



The Vodec Voice

Realizing Potential

Vocational Development Center, Inc. (Vodec) Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22), July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

It was another interesting period in Vodec history. FY22 saw the continuation of the impact of COVID-19 and a business pivot because of the workforce challenges from it. There was the rollout of a new program and the preparation for the rollout in FY22 of another. There was a build-out opportunity in the development center in Council Bluffs with local financial support. And there was financial support for addressing the need to recruit and retain our stellar employees. More on all this below.

COVID-19



Above: A Kohll's Pharmacy nurse administers the COVID-19 vaccination to Services Operations Director, Micky Jackson COVID-19 during the on-site vaccination clinic held at the Vodec Omaha development center.

COVID-19's impact has somewhat diminished. The number of positive cases dropped off. I believe this is a result of the high percentage, around 76 percent, of employees and consumers being fully vaccinated and some receiving booster vaccinations. It's also been helpful to have the cooperation of visitors to wear masks to mitigate risk of potential spread.

We've also been able to eliminate social distancing with fewer positive cases reported. This resulted in a return to more of a user-friendly physical environment. It also enabled some new consumers to start and some consumers to be welcomed back who were on hold because of social distancing restrictions.

And we offered on-site COVID-19 booster vaccination clinics to employees and consumers and the opportunity to receive booster vaccinations at local providers.

Addressing Workforce Challenges



Above: Nebraska direct support professionals displaying one of many tokens of appreciation distributed during the annual direct support professionals week in September.

Challenges to recruit an adequate workforce continued to be felt nationally and Vodec was no exception. The number of people looking for work or wanting to remain in the workforce after the pandemic started was reduced significantly. Our biggest challenge was to adequately keep shifts filled in our Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver homes. Coverage needed to be 24/7. The low application numbers for positions in the waiver homes, the growing extraordinary expense of overtime compensation, and the increasing stress on existing employees to keep shifts filled caused us to ultimately reduce the number of our waiver homes to a manageable amount. Consumers who lived in the waiver homes were mostly transitioned to Iowa host homes and Nebraska shared living provider homes. Some consumers did transition to other organizations' waiver homes. Key is that all are still receiving an appropriate level of service.

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Employee recruitment and retention stressors were reduced but not totally eliminated. The need for employees continued in other programs. Helping meet this need was the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). We received ARPA money from Iowa and Nebraska. We started using this money in FY22 and continue doing so in FY23. We increased entry wages twice to bolster recruitment results and provided one-time and recurring retention incentives to keep employees. For some of the Iowa ARPA money, it was targeted to direct service professionals (DSPs) and their supervisors per instruction by the State. Reports from our human resources department indicate success through receipt of more and even higher quality applications and reduced turnover activity from longer retention throughout Vodec.

ARPA Grants

While ARPA helps with one-time or time-limited money, there were increases to service fees approved in the 2022 State legislative sessions in Iowa and Nebraska for HCBS programs. The intentions were for providers of HCBS programs to focus most to all of the money on employee recruitment and retention. We honored the intentions and passed money through to support those purposes.

Supported Employment



Above: Vodec supported employment consumer, James is cleaning the lobby at the Ameristar Casino in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Our supported employment program in Council Bluffs and Atlantic, Iowa, also continues with ongoing financial support from the Southwest Iowa Mental Health/Disability Services Region. In our experience the service fees for HCBS and Vocational Rehabilitation Services remain inadequate to support the activities so, without the SWIA region's

continued support it is doubtful we could continue to provide this program. A couple years ago we had to put this program on a shelf in Nebraska and central Iowa with hope that adequate funding would someday be provided.

New Programs



Above left to right: Special Education Consultant, Kylene Simpson, Jazzmin, Day Services Coordinator, Holly Adams, and Leon enjoy a day at the park in Urbandale Iowa.

With the success of the recruitment and retention activities, we were finally able to roll out a couple of new programs to meet localized demand, which had been on the shelf. In Urbandale, Iowa, our Transition Focus program was ramped up to accept its first consumers in September 2022. This is a mixed student service and enhanced day habilitation program focusing heavily on daily living skills for high school students and adults with developmental disabilities who find this more appealing than traditional day habilitation programs.

We were also able to rollout our first summer session of adult transition program (ATP) for high school students from several school districts in the Council Bluffs area. Included with this was a resurrection of community-based work experience program (WEP) for high school students in the area. WEP just started when the pandemic started and was shelved until FY22.

