

CITYVIEW'S

BUSINESS JOURNAL



HELP WANTED — and quickly!

More than 66,000 job openings are listed through Workforce Development.

By Tammy Pearson

As businesses start to reach the “light at the end of the tunnel” and fully reopen as COVID-19 wanes and restrictions ease, owners face a major hurdle — hiring the staff they need to “get back to normal.”

Pandemic-related unemployment programs end

With an abundance of jobs available — and some arguing that the federal \$300 a week unemployment supplement was discouraging people from seeking employment — Gov. Kim Reynolds recently announced that, effective June 12, the state will no longer participate in the federal pandemic-related unemployment benefit programs. The \$300 weekly federal payment will stop, as will the benefits of another federal program that assisted

While restrictions are being lifted, many businesses are struggling to find the staff they need to return to pre-pandemic “business as usual.”

FEATURE

the self-employed, the underemployed, independent contractors, and individuals who have been unable to work due to health or COVID-19-related reasons.

In essence, as far as Iowa unemployment benefits go, it is mostly back to “business as usual,” with claims being handled much as they were pre-pandemic.

“The overwhelming message we receive from employers these days is the lack of workforce that is adversely affecting their ability to recover from the pandemic,” said Iowa Workforce Development Director Beth Townsend, adding that more than 66,000 job openings are listed through Workforce Development.

While those on unemployment related to the pandemic were not required to report work searches under the federal programs, they will need to start doing so.

Employees can be called back to work

Business owners should note that Iowa will no longer waive employer charges for COVID-related unemployment insurance claims.

“IWD will resume charging employers for COVID-related unemployment insurance claims filed after June 12, 2021. If you have unemployment insurance claims filed from current of former employees after that date, your account may be charged,” warn officials.

Bottom line, if employers want their employees at work instead of on unemployment, they can require them to be there — and, as long as the employer is taking steps to create a safe workplace, the employee probably would not receive unemployment benefits if he or she quit.

Iowa Workforce Development defines those “steps” as “providing extra wash stations, additional sanitation, PPE such as masks or gloves, or following social distancing recommendations.” Employers should note, “If you refuse to follow safety measures and OSHA guidelines recommended by state or federal governments for your industry, then the employee may be able to receive unemployment benefits.”

If an employee feels unsafe in the workplace due to pre-existing medical conditions, things get a bit trickier. The employer must grant “reasonable accommodation” for the employee, and, if a safe environment can’t be provided, the employee “may be eligible for unemployment benefits if they choose to quit employment should you refuse to continue their furlough.” Cases are examined case-by-case by Workforce Development.

Employees who don’t return to work when asked

to are considered to have quit the job, which would disqualify them for unemployment.

With the State of Iowa no longer participating in the federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program, employees will no longer (after the week ending June 12) be able to claim unemployment for staying home to care for a family member sick with COVID-19 or to stay home to care for children in general.

Many women dropped out of workforce

With the COVID-related shutdowns, many people — significantly more women than men — simply dropped out of the workforce in order to care for their children. With schools and child care options closed the end of last school year, many had no option other than to stay home with young children.

According to fortune.com, “Hope for a return to pre-pandemic levels of employment for women is still distant. Recent projections based on economic scenarios modeled by McKinsey and Oxford Economics estimate that employment for women may not recover to pre-pandemic levels until 2024 — two full years after a recovery for men.”

Prior to the impact of COVID-19, unemployment was roughly equal between men and women, according to the McKinsey analysis, but the gap quickly developed. By April 2020, analysis of the Current Population Survey that is conducted jointly by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, showed that the unemployment rate for women was 15.8% — more than 2 percentage points above that for men.

“In September, when schools resumed, many of them with remote learning, 80% of the 1.1 million people who exited the workforce were women,” reported fortune.com. “In December, women accounted for all of the net job losses, while men achieved some job gains. Today, unemployment for women remains 1.9 percentage points above the pre-pandemic level.”

Child care and early childhood education, an industry already hard hit by a lack of qualified applicants, received another blow from the pandemic, said Anissa Deay, director of Primrose School in Urbandale. Today, it’s even harder to fill open positions. It’s a story shared by many child care and preschool directors at area meetings she has attended, she adds.

