

Iowa's Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health

Evidence-Based Practices in Behavioral Health Summit

IPS in Rural Communities: Barriers and Strategies

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September 29, 2023

Learn. Support. Advance.

Objectives

- Attendees will learn about some of the challenges of Rural IPS.
- Attendees will learn about some of the creative responses of Rural IPS.
- Attendees will learn how rural IPS programs compare in Fidelity Measures.
- Attendees will learn from a Rural Iowa IPS program.

What is Rural?

- Lots of definitions mostly based on distance or travel time from an urban area with population of 50,000
- Frontier is another distinction and is 15 minutes from a town of under 10,000
- All states have rural areas, but in 26 states 25% of the land is considered rural.
- Rural if residents identify as rural!
- Links for the maps on your handout:
 - https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/DataFiles/51020/52626_farcodesmaps.pdf?v=483.4
 - <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-role-of-medicaid-in-rural-america/>

Rural IPS is a National Issue

- With 8 practice principle and a 25-point fidelity scale it is often assumed the same standards are not appropriate in rural areas.
- IPS Center study in 2014 comparing 56 urban and 23 rural programs found little to no difference in the fidelity scores and employment outcomes are similar and employment rate was higher in the rural programs.
- Rural programs tend to do better in some measures and worse in others.

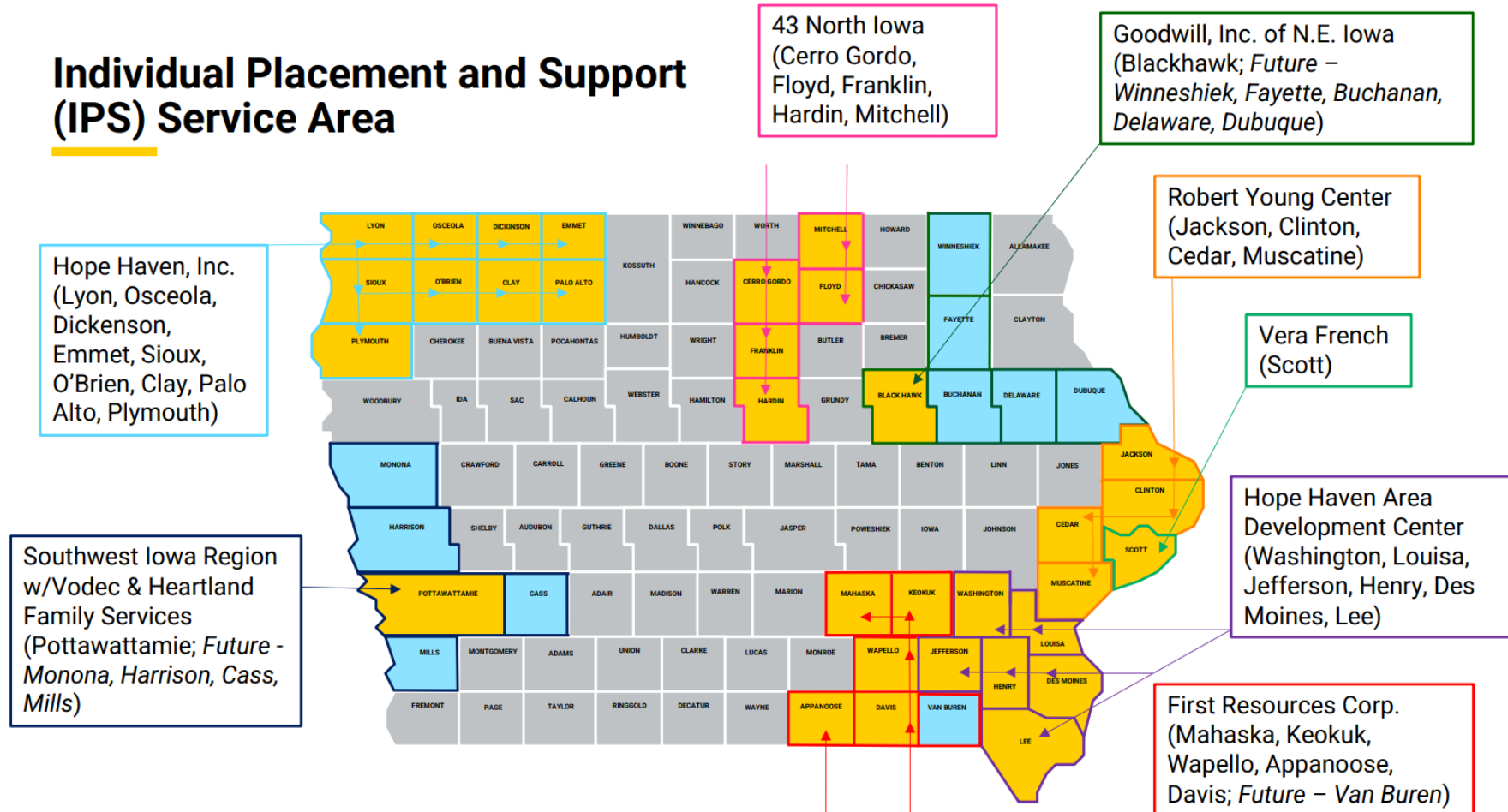
Rural IPS Implementation Issues

- Low Population density impacting workforce and funding
- Transportation!
- IPS employment team staff and supervision
- Job Development and Employer Diversity
- Stigma- everyone knows everybody's business

Where are WE?

Hope Haven operates in the far NW part of Iowa

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Service Area



Stats about our service area...

- Our service area covers 150x60 square mile area
- The largest community is a little over 11,000
- Smallest community is less than 20
- East side has the Iowa Great Lakes which provides lots of tourism/service jobs
- West side has a lot of Agricultural related jobs, including ag manufacturing
- Our Minnesota program covers similar distance, but their largest community is a little over 13,000

Small communities – a blessing or a curse?

Challenges

- Transportation barriers
- Everyone knows everyone – confidentiality
- Finding and retaining quality staff
- Access to Mental Health/Substance counseling services
- Stigma and taking people where they are at in their journey
- May take multiple job placements before find the right fit – reputation
- Mileage costs
