



Finding solutions. Generating success.

December 28, 2022

Iowa Department of Management
Kraig Paulsen

RE: Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services Strategic Plan, 2019-2022

IVRS is continuing to implement key initiatives as outlined in our current Strategic Plan, 2019-2022. This year, we began discussions in identifying a new vision for our next strategic plan. This plan is in the final stages to be moved forward.

During the past year, IVRS has integrated the goals and vision of Future Ready Iowa and continued to advance opportunities for individuals with disabilities with special focus on the following:

- Assisted in the development and approval of Local One Stop Plans, as well as beginning the process of the certification of those One Stop Centers.
- We continue to be involved with the Disability Access Committees to positively influence accessibility and service delivery.
- Identifying business needs and moving Business Services to the next level of outreach for the agency.
- Continued communication and development of Local School Plans focused on the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities.
- Focus on Supported Employment Service delivery related to Customized Employment and Discovery for those individuals with the most significant disabilities. This service is now at the level that we are looking into fidelity for areas of the state while still attempting to expand it to cover the entire state.
- Collaboration between the Professional Development Team (PDT) and the local area supervisors to ensure clear communication is occurring across the state.
- Continuation of monthly statewide area office meetings and holding an in-person statewide training conference.

Our work environment continues to be a hybrid approach based on the efficiencies and work effectiveness as we learned while going through the pandemic.

Strategic planning efforts continued in 2022 and a new strategic plan has been developed with input from field staff. We remain focused at creating and maintaining a diverse workforce that is accessible, engaged and empowered to service our stakeholders and position staff to be at the Intersection of Disability Expertise and Business Intelligence.

Respectfully,

Daniel Tallon

Daniel Tallon
IVRS Administrator



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Iowa Disability Determination Services (DDS) Bureau - 2021 Update on the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan
November 30, 2022 | Submitted by Liz McLaren, Bureau Chief

The Iowa Disability Determination Services (DDS) Bureau provides disability determination services to claimants for Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income in Iowa through a partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA) and per federal regulations. The DDS receives 100% federal funding of approximately \$28 million from SSA with 189 Full Time Equivalent positions involved. This includes 15 physicians and 15 psychologists.

The DDS meets all FFY 2022 SSA COVID-19 adjusted performance targets and provides timely, accurate and cost-effective services. The Iowa DDS is a top performer of adjudicative services in the nation in the critical areas of processing time and accuracy of claims determinations.

The 2019-2022 DDS Strategic Plan focuses on services to the citizens of Iowa and our workforce. What we are doing to achieve results:

- Revised organizational structure and created a second training unit to accommodate realized and anticipated new hire disability examiners. Prepared organization for the increase in staffing in response to COVID-19 actuarial predictions and workload assistance for other states.
- Leadership Program Cohort #3 session completed in spring of 2022.
- Limited English Proficiency (Spanish) cases routed to Spanish speaking staff.
- In June 2022, the DDS decommissioned the IBM server and ended all work in legacy system and fully processed all SSA and Iowa Medicaid claims in the SSA provided Disability Case Processing System (DCPS).
- Worked with Iowa DHS to implement fully paperless processing of State Medicaid disability cases.
- Internal DDS staff details created to offer development and skill growth opportunities. Mentoring program revised and expanded.
- Deployed staff resources and expertise to SSA upon request. Expanded outreach efforts to SSA Field Offices, On With Life, Iowa Psychological Association, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Workplace culture improvements include utilization of flexible work hours and expanded telework; rebrand and relaunch of the Live Well, Live Social team; surveying staff on challenges, ideas, and situation updates via Bureau Chief chats and Strategic Planning focus groups. All units held at least monthly meetings with supervisor.
- Accountability and service expectations drafted and messaged aligned with the new SSA approved telework plan.
- Maintained solid employee retention rates. Began FY22 with 175 total staff and ended FY22 with 190 total staff. Attrition rate for the Iowa DDS is 8.3% with national average 17.8%.
- After selection as first state DDS to pilot SSA's Imagen (Intelligent Medical Language Analysis Generation) software with the goal to use automated intelligence to analyze and filter medical evidence, the DDS has expanded to additional users, with plans to increase in 2023. All new disability examiner, physician, and psychologist hires are trained in this tool.
- Evolved use of management information and data analytics, including SSA's Performance and Quality Dashboards and Microstrategy Business Intelligence. Expanded report usage and use of 365 data analytics.
- Met federal draw down maximums with no lapse in funding. FY 2022 Federal financial statement audit resulted in only one finding.

The Focus of the Iowa Disability Determination Services Bureau is Best Decision, Every Claimant, Every Time.
We strive to be a top five producer of disability adjudication services.