Primrose School in Urbandale opened in January and now its growth depends on finding qualified teachers, said Deay. “We’re projecting enrollment growth, and I’m extremely cautious about making sure we have the teachers in the building,” she said.



With many women leaving the workforce to care for their own children, businesses such as child care centers and preschools are finding it difficult to fill open positions.

“Typically this wouldn’t be the case.”

Generation Next opened a new center in Bondurant but can’t find enough staff to operate it.

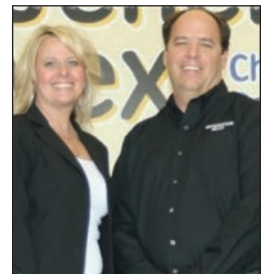
“Due to the staff shortage, we are not even advertising for it as we struggle to find enough employees to staff” other locations, says President Karen Glenn. While some businesses can work short-staffed, preschools and child care centers cannot.

“When our hiring pool is as low as it currently is, we also have to be ever more mindful of our state-mandated ratios,” says Glenn. “We worry that many child care centers (of which a great number have shut down due to the pandemic to begin with) will remain understaffed and unable to support the great need for child care as people return to work and life returns to normal,” she adds.

When COVID hit, Deay says a lot of early childhood education teachers stayed home to care for their own kids or to join cohorts that pooled their resources for child care and tutoring, in essence “running their own child care,” says Deay. Though Deay believes the situation will improve as kids get back to school next fall, “the transition period is difficult,” and the overall bigger picture of the lack of affordable and quality child care and early childhood education still needs to be addressed, with low wages being one of the big factors contributing to “fewer going down the path of early childhood development,” she says.



Anissa Deay



Karen and Jerry Glenn

Restaurants hit hard

The restaurant industry is being hit hard by the lack of employees.

The vast majority — 92% of Iowa's restaurants — are actively seeking to immediately add staff, according to a survey conducted in May by the Iowa Restaurant Association. The survey found that more than half of the state's restaurants are operating at more than 20% below needed staffing levels. The survey also found 70% of Iowa's hospitality operators cite the inability to find qualified employees as the No. 1 threat to their potential recovery from the impact of COVID-19. In addition, 85% say the lack of workforce will impact future business plans.

"The data couldn't be clearer," said Jessica Dunker, president and CEO of the Iowa Restaurant Association. "We need people — and we need them now. Our ability to recover depends on it."



Jessica Dunker

Like many restaurant owners, Misty Fontanini, Curbin' Cuisine, puts in a lot of time and effort in trying to fill open positions, only to be faced with frustrating results. Of 50 applicants, Fontanini reached out to 21 "based on their experience, availability and that their social media was clean. Out of those 21, 11 replied back to me either via call or email. I scheduled interviews with them all. After scheduling the interviews I sent a text, email, Facebook message and left a voicemail with confirmation of the interview date and time. Three showed up to their scheduled interviews."

Fontanini hired all three because they were short staffed "and I knew, as the restrictions lifted, we would start getting busier. One of those three has already been a no call no show. So, now we are left without a pizza maker," she said.

When surveyed, restaurant operators cited multiple factors they believe are contributing to the current shortage of workers including people opting to stay on enhanced unemployment (90%). However, nearly 40% say that many of their talented workers took positions in other industries. Other top reasons for worker shortages cited included childcare issues (15%), as well as fear of returning to work (20%).

To cope with the worker shortage, 87% of



Jarrod and Misty Fontanini

restaurant owners indicated they are stretching their existing staff by giving them more hours and duties. Sometimes the "existing staff" means the brunt of work falls on the owners.

"My husband, Jarrod, and I put in 70 hours a week," says Fontanini. "We come in two to three hours before open and are here one to two hours post close. We come in on Mondays when we are closed to ensure any major prepping, deep cleaning, etc. is taken care of so that our staff can focus on day-by-day prepping, cleaning and, of course, making food to customers' satisfaction. My husband and I rarely take a paycheck to ensure our staff is taken care of. They are like family to us. We give them days off paid," she emphasized, "to ensure they are rested, in addition to their normal Sunday and Mondays off."

However, staff and owners can only be stretched so far, and some restaurant owners have taken additional steps. The survey indicated:

- 52% of the restaurants are not operating at capacity, making fewer seats and tables available for customers.
- 35% are closing the restaurant for one or more days per week that they would normally operate if they had enough staff.
- 20% are dropping breakfast or lunch service.
- 19% are rotating staff between multiple locations.