Meeting the CMS Settings Rule

All of our programs include community integration activities. Not only is this positive for the consumers but it also enables us to meet the Community Settings Rule established in January 2014 by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). Deadlines for full compliance had been extended several times,

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and the rule will finally be effective on March 17, 2023. Extensions were put in place by CMS originally to allow HCBS providers adequate time to adjust service models and then because of complications caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. External reviewers indicate that our programs do meet the intentions of the settings rule.

Providing Quality Services

Providing high quality services is something Vodec continues to take pride in. Our belief in this was affirmed in FY22 through two external reviews. The first was by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Vodec earned a maximum three-year accreditation for the following services provided in Iowa and Nebraska.

- Community Employment Services: Job Development and Employment Supports
- Community Integration
- Employment Planning Services
- Organizational Employment Services



The second survey was by the Iowa Bureau of Long-Term Care of the Department of Human Services. Vodec earned a maximum three-year certification for the following services provided in Iowa.

- Waiver certified: Intellectual Disability and Brain Injury
- Services certified: Respite and Supported Community Living



And (spoiler alert), a review in the first quarter of FY23 by the Nebraska Department of Public Health resulted in a maximum two-year certification of waiver services provided in Nebraska.

Kudos go to the employees who deliver these services every day with the highest regard for consumer-first activities.

Left: Nebraska Services Operations Director, Micky Jackson (left) and Quality Assurance Director, Andrea Smith display the new certification good for two years.

Meeting Program Space Requirements



Above: Construction workers add windows to the newly refurbished ATP room in the Council Bluffs, Iowa development center.

A transformation of space in the Council Bluffs development center started in FY22 with the support of two grants from the SWIA MH/DS Region. The transformation expands space for our day habilitation Cares program, converting space used by the pre-vocational program closed out in FY21. It also expands space used by the adult transition program as part of our student services. Finally, there's conversion of an area providing a better workspace for day habilitation employees. The total project will be completed by the end of 2022.

We also started a search in the Urbandale, Iowa, area which would enable us to replace our current location with one to meet the growing demand for our day habilitation and student services programs and to provide adequate office and meeting space for employees working in those and the residential programs. The search extends into FY23 with intention of finishing that project before June 30, 2023.



I must give a huge shoutout to our employees and board of directors. Our employees give 100 percent every day to make sure our consumers receive the best possible service. Each employee works to fulfill our mission of enabling consumers to reach their full potential. Some days are easier, some are harder, but each is met head-on to make Vodec a premier service provider.

The board of directors also deserves praise. They volunteer to serve on the board and various board committees. They freely give of their time and talents to provide guidance and direction to support Vodec's mission. They represent a variety of community segments and consumers.

Vodec Financial Status

Everyone at Vodec works hard to be a good steward of funds provided through services' provision, other earned income, grants, and donations. We take seriously the trust placed in our ability to work within the financial restrictions of the funds in our care and to maintain a cash reserve for future needs. Once again in FY22 an external financial audit performed by Schroer & Associates affirmed that money was handled appropriately. Information from the FY22 audit follows.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT - FY21				
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (SUMMARY)				
JUNE 30, 2020 AND 2021				
ASSETS				
	FY22	FY21	FY21 Var	
Assets				
Total Current Assets	11,964,387	10,233,515	1,730,872	
Property & Equipment				
Total Property & Eqpt	5,855,664	6,042,689		
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(3,343,274)	(3,301,924)		
	2,512,390	2,740,765	(228,375)	
Other Assets				
Security Deposit	10,393	10,393		
TOTAL ASSETS	14,487,170	12,984,673	1,502,497	
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS				
Current Liabilities				
Current Liabilities	1,848,714	1,932,665		
Long Term Liabilities		-		
Total Liabilities, net of current	1,848,714	1,932,665	(83,951)	
Net Assets				
Unrestricted	12,638,456	11,052,008	1,586,448	
Temporarily Restricted		-		
Total Net Assets	12,638,456	11,052,008	1,586,448	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	14,487,170	12,984,673	1,502,497	
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (SUMMARY)				
JUNE 30, 2020 AND 2021				
		FY21	FY20 Var	
Unrestricted Net Assets				
Program, Grant & Contribution Revenue	16,112,440	14,362,238	1,750,202	
Workshop Fees, net	349,804	287,453	62,351	
Other	647,095	1,554,614	(907,519)	
Net Assets Released from Restriction	-	-		
Total Support & Revenue	17,109,339	16,204,305	905,034	
Expense				-
Program Services	12,686,166	12,547,669	138,497	
Supporting Services	2,836,725	2,228,203	608,522	
Total Expenses	15,522,891	14,775,872	747,019	
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	1,586,448	1,428,433	158,015	
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets, Net Assets Released from Restriction				
Change in Net Assets	1,586,448	1,428,433	158,015	
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	11,052,008	9,623,575	1,428,433	
Net Assets, End of Year	12,638,456	11,052,008	1,586,448	

