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Iowa Department of Human Rights Strategic Reorganization

Last year's HF809 directed the Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR) to "conduct a study to examine the organization and duties of the department and whether reorganizing the structure of the department could provide enhanced services to Iowans in a more efficient manner." DHR has spent the last several months developing a Strategic Reorganization Plan based upon an open, deliberative process that included input from key stakeholder groups, department staff, and administration. With proposed changes, **DHR's new mission is "to ensure basic rights, freedoms, and opportunities for all by empowering under-represented Iowans and eliminating economic, social and cultural barriers."** DHR's vision is to be the results-oriented leader in creating a more inclusive and productive Iowa.

What will structurally change under the proposed reorganization?

DHR will consolidate seven divisions (Status of African Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage, Deaf Services, Persons with Disabilities, Latino Affairs, Native Americans, and Status of Women) **into one Division of Community Advocacy and Services, significantly broadening the span of control, increasing accountability for results, and decreasing administrative costs.** "Offices," staffed with the appropriate expertise to continue to meet the needs of the population and the respective Commissions, will be established within the Division. Reducing duplicated administrative functions will result in more staff time that can be spent on direct service to customers and advancing systemic changes that will benefit all DHR customer groups.

The size of the Commissions will be standardized, and Code-required meetings will be reduced to four times per year, reducing costs. The Commissions will be strengthened by their each gaining a seat (along with representatives from the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council and Community Action Agencies Commission) on a newly created Iowa Human Rights Board that will develop an integrated, comprehensive workplan to remove barriers and increase opportunities for all underrepresented groups of Iowans and monitor results.

What will not change under the proposed reorganization?

The reorganization does not change the department's core function of advocacy and includes the **retention of individualized, responsive, culturally affirmative services and expertise.** Services to the public will not be affected due to restructuring. In fact, those populations now served with few or no devoted staff will receive enhanced services as DHR taps into pooled resources, such as data analysis, publications development, legislative advocacy, and events planning, to better serve them. The Divisions of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) and Community Action Agencies (DCAA) will experience only minor changes. Though some cost savings are achieved in this plan, the most significant result is that the agency gains the flexibility and accountability to better respond to its customer needs—and even achieve *greater* results—in an environment where **customer needs are growing** and budgets are shrinking.

What results for Iowans will be more possible under the new structure than are possible now?

The proposed structure for DHR will support a scope of work that focuses on **cross-population initiatives in areas like education, justice, health and economic opportunity**—"raising the tide for all boats," rather than supporting potentially duplicative "silos" narrowly focused on individual populations. DHR will also expand the data analysis expertise of CJJP across its customer groups so that we can **provide better assistance to other state and local agencies in prioritizing and enacting data-driven policies that better serve underrepresented Iowans.** Further, DHR will be freer to support other high-priority (and currently unmet) needs like federal and private grant and resource development and working to build the capacity of local agencies to help meet the needs of Iowa's special populations.