Regardless of the steps taken by restaurant operators, working short-handed is likely going to be the standard for awhile. Business is increasing as restrictions are lifted, so a worsening of the situation seems inevitable in the near future. Patience of customers will be needed.

"Being short staffed means that a typical 12-minute pizza time (from roll out to bake) could be 20-30 minutes depending on the day/night," says Fontanini. "We do mention this to almost every person that orders when this is the case so they are not surprised with a wait time given."

Aim to keep current employees

As hiring challenges are faced by most industries, employers are focusing more attention on the staff they do have. Fontanini offers the staff at Curbin' Cuisine some perks.

"We provide them with free food during their shifts and to take home to their families as well," she says. "We pay our front of the house servers double what server minimum wage is, and they keep their cash tips. We split the credit card tips among all staff working based on the number of hours they work."

Paying more than the competitors can also help keep staff.

"Our kitchen cooks make anywhere from \$13



Restaurants have been particularly hard hit by the worker shortage, and owners are having to make adjustments to stay open. And, with the lifting of regulations and increase in business, it may only get worse in the near future.

(part time) to \$18 (full time) an hour plus the tips previously mentioned," says Fontanini. "Not to mention the overtime pay received when they pull extra hours because of being short staffed. We also give bonuses out every six months in gift cards to grocery stores or restaurants."

Some businesses faced with a shortage of experienced candidates are focusing more effort on developing current staff for promotion and hiring entry level people to fill vacancies.

"Our MidWestOne human resources professionals have indeed experienced difficulty finding applicants for more specialized roles," said Dan Clute, Des Moines Market president. "As a result, we have also seen hiring

managers more open to promoting from within. Our philosophy is that we can train to the skillset but should hire for the fit — job fit and culture fit. Now more than ever, our hiring managers take this stance to heart and train existing staff into positions that sometimes would require more direct experience. This professional development, in turn, leads to hiring more bankers at the ground level."

"One thing I can recommend to any restaurant owner: Take care of the staff that you have," says Fontanini. "Treat them as family and make sure to take interest in them as a person, not just a worker in your restaurant. Encourage them, ensure that the environment is positive despite whatever hell is going on in the world. Let them know they are valued and appreciated. After all, they are the backbone of your restaurant." ■



Dan Clute

Sources: <https://fortune.com/2021/02/13/covid-19-women-workforce-unemployment-gender-gap-recovery/>

DID YOU KNOW?
A BUSINESS FALLS VICTIM
TO RANSOMWARE EVERY



14 SECONDS*

ADVANCED DATA SECURITY

Advanced Data Security from Mediacom Business works to safeguard your business from malicious threats like malware, ransomware, phishing, and botnet infections.

Limited-Time Offer with Mediacom Business Internet

6 months of Advanced Data Security **FREE**
NO CONTRACT or long-term commitment
FREE standard installation

MEDIACOM
BUSINESS

CALL TODAY 800-479-2091

*Cybercrime Magazine: Global Ransomware Damage Costs Predicted to Reach \$20 Billion (USD) By 2021. Offer: Restrictions apply. Not available in all areas. Mediacom Business Advanced Data Security requires Mediacom Business Internet for additional monthly charge. Does not help prevent access to malicious internet sites if connected via a public Wi-Fi. Free standard installation. First 6 months free; thereafter, standard rate of \$15/mo. shall apply. Mediacom Business may increase the monthly rate at any time. Price does not include taxes, and other amounts required by law to be collected or paid. These monthly charges may increase from time to time. © 2021 Mediacom Communications Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

