

MINORITY IMPACT STATEMENTS
By Beth Lenstra

The General Assembly enacted HF 2393 (Minority Impact Statements) during the 2008 Legislative Session. The Act requires the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) to estimate the impact on minorities of any pending legislation that has a correctional impact. The LSA is required to work with the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Division (CJJPD) of the Department of Human Rights to develop protocols.

The LSA formed a Team of Beth Lenstra, Jennifer Acton, and Deb Helsen and conducted a literature review. We met with the following State agencies: CJJPD, Departments of Corrections, Public Safety, Transportation, and Justice, as well as the Department of Human Rights, Persons with Disabilities and Deaf Services Divisions. We also discussed the process with representatives of the Judicial Branch.

We worked closely with Isabel Gomez (Minnesota) and Jack O'Connell (Delaware) in developing a format that is currently being reviewed by LSA management. There does appear to be a lack of data at the local level for jails, and a lack of data concerning disabled offenders.

The Act also requires each applicant for grants from State agencies to provide a minority impact statement. The Office of Grants Enterprise Management within the Department of Management (DOM) has developed a form for agencies to use in gathering the information. Future plans include moving to a web-based grants management system.