

Making a Difference

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) is a state agency that seeks to assure equality for Iowa women. The ICSW advocates for Iowa women, working to equalize women's opportunities and to promote full participation by women in the economic, political, and social life of the state.

Established in 1972 by the Iowa Legislature, the ICSW is a division of the Department of Human Rights. The ICSW is composed of nine citizens appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Iowa Senate. Two members of the Senate, two members of the Iowa House of Representatives, and the director of the Department of Human Rights serve *ex officio*.

The ICSW represents the interests of women in a number of areas including pensions, elder care, sexual harassment, welfare, insurance, divorce, nontraditional jobs, displaced homemakers, pay equity, housing, domestic violence, sexual assault, education, and credit.

The ICSW is a responsive, visible advocacy agency for Iowa women's needs and provides a basis for statewide study and action on issues affecting women. Through research, education, legislative action, and special projects, the Commission is a strong voice for women's rights.

Annually, the ICSW researches and submits a program of legislative priorities to the Governor and the General Assembly in the areas of aging and caregiving, economics, education, health, insurance, violence against women, welfare reform, justice, and government. The ICSW also advocates for women's interests at the federal level, testifies on behalf of women at legislative hearings, and monitors pending legislation for its impact on women.

As is legislatively mandated, the ICSW administers grant funds to programs that provide services to Iowans in transition. It also administers grant funds for training on issues of violence against women.

Projects

The ICSW works on a number of projects that seek to advance the status of women. The ICSW:

Collects employment related information and works toward pay equity.

Administers a Challenge Grant to address the needs of females in the juvenile justice system.

Holds a public hearing each fall, in which individuals, agencies, and organizations are encouraged to present testimony. Testimony assists the ICSW in developing proposals that are sent to the Governor and General Assembly annually.

Sends the bi-monthly newsletter, *IoWoman*, to more than 8,600 individuals and organizations statewide.

Recognizes Iowa women through the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame and the annual *Write Women Back Into History* Essay Contest, for students grades 6-9. The ICSW also awards the Cristine Wilson Medal for Equality and Justice.

Information

The ICSW offers the following publications on its website, www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw, and in hard copy:

Annual Report

Cristine Wilson Medal for Equality and Justice

Divorce: Things to Consider (2002)

Female Juvenile Justice Report (1996)

Financial Safety Planning for Older Women (2000)

How to Get Your Bearings: How to Get a Job (1998)

Referral Information on Programs to Assist Women/Minorities in Establishing and Expanding Small Businesses (2003)

Iowa Women's Hall of Fame Book

Iowa Women and the Law in English and Spanish (2002)

Promising Directions: Programs that Serve Iowa Girls in a Single-Sex Environment (2000)

Providing Gender-Specific Services for Adolescent Female Offenders: Guidelines & Resources (1999)

Sexism in Education (2001)

Sexual Harassment: It's Against the Law (2001)

Status of Iowa Women Report

Why Not Women? (1998)

Commission

Citizen Members

Vicki Brown, Oskaloosa

Carla R. Espinoza, Ames

Francis Giunta, Dubuque

Holly Mennen-Sagar, Des Moines

Sue Mullins, Corwith

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Michael Whitlatch, Storm Lake

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**Iowa
Commission
on the
Status
of Women**

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**Making a difference in
the lives of Iowa women**

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Web site: www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw

Division of Community Action Agencies

The Division of Community Action Agencies administers five federally funded programs that assist low-income populations through a partnership with 18 community action agencies and other community-based programs, including:

- Low-income Home Energy Assistance
- Low-income Weatherization Assistance
- Community Services Block Grant
- Family Development/Self-Sufficiency
- Community Food and Nutrition

Bill Brand, Administrator
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Division on the Status of Women

The Division on the Status of Women promotes full participation by women in the economic, political and social life of the state. Activities include:

- Information and Referral
- Iowa Women's Hall of Fame
- Studies and Data Collection
- Legislative Recommendations
- Grants to Programs that Serve Iowans in Transition

Charlotte Nelson, Administrator
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Division of Persons with Disabilities

The Division of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) exists to promote the employment of persons with disabilities and reduce barriers to employment by providing:

- Technical Assistance (Assessment and Guidance)
- Information, Referral, and Training
- Youth and College Leadership Forums
- Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Jill Fultano-Avery, Administrator
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Commission of Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage

The mission of the Commission on the Status of Iowans of Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage is to advise the Governor and the General Assembly in order to empower Asian & Pacific Islanders, improve their well-being, and celebrate a diverse Iowa, through:

- Technical Assistance
- Information, Referral, and Training
- Legislative Advocacy

Cyndi Chen, Commission Chair
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"Many hands make light work."

The Iowa Department of Human Rights exists to promote equal access to work, services, and opportunities to enhance the well-being of diverse populations in Iowa.

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The Iowa Department of Human Rights was created in 1986 as an umbrella agency. Its mission is to promote equal access to work, services, and opportunities to enhance the well being of Iowa's diverse populations.

Seven Divisions, one Commission, and an Administrative Support Unit comprise the Human Rights Department. The Divisions promote self-sufficiency of their constituency population by providing training, developing strong partnerships, advocacy, and maintaining a working relationship with a broad range of key decision makers. The following principals are a guide for each Division:

- Promote Human and Civil Rights for all Iowans.
- Promote cultural competence and diversity awareness throughout the state enterprise.
- Promote economic opportunity and social participation for diverse populations.
- Build strong healthy families and inclusive vibrant communities.
- Collaborate internally and externally to improve services and programs.

Each Division has a Commission or Council that is appointed by the Governor. Commissioners and Council Members represent a cross section of citizens who are politically, geographically, and gender balanced. They are responsible for developing policies and procedures, recommending legislation/regulation priorities, recommending new programs, and constructive action to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Walter Reed, Jr., Director
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Division on the Status of African-Americans

The Division on the Status of African-Americans is committed to improving the quality of life for Iowa's African-American population. Activities include:

- Technical Assistance
- Education and Outreach
- Information, Referral and Training
- Legislative Recommendations
- Conferences, Programs and Cultural Events
- Public Hearings and Community Forums

Kimberly Baxter, Administrator
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Division of Deaf Services

The Division of Deaf Services plans, coordinates and provides services to the deaf and hard-of-hearing population in Iowa. Activities include:

- Information and Research
- Technical Assistance
- Library
- Intervention Services
- Interpretation Services

Kathryn Baumann-Reese,
Administrator

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Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning

The Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning provides criminal and juvenile justice planning in the state. Activities include:

- Justice Data Warehouse
- Research and Evaluations
- Policy and Data Analysis
- Program Development and Community Planning
- Juvenile Justice and Youth Development Grants

Richard Moore, Administrator
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Division of Latino Affairs

The Division of Latino Affairs promotes statewide understanding of the social, cultural and economic contributions Latinos make in Iowa. Activities include:

- Training & Technical Assistance
- Resource and Referral Center
- Registration of Interpreters
- Legislative Advocacy
- Public Hearings and Outreach

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Administrator

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