



Human Rights Report FY25

October 2025



Pursuant to Iowa Code Section 216A.1(3), the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services is submitting this Annual Report concerning the operations related to the responsibilities for Human Rights.

Community Action Agencies Subdivision

The Subdivision of Community Action Agencies (CAA) within the Division of Community Access and Eligibility at Iowa HHS provides resources and opportunities to strengthen communities and empower Iowans to become self-sufficient. Iowa has a network of 16 community action agencies across the state. Community action agencies in Iowa are nonprofit organizations that create, coordinate, and deliver an array of comprehensive programs and services to people living in poverty. These programs and services reduce conditions of poverty, revitalize communities, and enable low-income families and individuals to secure opportunities to become self-sufficient. The agencies are governed by a uniquely structured tri-partite volunteer board of directors, comprised equally of elected public officials, private sector representatives, and low-income representatives. This structure is designed to promote the participation of the entire community in assessing local needs and attacking the causes and conditions of poverty.

Annual reports on Community Action Agencies can be found on the Legislature's website: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/publications/otherResources/reportsFiled>

Family Development and Self-Sufficiency

The Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program partners with families to identify and achieve goals to move toward economic security and family stability. The core components of the program include home visits, assessments that support healthy self-exploration, goal setting, career development and connecting families to stabilizing supports and opportunities in their communities.

The FaDSS program is under the Family Wellbeing and Protection/Early Intervention and Support area of the Department.

Annual reports on FaDSS can be found on the Legislature's website: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/publications/otherResources/reportsFiled>

Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning

The juvenile justice planning team at Iowa HHS¹ is responsible for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Title II funding and its associated Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (JJAC). JJAC has multiple workgroups including the Racial and Ethnic Disparities workgroup, the Taskforce for Young Women, and the Youth Justice Council. The planning team implements components of the Title II workplan through pilot projects, direct service provision, and distribution of pass-through funding to locally managed projects and services across the state through the Title II funding and a federal discretionary grant for diversion. In addition, they provide technical assistance to other state and local agencies in the implementation of juvenile justice system reforms.

States receiving the Title II federal funding must complete monitoring to verify that youth and adult detention and correctional facilities in the state operate in compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. An HHS employee completes this monitoring by performing onsite inspections of county jails, police departments, juvenile detention centers, the State Training School in Eldora, and the Four Oaks STOP program in Marion. Training and technical assistance is also offered to assist with compliance.

This staff member also manages juvenile detention center licensure, a duty that had been transferred from legacy Iowa DHS to the Department of Human Rights prior to agency realignment. This includes issuing and monitoring licensure, financial management of the Juvenile Detention Fund, oversight of a contract with Myers and Stauffer to determine annual fund distribution, and collaboration with Department of Inspection, Appeals and Licensing staff conducting onsite inspections of centers in support of licensure.

Office of Youth and Family Engagement

Work of the Office of Youth and Family Engagement includes:

- Integrating authentic engagement across Iowa HHS.
- Supporting youth-led initiatives
 - Opportunity Pathway
 - Youth Shadow Week

¹ The Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) research and data analysis function (formerly a part of legacy Department of Human Rights) now operates under the Department of Management (DOM Criminal Justice Planning) through a Memorandum of Understanding with Iowa HHS. Additionally, 2024 Iowa Acts, SF2385 eliminated the Justice Advisory Board and Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development.

- State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council (Iowa Code § 216A.140). Annual reports of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council can be found on the Legislature's website:
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/publications/otherResources/reportsFiled>
- Youth Justice Council
 - Talking Wall – Annual project gathering thousands of sticky notes from youth in foster care and juvenile justice settings, elevating their ideas, needs and experiences to inform system improvements and guide the Youth Justice Council's Annual Action Plan.
 - National Youth in Transition Database – This work is transitioning to the Family Well- Being and Protection area of Iowa HHS.
 - Jim Casey Site Lead work – This work is the local implementation arm of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The initiative is focused on improving outcomes for young people who are transitioning from foster care to adulthood.
 - Agreement with Juvenile Court Services (JCS) – In this agreement, the Office of Youth and Family Engagement Coordinator provides support to JCS to train and coordinate events and assist JCS in piloting innovative strategies to advance authentic engagement.

Community Advocacy and Services (CAS)

2024 Iowa Acts, SF2385 eliminated the following Offices and Commissions that were formerly under the Department of Human Rights:

- Office and Commission on the Status of African Americans
- Office and Commission on the Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs
- Office of Deaf Services
- Office and Commission on the Persons with Disabilities
- Office and Commission on the Latino Affairs
- Office and Commission on the Native American Affairs
- Office and Commission on the Status of Women

The staff formerly under CAS are engaged in primary prevention services for families and children.