Borrower Name	City	County	Cong. District	\$ Amount	Jobs Created	Jobs Retained	Existing Jobs	New vs. Existing	Business Type
Randy R. Mumm And Teresa S. Mumm Revocable Trust	Cedar Falls, IA	Black Hawk County	IA (01)	\$379,000	6	0	0	New	Accommodation And Food Services
Carroll Subway, Inc.	Carroll, IA	Carroll County	IA (04)	\$468,000	12	12	41	Existing	Accommodation And Food Services
Carroll Subway, Inc.	Spencer, IA	Clay County	IA (04)	\$124,000	6	0	41	Existing	Accommodation And Food Services
Carroll Subway, Inc.	Spencer, IA	Clay County	IA (04)	\$145,000	6	0	41	Existing	Accommodation And Food Services
Tomman Properties, L.L.C.	Clinton, IA	Clinton County	IA (02)	\$120,000	3	0	0	New	Other Services (Except Public Administration)
James Construction Company Llc	Adel, IA	Dallas County	IA (03)	\$10,000	5	0	1	New	Construction
Home Sweet Cone Ice Cream, Llc	Waukee, IA	Dallas County	IA (03)	\$300,000	5	2	2	New	Manufacturing
Thakkar Brothers Llc	Burlington, IA	Des Moines County	IA (02)	\$1,275,000	0	10	6	Existing	Accommodation And Food Services
Millhouse Logistics, Inc.	Spirit Lake, IA	Dickinson County	IA (04)	\$432,300	3	16	16	Existing	Transportation And Warehousing
Heffernan Enterprises Pllc	Webster City, IA	Hamilton County	IA (04)	\$150,000	1	2	2	Existing	Health Care And Social Assistance
Ackley Publishing Company Inc	Ackley, IA	Hardin County	IA (04)	\$95,000	0	4	4	Existing	Manufacturing
Rcomm If, Inc.	Iowa Falls, IA	Hardin County	IA (04)	\$478,000	1	0	2	New	Real Estate And Rental And Leasing
Prevail Enterprises Llc	Ida Grove, IA	Ida County	IA (04)	\$196,000	2	11	11	Existing	Other Services (Except Public Administration)
Prevail Beauty, Llc	Ida Grove, IA	Ida County	IA (04)	\$200,000	2	11	11	Existing	Other Services (Except Public Administration)
Rockdale Enterprises, Llc	Maquoketa, IA	Jackson County	IA (01)	\$817,000	7	0	0	New	Retail Trade
Bird Dog Hospitality Iii, Llc	Cedar Rapids, IA	Johnson County	IA (02)	\$2,483,000	0	12	12	Existing	Accommodation And Food Services
Omega Puff Llc	Iowa City, IA	Johnson County	IA (02)	\$620,000	0	9	9	New	Retail Trade
Eastvoid Investments, Llc	Cedar Rapids, IA	Linn County	IA (01)	\$250,000	4	1	1	New	Retail Trade
B & B Investments, Llc	Cedar Rapids, IA	Linn County	IA (02)	\$1,519,600	8	2	2	New	Real Estate And Rental And Leasing
Bellows Custom Pumping, Llc	Pocahontas, IA	Pocahontas County	IA (04)	\$522,000	0	4	4	New	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing And Hunting
Kb Holding, Llc	Ankeny, IA	Polk County	IA (03)	\$366,000	3	0	59	Existing	Construction
Huisman Grading, Llc	Bondurant, IA	Polk County	IA (03)	\$198,000	3	1	1	New	Construction
Meatball Hc Llc	Des Moines, IA	Polk County	IA (03)	\$435,000	15	2	2	New	Accommodation And Food Services
Mema'S, Llc	Grimes, IA	Polk County	IA (03)	\$250,000	5	5	5	Existing	Accommodation And Food Services
Heartland Soles Llc	Johnston, IA	Polk County	IA (03)	\$100,000	5	12	12	Existing	Retail Trade
Afpc Group, Llc	Polk City, IA	Polk County	IA (03)	\$346,500	10	4	4	New	Arts, Entertainment, And Recreation
Hartsmart Products, Llc	Urbandale, IA	Polk County	IA (03)	\$300,000	2	3	3	Existing	Manufacturing
Ghosh Llc	West Des Moines, IA	Polk County	IA (03)	\$450,000	0	14	14	Existing	Accommodation And Food Services
Barkley Group, Llc	West Des Moines, IA	Polk County	IA (03)	\$1,617,000	22	55	55	Existing	Construction
Hvp Llc	Oakland, IA	Pottawattamie County	IA (03)	\$50,000	0	1	1	Existing	Professional, Scientific, And Technical Services
Charles F.Day & Associates, Llc	Davenport, IA	Scott County	IA (02)	\$1,716,000	2	30	30	Existing	Professional, Scientific, And Technical Services
Hoffman Construction Co.	Ames, IA	Story County	IA (04)	\$110,000	2	3	3	Existing	Construction
Longnecker Lawn & Amp; Landscape, Llc	Cambridge, IA	Story County	IA (04)	\$89,000	2	0	2	Existing	Administrative And Support And Waste Management And Remediation Services
Hawkeye Molding Company Inc	Roland, IA	Story County	IA (04)	\$350,000	3	29	29	New	Manufacturing
Hawkeye Molding Company Inc	Roland, IA	Story County	IA (04)	\$3,912,300	3	31	31	Existing	Manufacturing
Vahanvati Ma Inc.	Toledo, IA	Tama County	IA (01)	\$981,000	0	4	4	Existing	Accommodation And Food Services
Summertime Farms, Llc	Carlisle, IA	Warren County	IA (03)	\$1,762,000	2	0	11	Existing	Wholesale Trade
Dtf Sports, Llc	Indianola, IA	Warren County	IA (03)	\$60,000	2	0	2	New	Retail Trade
Iowa Hearing Center, Llc	Norwalk, IA	Warren County	IA (03)	\$27,000	2	0	0	New	Health Care And Social Assistance
Iowa Hearing Center, Llc	Norwalk, IA	Warren County	IA (03)	\$49,500	2	0	0	New	Health Care And Social Assistance
Crayons 2 Pencils Preschool, Llc	Norwalk, IA	Warren County	IA (03)	\$692,000	12	0	28	Existing	Health Care And Social Assistance
Hudson Services Llc	Prole, IA	Warren County	IA (03)	\$10,000	0	0	0	New	Construction
Mcneil Properties, Llc	Fort Dodge, IA	Webster County	IA (04)	\$963,000	7	25	25	Existing	Health Care And Social Assistance
Sg Concrete Llc	Lawton, IA	Woodbury County	IA (04)	\$25,000	2	3	1	New	Construction
Morningside Audiology Llc	Sioux City, IA	Woodbury County	IA (04)	\$107,500	1	0	0	New	Health Care And Social Assistance

