



July 31, 2012

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27 Layoffs at Woodward as More People Find Community Placements

WOODWARD, Iowa – The Woodward Resource Center announced the layoff of 27 workers Tuesday, with officials explaining the action is the result of successful home and community placements for dozens of people who once lived on campus.

“On the one hand I know we are doing what is right for the clients we serve by finding community-based options for them. But our mission success has led to employment insecurity for some of you today,” said Woodward Superintendent Marsha Edgington-Bott in a staff message.

Edgington-Bott said the facility, which currently has 697 employees, will be consolidating houses on campus, going from 16 to 15, and will be eliminating a variety of positions, from professional, clinical, treatment, to management staff. Also, several community-based services now provided by WRC, including hourly supported community living services, will transition to private community providers.

For several years, both Woodward and its sister facility in Glenwood have vigorously worked to find home and community options for people with disabilities. Woodward currently has 181 residents on campus. When the current fiscal year ends next summer, Woodward officials project a census of 170, a reduction of more than 25 percent in just five years.

Edgington-Bott said that with fewer people on campus, budgets and staffing levels have declined.

“To date we have been able to manage this trend without layoffs, which is always the last option. We continue to squeeze supply budgets and we’re holding vacancies open. We also had a few retirements and resignations recently. But we now must go further to right-size our staff,” she said.

Officials at Glenwood, where 263 people live on campus, said they will be able to manage reduced budgets without layoffs this year.