

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ACT

Footnotes

Purposes of Act; 98 Acts, ch 1206, §1
Legislative findings and intent; 98 Acts, ch 1206, §12
Chapter transferred from chapter 7I pursuant to Code editor directive; 99 Acts, ch 190, §19, 20

28.1 Definitions.

For the purposes of this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. "*Community empowerment area*" means a geographic area designated in accordance with this chapter.
2. "*Community empowerment area board*" or "*community board*" means the board for a community empowerment area created in accordance with this chapter.
3. "*Decategorization project*" means a decategorization of child welfare and juvenile justice funding project operated under section 232.188.
4. "*Innovation zone*" means a local jurisdiction implementing an innovation zone plan in accordance with section 8A.2, Code 1997.
5. "*Iowa empowerment board*" or "*Iowa board*" means the Iowa empowerment board created in section 28.3.

98 Acts, ch 1206, §2, 20

C99, §7I.1

99 Acts, ch 190, §1, 19, 20

CS99, §28.1

28.2 Purpose and scope.

1. The purpose of creating the community empowerment initiative is to empower individuals and their communities to achieve desired results for improving the quality of life in the communities in this state. It is expected that the empowerment of individuals will strengthen the individuals' sense of responsibility for their neighbors and promote partnerships in order for all to succeed. It is believed that the desired results identified by individuals and their communities, with the support of the state, will be achieved as individuals, governments, and agencies work collaboratively within communities. It is believed that local individuals in local communities working together will identify and implement the best means for attaining the desired results for themselves and their neighbors. The role of the Iowa empowerment board, the state, and local governments is to support and facilitate growth of individual and community responsibility in place of the directive role that the public has come to expect of government.

2. It is intended that through the community empowerment initiative, by June 30, 2005, every community in Iowa will have developed the capacity and commitment for using local decision making to achieve the following initial set of desired results:

a. Healthy children.

b. Children ready to succeed in school.

c. Safe and supportive communities.

d. Secure and nurturing families.

e. Secure and nurturing child care environments.

3. To achieve the initial set of desired results, the initiative's primary focus shall first be on the efforts of the state and communities to work together to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education, health, and human services provided to families with children from birth through age five years.

4. It is anticipated that the scope of the initiative will expand as additional desired results are identified and agreed upon by communities and the state. It is the intent of the general assembly to identify from time to time the additional desired results in statute.

99 Acts, ch 190, §2, 19, 20

28.3 Iowa empowerment board created.

1. An Iowa empowerment board is created to facilitate state and community efforts involving community empowerment areas, including strategic planning, funding identification, and guidance, and to promote collaboration among state and local education, health, and human services programs.

2. The Iowa board shall consist of seventeen voting members with thirteen citizen members and four state agency members. The four state agency members shall be the directors of the following departments: education, human rights, human services, and public health. The thirteen citizen members shall be appointed by the governor, subject to confirmation by the senate. The governor's appointments of citizen members shall be made in a manner so that each of the state's congressional districts is represented by two citizen members and so that all the appointments as a whole reflect the ethnic, cultural, social, and economic diversity of the state. The governor's appointees shall be selected from individuals nominated by community empowerment area boards. The nominations shall reflect the range of interests represented on the community boards so that the governor is able to appoint one or more members each for education, health, human services, business, faith, and public interests. At least one of the citizen members shall be a service consumer or the parent of a service consumer. Terms of office of all citizen members are three years. A vacancy on the board shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the balance of the unexpired term.

3. Citizen members shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in performance of their duties. Members shall be paid a per diem as specified in section 7E.6.

4. In addition to the voting members, the Iowa board shall include six members of the general assembly with not more than two members from each chamber being from the same political party. The three senators shall be appointed by the majority leader of the senate after consultation with the president of the senate and the minority leader of the senate. The three representatives shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives after consultation with the majority and minority leaders of the house of representatives. Legislative members shall serve in an ex officio, nonvoting capacity. A legislative member is eligible for per diem and expenses as provided in section 2.10.

5. A community empowerment assistance team or teams of state agency representatives shall be designated to provide technical assistance and other support to community empowerment areas. A technical assistance system shall be developed using local representatives of the state agencies represented on the Iowa board and other state agencies and individuals involved with local community empowerment areas. The technical assistance shall be available in at least three levels of support as follows:

a. Support to areas experienced in operating an innovation zone or decategorization project with an extensive record of success in collaboration between education, health, or human services interests.

b. Support to areas experienced in operating an innovation zone or decategorization project.

c. Support to areas forming an initial community empowerment area with no previous experience operating an innovation zone or decategorization project.

