

NEWS RELEASE

For Statewide Distribution



Iowa Workforce Development

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VISTA Workers will Enhance Iowa's Response to Hurricane Survivors

DES MOINES, IOWA - Iowa Workforce Development and its New Iowan Centers will work with Iowa Workforce Regions, Community Based Organizations and the Corporation for National and Community Service to support Hurricane Katrina evacuees who wish to relocate to Iowa and become integrated into the economy of our communities.

People who came to Iowa following the hurricane may be considered homeless, some with symptoms of post-traumatic stress not unlike what is seen among returning veterans, and in immediate need of developing the means to support their families in unfamiliar communities. Quick connection to supportive services for this transition is necessary to the welfare of their families. This assistance will be provided in addition to addressing their need to understand their new state and its culture.

Three VISTA volunteers in communities recognized as developing the highest accumulation of Hurricane "survivors" in Iowa will be engaged to identify and approach all known newcomers in this group and then mobilize the resources available through the New Iowan Centers and partner organizations. Though it is not definitely known at this time, it is likely that the needs of these "new Iowans" may be unique to the others. Addressing these needs will only be possible through the efforts of people dedicated entirely to their identification and integration. It is also anticipated that once the unique needs and strategies in service provision are identified and tested, these resources and services can be fully integrated into the New Iowan Center, and One-Stop Workforce Center, offerings after the completion of one year.

"The State of Iowa has invested heavily into a One-Stop employment service system that is responsive to the needs of local communities," reports Anthony Dietsch, Administrator for the Workforce Center Administration Division of Iowa Workforce Development. "With the focus of the New Iowan Centers, within the workforce system, to welcome and support all "new Iowans" in their integration into our economy and communities, this opportunity is an excellent fit."

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Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request for individuals with disabilities.
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