April 2021



BACKED BY A YEAR-ROUND
CLOG-FREE GUARANTEE

THE NATION'S
#1
GUTTER GUARD

EXCLUSIVE LIMITED TIME OFFER!

15% OFF & **10% OFF**

YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE* SENIORS & MILITARY!

+ 5% OFF TO THE FIRST 50 CALLERS ONLY!

WE INSTALL YEAR-ROUND!


FINANCING THAT FITS YOUR BUDGET!
Promo Code: 285
*Subject to credit approval. Call for details.

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE
1-855-995-2490


Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-8pm EST

*For those who qualify. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. **Offer valid at time of estimate only. *The leading consumer reporting agency conducted a 16 month outdoor test of gutter guards in 2010 and recognized LeafFilter as the "#1 rated professionally installed gutter guard system in America." Manufactured in Plainville, Michigan and processed at LMT Mercer Group in Ohio. See Representative for full warranty details. CSLB# 1035795 DOPLE#10783658-5501 License# 7656 License# 50145 License# 41354 License# 99338 License# 126344 License# 218294 WA UB# 603 233 977 License# 2102212986 License# 2106212946 License# 2705132153A License# LEAFFNW822JZ License# WV056912 License# WC-29998-H17 Nassau HIC License# H01067000 Registration# 176447 Registration# HIC-0649905 Registration# C127229 Registration# C127230 Registration# 366920918 Registration# PC6475 Registration# IR231804 Registration# 13VH09953900 Registration# PA069383 Suffolk HIC License# 52229-H License# 2705169445 License# 262000022 License# 262000003 License# 0086990 Registration# H-19114

We know **renewable energy.**



When it comes to renewable energy, we can help you with any solar or wind project, including cost studies and design. You can have confidence we'll get the job done right.



Tri-City Electric Co.
Since 1895
CONFIDENCE DELIVERED.®

515-288-7181
www.tricityelectric.com
1821 Ingersoll Avenue,
Des Moines

Prepare for unexpected power outages with a Generac home standby generator


REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!
877-228-5789

FREE 7-Year Extended Warranty*
A \$695 Value!

Offer valid February 15 - June 6, 2021

Special Financing Available
Subject to Credit Approval

*To qualify, consumers must request a quote, purchase, install and activate the generator with a participating dealer. Call for a full list of terms and conditions.



32 | CITYVIEW | JUNE 2021