6. *a.* Staffing services to the Iowa board shall be provided by the state agencies which are represented on the Iowa board and by other state agencies making staffing available to the Iowa board.

b. In addition, a community empowerment office is established as a division of the department of management to provide a center for facilitation, communication, and coordination for community empowerment activities and funding. Staffing for the community empowerment office shall be provided by a facilitator appointed by the governor, subject to confirmation by the senate, and who serves at the pleasure of the governor. A deputy and support staff may be designated, subject to appropriation made for this purpose. The facilitator shall submit reports to the governor, the Iowa board, and the general assembly. The facilitator shall provide primary staffing to the board, coordinate state technical assistance activities and implementation of the technical assistance system, and other communication and coordination functions to move authority and decision-making responsibility from the state to communities and individuals.

7. The Iowa board may designate an advisory council consisting of representatives from community empowerment area boards.

8. The Iowa board shall elect a chairperson from among the citizen board members and may select other officers from among the citizen board members as determined to be necessary by the board. The board shall meet regularly as determined by the board, upon the call of the board's chairperson, or upon the call of a majority of voting members.

98 Acts, ch 1206, §3, 20

C99, §7I.2

99 Acts, ch 190, §36, 19, 20

CS99, §28.3

2000 Acts, ch 1223, §17

Footnotes

Confirmation; §2.32

28.4 Iowa empowerment board duties.

The Iowa board shall perform the following duties:

1. Perform duties relating to community empowerment areas.
2. Manage and coordinate the provision of grant funding and other moneys made available to community empowerment areas by combining all or portions of appropriations or other revenues as authorized by law.
3. Develop advanced community empowerment area arrangements for those community empowerment areas

which were formed in transition from an innovation zone or from a decategorization governance board or which otherwise provide evidence of extensive successful experience in managing services and funding with high levels of community support and input.

4. Identify boards, commissions, committees, and other bodies in state government with overlapping and similar purposes which contribute to redundancy and fragmentation in education, health, and human services programs provided to the public. The board shall also make recommendations to the governor and general assembly as appropriate for increasing coordination between these bodies, for eliminating bureaucratic duplication, for consolidation where appropriate, and for integration of functions to achieve improved results.
5. Assist with the linkage of child welfare and juvenile justice decategorization projects with community empowerment areas.
6. Integrate the duties relating to innovation zones in the place of the innovation zone board created in section 8A.2, Code 1997, until the Iowa board determines the innovation zones have been replaced with community empowerment areas.
7. Coordinate and respond to any requests from a community board relating to any of the following:
 - a. Waiver of existing rules, federal regulation, or amendment of state law, or removal of other barriers.
 - b. Pooling and redirecting of existing federal, state, or other public or private funds.
 - c. Seeking of federal waivers.
 - d. Consolidating community-level committees, planning groups, and other bodies with common memberships formed in response to state requirements.

In coordinating and responding to the requests, the Iowa board shall work with state agencies and submit proposals to the governor and general assembly as necessary to fulfill requests deemed appropriate by the Iowa board.

8. Provide for maximum flexibility and creativity in the designation and administration of the responsibilities and authority of community empowerment areas.
9. Adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A as necessary for the designation, governance, and oversight of community empowerment areas and the administration of this chapter. The Iowa board shall provide for community board input in the rules adoption process. The rules shall include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Performance indicators for community empowerment areas, community boards, and the services provided under the auspices of the community boards. The performance indicators shall be developed with input from community boards and shall build upon the core indicators of performance for the school ready grant program, as described in section 28.8.
 - b. Minimum standards to further the provision of equal access to services subject to the authority of community boards.
 - c. Core functions for home visitation, parent support, and preschool services provided under a school ready children grant.
10. Implement a process for community empowerment areas to identify desired results for improving the quality of life in this state. The process shall allow for consideration of updates, additions, and deletions on a

regular basis. The identified desired results shall be submitted to the governor and general assembly.

11. Develop guidelines for recommended coverage and take other actions to assist community empowerment area boards in acquiring necessary insurance or other liability coverage at a reasonable cost. Moneys expended by a community empowerment area board to acquire necessary insurance or other liability coverage shall be considered an administrative cost and implementation expense.

