



Impact Report

July 2023 - June 2024



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FY2024 by the Numbers

674

Individuals served

192

Workshops and programs

458

Job applications/
searches

69.3%

Percentage of individuals served
who are currently unemployed

1,369

Workshop and program
attendees

381

Resumes created

65%

Individuals served
from 52404

233

Resource
referrals

Our Story So Far

WHO WE ARE

The core focus of the Opportunity Center is to provide resources to the community to support employment and job training goals. Through resume workshops, computer skills classes, mock interviews, and career fairs, the Opportunity Center helps people find employment.

Opened in the Cedar Rapids Public Library's Ladd Library in 2019, the Opportunity Center is a collaboration between the Library, Kirkwood Community College, United Way of East Central Iowa, HACAP, and the City of Cedar Rapids. Other partners include IowaWorks, Goodwill, Catherine McAuley Center, DeltaV Code School, and Iowa Vocational Rehab.



HOW WE'RE DIFFERENT

The Opportunity Center guides job seekers through obstacles in the way of gainful employment and career advancement. The Opportunity Center focuses on being transformational as opposed to merely transactional, tailoring the experience and support to each job seeker—with an emphasis on outcomes: self-sufficiency, growth, and upward mobility. The result is a skilled and reliable workforce ready to meet the demands of employers and alleviate the worker shortage.

Transforming lives and our workforce one connection at a time.

Our FY2024 Success

1

Events and Workshops

Many workshops and skill-building opportunities were added to the Opportunity Center schedule: Computer Skills, Interview Prep, Resume Building and Financial Wellness. The Opportunity Center also provides space for other community organizations to host classes. Career Fairs were relaunched in partnership with IowaWORKS in June and had an average of 50 job seekers attend monthly.

2

Financial Wellness Education - Linn County Juvenile Detention

The Opportunity Center provided weekly Financial Wellness education through the summer to youth at Linn County Juvenile Detention. Through these interactive workshops and projects, youth were able to learn new skills, participate in unique learning opportunities as well as prepare for financial responsibility in their future as they become adults and more independent.

3

Community Outreach

Opportunity Center staff visits ASAC's Recovery Center program and the Larry A. Nelson Center with laptops to start resume building, teach skills for searching/applying for jobs, and register for workshops with IowaWORKS. They also lead a monthly group at ASAC's Heart of Iowa to talk about Opportunity Center services, provide an introduction to the Way Home transitional housing program's Creating Career Pathways pilot, and teach the "Dos and Don'ts of resumes/interviews."

FY2024 was the first full year with a full-time Opportunity Center Program Coordinator, who began making an immediate impact on the operations and functions of the Opportunity Center. A front desk volunteer began in April of 2024, a Kirkwood Work Study student will start in August 2024, and two RIVA AmeriCorp members are slated to start in fall 2024, expanding capacity and helping prepare the Opportunity Center for future initiatives.

Looking Forward

In addition to current services, the Opportunity Center is excited to launch two new initiatives in FY2025.