For Katelman, Helping Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities Began at an Early Age



Above: Kellie Katelman, Day Services Manager of Vodec in Omaha, Nebraska.



Above: Day Services Manager, Kellie Katelman (right) instructing a student on a job-related task at a community work experience site.

Kellie Katelman is newly promoted to day services manager of Vodec in Omaha, Nebraska.

Kellie oversees all of Vodec's Day Support programs in the Omaha area which includes the Elm, Cares, and Employment Training programs. Originally hired by Vodec in 2020 as a special education teacher, Kellie began working with transition-aged students requiring pre-employment training. Kellie created the Vodec curriculum which was designed at the request of local school districts.

"The (school) districts approached us seeking a curriculum for students with limited skill sets but have the desire to enter the workforce at some point," states Daryn Richardson, Services Development Director.

"Kellie is a compassionate and creative problem-solver regarding the needs of individual students," Richardson adds, "we are incredibly fortunate to have her."

"I became interested in this work at an early age," states Katelman. "I was babysitting for a young boy who had autism. He was struggling to take his medications and communicate with others. I enjoyed developing some creative strategies for him to help navigate those areas of daily living that were a struggle. I felt good about being able to help him and decided this was what I wanted to do with my life." Kellie holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mild Moderate Special Education K-12 from Chadron State College, Chadron, Nebraska, and has worked in special education for several years.

Vodec Receives 2-year Certification from Nebraska DHHS

Vodec's Nebraska programs have received a two-year certification from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The certification is needed to provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities. "I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of our entire team here in Nebraska," proclaims Micky Jackson, Services Operations Director, "they are the best in providing services for people with intellectual disabilities, and the two-year certification demonstrates that."

Recertification of services that Vodec provides is required by Nebraska Health and Human Services

every two years at a minimum. In some cases, providers may only earn a one-year certification, and in other cases, they may be put on probation by the state. The recertification review lasts approximately 5 days and requires several on-site surveyors who work for the Department of Health and Human Services. They review documentation, policy and procedures, employee files, and a host of other items. "It was a smooth process for us because we do what we do every day; we operate as if the surveyors can arrive at any time," added Jackson, "and they will, of course."

Happy New Year! Have a Wonderful 2023



Steve Hodapp, CEO

Resolutions. Who loves them? Who made any for 2023? Who's kept any by January 31? Don't answer that. The Britannica Dictionary definition of RESOLUTION is the act of finding an answer or solution to a conflict, problem, etc. So, my question is, if I find in June I need a solution, why would I wait until New Year's to come up with one?

I can procrastinate as well as anyone. Some day I'll tell you more about that (see what I did there?). But I am not a unilateral procrastinator. I am a targeted procrastinator. About some things, yes, they'll go on a back burner. But those would be the small inconsequential things. Think: cleaning the garage. That does not have to get done today.

But I believe about the bigger things I begin to work towards a solution right away. I believe others would say that about me. Working towards a solution doesn't mean a solution is immediately implemented. In most cases there are multiple steps to get to a solution:

1. Define the problem. Analyze the situation carefully to learn more about the problem.
2. Identify alternative solutions.
3. Evaluate solutions.
4. Select a solution.
5. Implement the chosen solution.
6. Monitor progress and make adjustments.

These steps are critical to get to a solution. This process is making a resolution. Circling back to New Year's and making resolutions, let's imagine someone doing this around 11:30 p.m., New Year's Eve. Is the problem even able to be identified in a meaningful way? How good is the input from friends about identifying alternative solutions, let alone selecting the best one.

My advice which is free, and worth just that much, is to make your resolution when you've identified the problem. Maybe that's in June. But don't procrastinate. Some things are more important than cleaning the garage.