- Variety of job types

Positives

- Everyone knows everyone – Relationships are Key
- Partnership with IVRS has helped people obtain Drivers license
- Small businesses – family like environment
- Connections- easy to turn a cold contact into a warm contact using personal, client and agency connections
- Creative solutions and caring co-workers
- Approachable business owners

Fidelity challenges

- Voc unit – need at least 2 employment specialists and a supervisor to make a unit for fidelity.
- Job variety and preferences of participants can be difficult in communities with fewer employment options.
- Small, private therapy practices. It can be hard to get buy in from therapists who need to bring in money and don't have extra time for extra meetings. Also, difficult to get referral numbers from just 2 mental health teams.
- Challenging to meet weekly for case consultations with mental health team due to time and travel constraints.
- Co-locating with the mental health team is a challenge when Employment Specialists travel to many different communities.
- Meeting employer contact expectations each week with smaller communities with fewer employers to meet with.

How can we help clients develop work preferences that match individual interests, skills and abilities in a rural community where there is little variety of employment available?

Learn about as many employers in your area as possible so you can educate job seekers about the full range of positions available.



Program stats

- In Iowa since July 2018 we have served 136 people on IPS
- 93 became employed for an employment rate of 68%
- Our current average hourly pay is \$12.99/hour and 18.4 hours/week
- We scored “Good” Fidelity with each of our fidelity reviews since program start in 2018
- Minnesota program started in 2015 and has served 214 people, 176 of which became employed for 82% employment rate
- Minnesota team has scored “Good” with one “Exemplary” since their program start in 2015

Monica's Story...



Key things to consider...

- How strong is your relationship with your Mental Health Region?
 - They were key to funding us during start up and training period for new staff.
- How strong is your relationship with your local mental health partners? Do you have a larger IHH/Mental Health Provider, or mostly small private therapy providers?
 - It can work either way, just different things to navigate and figure out a process for.
- How strong is your staff in job development?
 - We need people who enjoy talking to people, learning about new businesses and love to be on the go out in the community/communities. When hiring, look for people who are already involved in their communities and have good connections.



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