12. *a.* With extensive community involvement, develop and annually update a five-year plan for consolidating, blending, and redistributing state-administered funding streams for children from birth through age five made available to community empowerment area boards.

b. With extensive community involvement, develop and annually update a ten-year plan for consolidating, blending, and redistributing state-administered funding streams for other age groups made available to community empowerment area boards. The focus for the early years of the initial ten-year plan shall be on the efforts of the Iowa board and affected state agencies to facilitate implementation of individual community empowerment area board requests for pooling, consolidating, blending, and redistributing state-administered funding streams for other age groups.

c. Submit plans and plan updates developed under paragraphs "*a*" and "*b*" to the community empowerment areas, the governor, and the general assembly annually in December.

d. The Iowa empowerment board shall regularly make information available identifying community empowerment funding and funding distributed through the funding streams listed under this paragraph "*d*" to communities. It is the intent of the general assembly that the community empowerment area boards and the administrators of the programs located within the community empowerment areas that are supported by the listed funding streams shall fully cooperate with one another on or before the indicated fiscal years, in order to avoid duplication, enhance efforts, combine planning, and take other steps to best utilize the funding to meet the needs of the families in the areas. The community empowerment area boards and the administrators shall annually submit a report concerning such efforts to the community empowerment office. If a community empowerment area is receiving a school ready children grant, this report shall be an addendum to the annual report required under section 28.8. The state community empowerment facilitator shall compile and summarize the reports which shall be submitted to the governor, general assembly, and Iowa board. The funding streams shall include all of the following:

(1) Moneys for the healthy families Iowa program under section 135.106 by the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2000, and ending June 30, 2001.

(2) Moneys for parent education appropriated in section 279.51 and distributed through the child development coordinating council, by the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2000, and ending June 30, 2001.

(3) Moneys for the preschool children at-risk program appropriated in section 279.51 and distributed through the child development coordinating council, by the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2001, and ending June 30, 2002.

(4) Moneys for home visitation and parent support annually appropriated to the department of human services and distributed or expended through child abuse prevention grants and the family preservation program, by the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2000, and ending June 30, 2001.

98 Acts, ch 1206, §4, 20

C99, §7I.3

99 Acts, ch 190, §79, 19, 20

CS99, §28.4

2001 Acts, ch 106, §1, 4; 2003 Acts, ch 44, §19

28.5 Community empowerment areas.

1. The purpose of a community empowerment area is to enable local citizens to lead collaborative efforts involving education, health, and human services programs on behalf of the children, families, and other citizens residing in the area. Leadership functions may include but are not limited to strategic planning for and oversight and managing of such programs and the funding made available to the community empowerment area for such programs from federal, state, local, and private sources. The initial focus of the purpose is to improve results for families with young children.
2. Each county and school district in the state shall have the option of participating in a community empowerment area. A community empowerment area shall be designated by using existing school district and county boundaries to the extent possible.
3. The designation of a community empowerment area and the creation of a community empowerment area board are subject to the approval of the Iowa empowerment board. Criteria used by the Iowa empowerment board in approving the designation of a community empowerment area shall include but are not limited to the existence of a large enough geographic area and population to efficiently and effectively administer the responsibilities and authority of the community empowerment area. The Iowa empowerment board shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A providing procedures for the initial designation of community empowerment areas and for later changing the initially designated areas.

98 Acts, ch 1206, §5, 20

C99, §71.4

99 Acts, ch 190, §19, 20

CS99, §28.5

28.6 Community empowerment area boards created.

1. *a.* Community empowerment area functions shall be performed under the authority of a community empowerment area board. A majority of the members of a community board shall be elected officials and members of the public who are not employed by a provider of services to or for the community board. At least one member shall be a service consumer or the parent of a service consumer. Terms of office of community board members shall be not more than three years and the terms shall be staggered. The membership of a community empowerment area board shall include members with education, health, human services, business, faith, and public interests.
- b.* If a disagreement arises within a community empowerment area regarding the interests represented on the community board, board decisions, or other disputes that cannot be locally resolved, upon request, state or regional technical assistance may be provided to assist the area in resolving the disagreement.
2. A community board may designate representatives of service providers or public agency staff to provide technical assistance to the community board.
3. A community board may designate a professional advisory council consisting of persons employed by or otherwise paid to represent an entity listed in subsection 1 or other provider of service.