Inclusion Begins at Home with our Children



**Erin Johnson, Residential Services
Manager for southwest Iowa**

"My children have always been around people with intellectual disabilities," states Erin Johnson Residential Services Manager in Council Bluffs, Iowa. "I strongly believe that children raised around people of diverse abilities and backgrounds tend to be more open-minded and compassionate to all people with or without disabilities. My children have an awareness of individuals with intellectual disabilities that many of their friends do not have," added Johnson. Johnson's children are curious about the work she does at Vodec. She helps her children

understand that everyone wants to be treated fairly and with kindness. "I believe that if children are able to learn about people with intellectual disabilities, at an early age, they will become compassionate and open-minded, and hopefully, it will help future generations of individuals with intellectual disabilities become included in their community."

Johnson is a veteran of providing compassionate care to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Beginning at age 18, she worked as a CNA in a nursing home in Avoca, Iowa that was supervised by her mother. By the age of 22, she was supervising group homes. She then spent 15 years supervising a sheltered workshop in Avoca. Recently she was hired as a residential manager by Jeremy Dunkirk, Services Operations Director for southwest Iowa.

Transition Focus' Skillet Skills

The Transition Focus program in Urbandale, IA makes breakfast every Friday. Staff and consumers can order breakfast for which they pay a minimal price. Proceeds from the sales of the breakfast go towards Transition Focus activities. "Thanks to Transition Focus consumers for the great breakfast...This new program has really brightened all of our days here in Central Iowa," states Nancy Sharp, Vodec Registered Nurse.



Left: A tasty omelet with a side of smoky bacon.

Right: A breakfast casserole with orange juice and English muffin slathered with creamy butter.



Above left to right: Transition Focus consumers Leon, Gage, Katrina, and Harley pose with their breakfast bounty in the Vodec development center kitchen in Urbandale Iowa.

We are thankful for these generous donors.

Availa Foundation
Donna Bush
Jeremy Dunkirk
Jacque Evans

Green State Credit Union
Miles and Crystal Havekost
Steve Hodapp

Knights of Columbus
Maria Mabe
Methodist Health System
Andrea Smith

Vodec is certified by:

- The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
- Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services
- Iowa Department of Human Services
- Nebraska Department of Education



Vodec is affiliated with the following organizations:

- Council Bluffs, Iowa Chamber of Commerce
- Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC)
- Iowa Association of Community Providers (IACP)
- Iowa Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
- Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP)
- Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce

Vodec is an authorized provider in the following Iowa HealthLink networks:

- Amerigroup
- Iowa Total Care

Vodec is a contracted Community Rehabilitation Program with the Iowa Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.



Vodec Entrance Criteria:

- Be at least 16 years of age for employment services
- Have behavior that is not dangerous to self or others
- Have medical needs within Vodec's scope of service
- Have transportation needs within Vodec's capability to provide
- Have funding in place prior to service provision

For more information or to apply for Vodec services, contact Daryn Richardson at drichardson@vodec.org or call (712) 328-2638.



612 S. Main Street
Council Bluffs, IA 51503

Our mission is to provide services to persons with disabilities in order that those persons may live, work and participate in the community in the least restrictive environment to achieve their full potential.

Vodec is an equal opportunity employer. There is equal opportunity for services and for employment, retention and advancement without regard to race, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability and veteran status or any other classifications protected by state or federal law.

Vodec is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. Donations may be tax-deductible.

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Omaha, Ne. 68117
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Fax: 402.455.2542

Iowa Medicaid Members Encouraged to Watch Mail for MCO Assignment Letter

Iowa Medicaid members will have a third choice for a Managed Care Organization (MCO) effective July 1, 2023. In August 2022 the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced its intention to award four-year contracts to Amerigroup Iowa and Molina Healthcare of Iowa. Amerigroup Iowa is a current MCO being renewed.

Molina Healthcare of Iowa will be a new MCO joining Amerigroup Iowa and Iowa Total Care. Iowa Total Care is a current MCO but not up for another contract this year.



As a result of the addition of a third MCO in Iowa is Iowa's nearly 790,000 Medicaid members will receive letters about the assignment to one of the three MCOs. Included are Vodec's Iowa consumers who are also Medicaid members.

Vodec consumers who are Medicaid members, and their guardians, will need to watch for the assignment letters. A letter may note a change in assignment to one of the three MCOs. The letter should include a process for selecting a different MCO if desired. Letters may come from one of the three MCOs or from Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME). IME administers Iowa's Medicaid programs. For more information please contact your Iowa MCO case manager.