

NEWS RELEASE

For Region 13 Distribution



Iowa Workforce Development

For Immediate Release

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REGION 13 WORKFORCE PARTNERS EMPLOY NEW “DEAF” NAVIGATOR

Council Bluffs, Iowa - Iowa Workforce Development, on behalf of a collaborative partnership with state agencies, has received a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration to create new positions for Iowa's Workforce Development Centers.

Known as a disability program navigator, one of these positions is housed at Council Bluff's Workforce Development Center and facilitates access to employment and services for area job seekers who are deaf. Region 13 includes Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Page, Pottawattamie and Shelby Counties. Tina Lynch will join current navigator, Karen Goehring, and partner workforce agencies in working to enhance their ability to facilitate quality employment outcomes for area job seekers who are deaf. Tina will assume the post on January 17, 2006. Tina has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education along with additional graduate level courses. She most recently served as an American Sign Language (ASL) Instructor with Kirkwood Community College (2003-2005), and has served in other colleges and universities in this capacity. In her role, Tina has demonstrated extensive knowledge of the resources and tools available to people who are deaf, and an understanding of how these resources can be utilized to support individuals in their careers. Tina will take over for Deb Graegin in this position, as Deb has left to assume a leadership role in a family business.

According to the 2000 US Census, Iowans with disabilities have an unemployment rate that exceeds 34%, but most would prefer to be pursuing a career. Disability program navigators will not duplicate services offered by agencies supporting local workforce services, but support job seekers with information and connection with service programs that will provide career enhancement.

“The creation of these positions should not be seen as a new service program,” stated Barbara Bobb, Iowa Workforce Development's Chief of the Targeted Services Bureau. “They will serve a role within the system designed to enhance the capacity of all of our partners in services designed to fully include Iowans with disabilities in the workforce.”

Iowa Workforce Development is meeting with State agency partners, including the Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Iowa Department for the Blind, Iowa Division of Persons with Disabilities, the Iowa Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Human Services and others to plan and support the implementation. Representatives from the Iowa School for the Deaf and Deaf Services of Iowa have been instrumental as well as inspirational to our other partners in planning and implementing this new position.

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

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