4. The community board shall elect a chairperson from among the members who are citizens, elected officials, or volunteers.

5. A community empowerment area board is a unit of local government for purposes of chapter 670, relating to tort liability of governmental subdivisions. For purposes of implementing a formal organizational structure, a community empowerment board may utilize recommended guidelines and bylaws established for this purpose by the Iowa board. All meetings of a community empowerment area board or any committee or other body established by a community board at which public business is discussed or formal action taken shall comply with the requirements of chapter 21. A community board shall maintain its records in accordance with chapter 22.

98 Acts, ch 1206, §6, 20

C99, §7I.5

99 Acts, ch 190, §10, 11, 19, 20; 99 Acts, ch 192, §33

CS99, §28.6

28.7 Community empowerment area board responsibilities and authority.

1. A community empowerment area board shall do the following:

a. Designate a public agency of this state, as defined in section 28E.2, a community action agency as defined in section 216A.91, an area education agency established under section 273.2, or a nonprofit corporation, to be the fiscal agent for grant moneys and for other moneys administered by the community board.

b. Administer community empowerment grant moneys available from the state to the community board as provided by law and other federal, state, local, and private moneys made available to the community board. Eligibility for receipt of community empowerment grant moneys shall be limited to those community boards that have developed an approved school ready children grant plan in accordance with this chapter. A community board may apply to the Iowa empowerment board to receive as a community empowerment grant those moneys which would otherwise only be available within the geographic area through categorical funding sources or programs.

c. If a community empowerment area includes a decategorization project, coordinate planning and budgeting with the decategorization governing board. By mutual agreement between the community board and the decategorization governance board, the community board may assume the duties of the decategorization governance board or the decategorization governance board may continue as a committee of the community board.

d. Assume other responsibilities established by law or administrative rule.

2. A community board may do any of the following:

a. Designate one or more committees for oversight of grant moneys awarded to the community empowerment area.

b. Function as a coordinating body for services offered by different entities directed to similar purposes within the community empowerment area.

c. Develop neighborhood bodies for community-level input to the community board and implementation of services.

98 Acts, ch 1206, §7, 20

C99, §7I.6

99 Acts, ch 190, §12, 19, 20

CS99, §28.7

2001 Acts, ch 106, §2, 4

28.8 School ready children grant program establishment and administration.

1. The departments of education, human services, and public health shall jointly develop and promote a school ready children grant program which shall provide for all of the following components:

a. Identify the core indicators of performance that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the school ready children grants, including encouraging early intellectual stimulation of very young children, increasing the basic skill levels of students entering school, increasing the health status of children, reducing the incidence of child abuse and neglect, increasing the access of children to an adult mentor, increasing parental involvement with their children, and increasing the quality and accessibility of child care.

b. Identify guidelines and a process to be used for determining the readiness of a community empowerment area for administering school ready children grants.

c. Provide for technical assistance concerning funding sources, program design, and other pertinent areas.

2. The program developed and components identified under subsection 1 are subject to approval by the Iowa empowerment board. The Iowa empowerment board shall provide maximum flexibility to grantees for the use of the grant moneys included in a school ready children grant.

3. A school ready children grant shall, at a minimum, be used to provide the following:

a. Preschool services provided on a voluntary basis to children deemed at risk of not succeeding in elementary school as determined by the community board and specified in the grant plan developed in accordance with this section.

b. Parent support and education programs promoted to parents of children from birth through five years of age. Parent support and education programs shall be offered in a flexible manner to accommodate the varying schedules, meeting place requirements, and other needs of working parents.

c. A comprehensive school ready children grant plan developed by a community board for providing services for children from birth through five years of age including but not limited to child development services, child care services, training child care providers to encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children, children's health and safety services, assessment services to identify chemically exposed infants and children, and parent support and education services. At a minimum, the plan shall do all of the following:

(1) Describe community needs for children from birth through five years of age as identified through ongoing assessments.

(2) Describe the current and desired levels of community coordination of services for children from birth through five years of age, including the involvement and specific responsibilities of all related organizations and entities.

(3) Identify all federal, state, local, and private funding sources available in the community empowerment area that will be used to provide services to children from birth through five years of age.

(4) Describe how funding sources will be used collaboratively and the degree to which the moneys can be combined to provide necessary services to children.

