

Clearing obstacles

When Sheila came to the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB) in September of 2018, it was clear to Jamie, Sheila's Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, that she was motivated to work. Sheila had moved from out of state. She had to learn and get to know the services Iowa had to provide. At the same time, Jamie had to assess what kinds of resources and supports she needed to achieve her goal. It helped that Sheila had a plan.

Sheila knew about a manufacturing program with a certification offered by Goodwill. It's a program and certification that is well-known amongst local businesses. In December of 2018, IDB paid for Sheila to go through the Goodwill program, and provided her with counseling services along the way.

Obstacle one

Jamie's assessment of Sheila's determination to find employment was proven true just as she embarked on Goodwill's certification program. While IDB and Goodwill were beginning to assess how she fit into the program, Sheila was hit by a car. Ensuing medical issues put her participation in the manufacturing program on hold. She was cleared to resume physical activities in February. A month later, in March of 2019, she was back at Goodwill and it was obvious that was a good fit to participate and complete the manufacturing training.

The program lasted about four months. Again, Sheila's eagerness to gain the needed certification and begin work was evident. Sheila excelled in the classroom portion of the program. Jamie would meet with Sheila each month to review her progress. She completed the program in July of 2019.

Jamie and Sheila participated in an exit meeting with Goodwill. Together, they all worked to update Sheila's resume. With the manufacturing certification, Sheila was ready to begin a job search. In September of 2019, Jamie helped her transition to receiving Title I and Title III services through Iowa Workforce Development (IWD). IWD was able to provide further job search and resume assistance, while Jamie and IDB continued to provide counseling and monitor Sheila's progress.

With IWD, Sheila was connected to an Employment Specialist. The Employment Specialist not only accompanied her to job fairs, including the Grab-a-Job Fair held at IWD, but perhaps more importantly, provided support with introductions to employers and local businesses. With Sheila being new to town, this warm exchange was important to help her achieve her employment goal. In September of 2019, she was offered and accepted a job.

Obstacle two

In the Fall of 2019, Sheila's employer was about to enter a slow period. Being new, Sheila knew that she could lose her job if lay-offs became necessary. That was not her plan.

Sheila left this employer, and was able to land another position in manufacturing in December of 2019. She works full-time and earns \$26,000 annually. Jamie continues to monitor Sheila's employment, but has not closed her status because she wants to ensure the position is stable.

Obstacle three...never presented itself

Sheila was motivated. She overcame a car accident and went on to complete her certification program. She saw a downturn coming with one employer and went on to get a job with another. One obstacle she never had to encounter was getting lost in the shuffle with the VR, training and employment services she received through Iowa Department for the Blind, Goodwill, and Iowa Workforce Development. The people that work with her are connected to each other and able to make the right connections on her behalf. Almost as important as Sheila's resolve to overcome the obstacles to achieving her employment goal was the seamless support she received and continues to receive along her journey.

Summary:

- Sheila's Career Outcome: Production Worker (12/3/19)
- \$12.50 an hour, \$26,700 annually.
- Sheila will likely exit once it is determined her position is stable.

Agency	Services Provided
Iowa Department for the Blind (Title IV)	Career Counseling (Counseling and Guidance), Case Management, Job Search Assistance
Iowa Workforce Development (Title III)	Job Center Workshops, Job Fairs Job Search Assistance, Job Placement Assistance
Title I Adult Program	Job Search Assistance
Goodwill	Manufacturing Training

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