
- ❖ 2013 Disability Status Report United States, Cornell University, 2013: www.disabilitystatistics.org
- ❖ Fedspending: www.fedspending.org
- ❖ Project SEARCH: www.projectsearch.us
- ❖ Job Accommodation Network: <https://askjan.org/>
- ❖ State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency:
http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_cd=SVR
- ❖ RespectAbilityUSA: www.respectabilityusa.org

Let Us Know If We Can Help!

We have many resources for policy makers and employers on our website and are ready to help!

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