(5) Identify the results the community board expects to achieve through implementation of the school ready children grant program, and identify community-specific quantifiable performance indicators to be reported in the annual report.

4. The community board shall submit an annual report on the effectiveness of the grant program in addressing school readiness and children's health and safety needs to the Iowa empowerment board and to the local governing bodies. The annual report shall indicate the effectiveness of the community board in achieving state and locally determined goals.

5. *a.* A school ready children grant shall be awarded to a community board for a three-year period, with annual payments made to the community board. The Iowa empowerment board may grant an extension from the award date and any application deadlines based upon the award date, to allow for a later implementation date in the initial year in which a community board submits a comprehensive school ready grant plan to the Iowa empowerment board. However, receipt of continued funding is subject to submission of the required annual report and the Iowa board's determination that the community board is measuring, through the use of performance indicators developed by the Iowa board with input from community boards, progress toward and is achieving the desired results identified in the grant plan. If progress is not measured through the use of performance indicators toward achieving the identified results, the Iowa board may request a plan of corrective action or may withdraw grant funding.

b. The Iowa board shall distribute school ready children grant moneys to community boards with approved comprehensive school ready children grant plans based upon a determination of readiness of the community empowerment area to effectively utilize the moneys, with the grant moneys being adjusted for other federal and state grant moneys to be received by the area for services to children from birth through five years of age.

c. A community board's readiness shall be ascertained by evidence of successful collaboration among public or private education, human services, or health interests or a documented program design evincing a strong likelihood of leading to a successful collaboration between these interests. Other criteria which may be used by the Iowa board to ascertain readiness and to determine funding amounts include one or more of the following:

(1) Experience or other evidence of capacity to successfully implement the services in the plan.

(2) Local public and private funding and other resources committed to implementation of the plan.

(3) Adequacy of plans for commitment of local funding and other resources for implementation of the plan.

d. The Iowa board's provisions for distribution of school ready grant moneys shall take into account contingencies for possible increases and decreases in the provision of state and local funding in future fiscal years which may be used for purposes of school ready children grants and for early childhood programs grants and for differences in local capacity for program implementation and provision of local funding. In developing these provisions, the Iowa board shall consider equity concerns; options for making capacity adjustments by restricting grant amounts based on service population size groupings to accommodate small, medium, and large population groupings; and options for making adjustments to accommodate varying amounts of time and assistance needed for implementation, such as extending the grant period to more than one year.

6. The priorities for school ready children grant funds shall include providing preschool services on a voluntary basis to children deemed at risk of not succeeding in elementary school, training child care providers and others to encourage early intellectual stimulation of very young children, and offering parent support and education programs on a voluntary basis to parents of children from birth through five years of age. The grant funds also may be used to provide other services to children from birth through five years of age as specified in the comprehensive school ready children grant plan.

98 Acts, ch 1206, §8, 20

C99, §7I.7

99 Acts, ch 190, §13, 1820; 99 Acts, ch 192, §33

CS99, §28.8

28.9 Iowa empowerment fund.

1. An Iowa empowerment fund is created in the state treasury. The moneys in the Iowa empowerment fund are not subject to section 8.33 and shall not be transferred, used, obligated, appropriated, or otherwise encumbered except as provided by law. Notwithstanding section 12C.7, subsection 2, interest or earnings on moneys deposited in the Iowa empowerment fund shall be credited to the fund.

2. A school ready children grants account is created in the Iowa empowerment fund under the authority of the director of the department of education. Moneys credited to the account shall be distributed by the department of education in the form of grants to community empowerment areas pursuant to criteria established by the Iowa board in accordance with law.

3. An early childhood programs grant account is created in the Iowa empowerment fund under the authority of the director of human services. Moneys credited to the account shall be distributed by the department of human services in the form of grants to community empowerment areas pursuant to criteria established by the Iowa board in accordance with law. The criteria shall include but are not limited to a requirement that a community empowerment area must be designated by the Iowa board in accordance with section 28.5, in order to be eligible to receive an early childhood programs grant.

4. Beginning July 1, 1999, unless a different amount is authorized by law, up to three percent, not to exceed sixty thousand dollars, of the school ready children grant moneys distributed under the auspices of the Iowa board to a community empowerment area board may be used by the community board for administrative costs and other implementation expenses.

98 Acts, ch 1206, §9, 20

C99, §7I.8

99 Acts, ch 190, §14, 15, 19, 20

CS99, §28.9