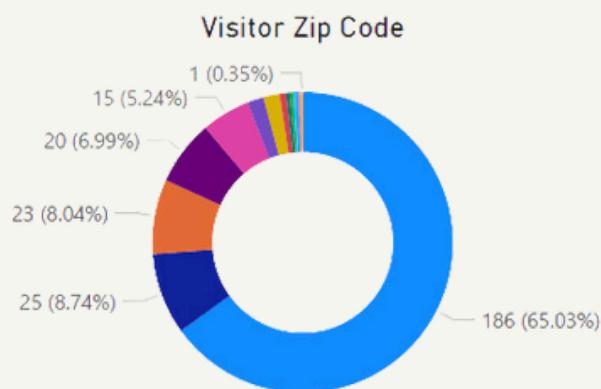
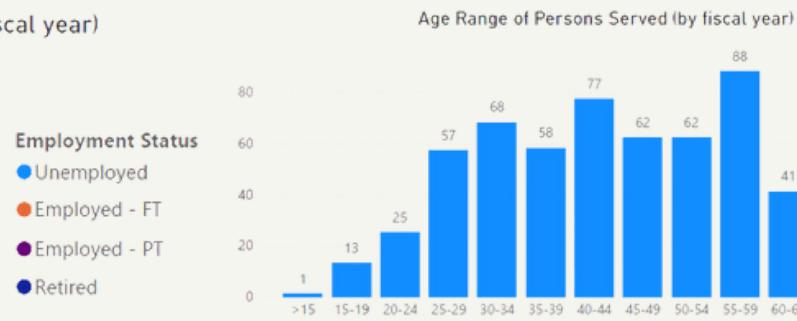
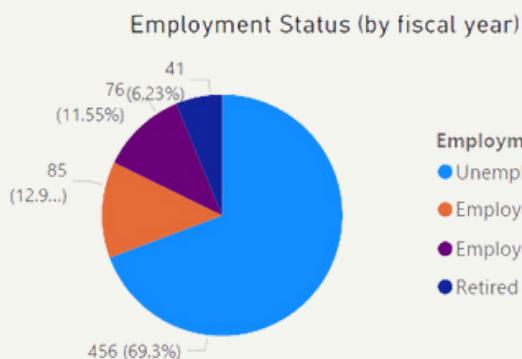
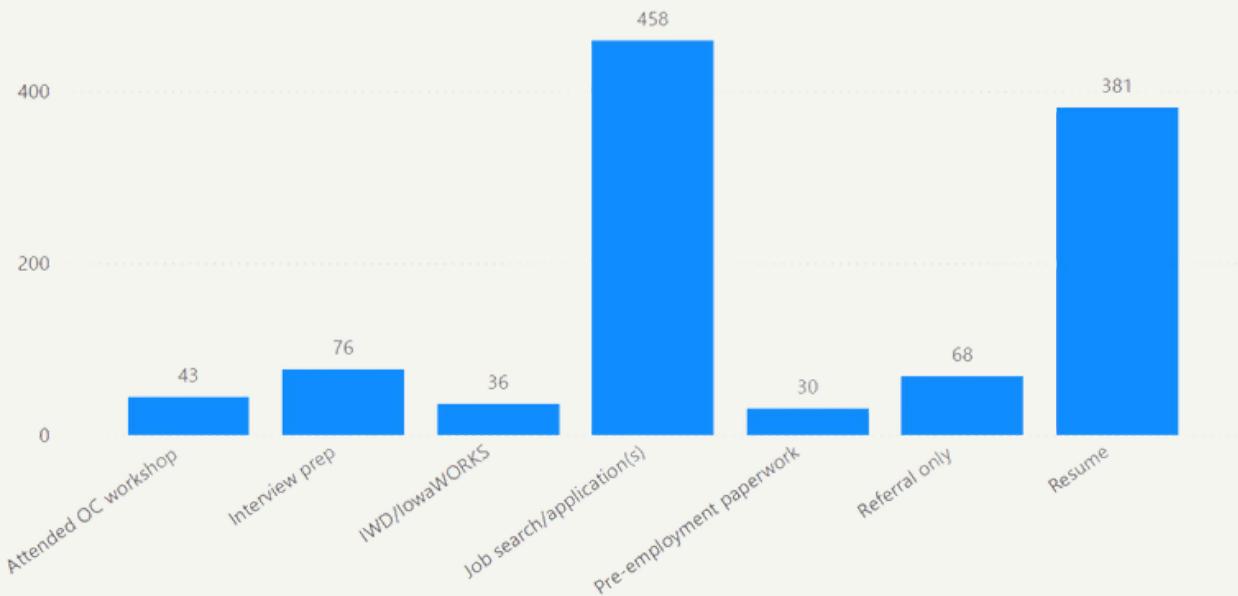
- AmeriRIVA (Refugee & Immigrant Voices of Action) AmeriCorps members serve and empower refugee and immigrant communities through direct services. Their mission is to increase organizational capacity to assist these underserved populations, leading to greater economic stability. Our members will assist with promoting work readiness programs through the Opportunity Center to the immigrant and refugee community. Examples include teaching ESL, digital literacy, financial literacy, job preparedness, job hunting, and interview preparation. We are also looking forward to being able to provide citizenship classes in the future as we prepare for the new Westside Library.

- The Opportunity Center, in partnership with Kirkwood Community College, Goodwill Career Services and United Way's Women United, are launching the "Creating Career Pathways," a unique career readiness workshop series and supportive employment pathway program designed for participants at ASAC's Way Home Transitional Housing to explore their interests and skill sets, establish career goals and identify a pathway to reach those goals. Participants are incentivized throughout with gift cards for participation in workshops and enrollment in education and/or job training programs. Participants also meet individually with a program coordinator to address possible barriers to participation and prepare for workplace success and their career goals.

PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
RIVA AmeriCorps	Increase organizational capacity to assist immigrant and refugee communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ESL, digital literacy, interview preparation, job searching• Citizenship classes• Outreach to target populations
Creating Career Pathways - ASAC's Way Home	Career readiness workshop series	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore interests and skill sets• Establish career goals• Identify a pathway for those goals

Additional Data

Count of Services by Fiscal Year



Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone responsible for making the Opportunity Center a success!

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And all our community partners who host workshops, meet and refer clients, and spread the word!



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