



December 28, 2020

Iowa Department of Management

David Roederer

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.

During this past year, key changes have occurred consistent with communication outlined in the strategic plan. Highlights include:

1. Restructuring our Planning and Development team meetings
2. Changing structure of weekly supervisor leadership calls
3. Implement monthly statewide conference calls with variety of training topics identified
4. Implementing local blueprint office plans identifying specific action steps taken locally to maintain and improve employment outcomes and to maintain and improve pre-employment transition hours. A template was developed which identified trend data results by area office for the past five years and action steps in the following four areas: Placement, Community Rehabilitation Providers, Quality of Services/Engagement and Pre-Employment Transition services.
5. Agency committees were revised to create an executive leadership team as well as revising the role of our coordinating council to creating a new staff leadership council focusing on policy review and individual leadership, titled the IMPACT Team.

2020 was a challenging year as we navigated the pandemic crisis. Emphasis on our technology and partnerships assisted in helping us continue in service provision without closing offices or laying off staff. 90% of staff were able to telework within a week's timeframe with a total COVID cost to the agency at less than \$10,000, which came from increased bandwidth needs and a change in faxing strategies. 2020 was significant for celebrations recognizing the 100-year celebration of the federal VR program, the 30th year anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 50th year of the passage of the Developmental Disabilities Act.

Strategic planning efforts will continue to provide guidance as we move forward with plans for 2021. An overarching goal is to change the learning and work culture at IVRS

recognizing the value of diversity and positioning staff to be at the Intersection of Disability Expertise and Business Intelligence.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Mitchell".

David Mitchell, MS, CRC
IVRS Administrator



Iowa Disability Determination Services (DDS) Bureau 2020 Update on the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

December 28, 2020

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 \$26.2 million from SSA with 139.2 Full Time Equivalent positions involved.

The DDS meets all FFY 2020 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. The following highlights were a result from the strategies implemented:

- Revised organizational structure to create a training unit to accommodate anticipated new hire disability examiners. Prepare organization for the increase in staffing in response to COVID-19 actuarial predictions of a large increase in claims.
- Leadership Program curriculum completed and ready to implement in 2021.
- The Iowa DDS is one of the first DDS's in the Nation to 100% roll out and ramp up the new SSA Disability Case Processing System (DCPS). This final blitz began in January 2020 and was complete by June 2020. Notably, many staff received training and learned the new system while in telework status.
- Serve as a mentor site for multiple states both formally and informally and provide staff training to assist other DDS's in their transition to DCPS.
- Internal DDS staff details created to offer development and skill growth opportunities.
- Deployed staff resources and expertise to SSA upon request.
- Workplace culture improvements include utilization of flexible work hours, telework expansion, surveying staff on challenges, ideas, and situation updates, and diversity and inclusion activities.
- Maintained solid employee retention rates. Began and ended FY20 with 148 total staff.

-COVID-19 response and mitigation drove the DDS to innovate in work assignments, redeployment of human resources, utilization of new technologies to support work from home and policy application.

-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 2021.

-We continuously update the Help Desk and DDS Intranet portal & modernize using Confluence tools.

-Evolved use of management information and data analytics, including SSA's Performance and Quality Dashboards and Microstrategy Business Intelligence.

-Met federal draw down maximums with no lapse in funding.

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.

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