

# The Iowa African-American Journal

Volume 11, Issue 1

Fall 2005

## 2006 ICSAA Legislative Priorities

### Commissioners

**Beverly Allen**  
Des Moines  
term expires April 2008

**Cutis Baugh**  
Pella  
term expires April 2006

**Dr. Michael Blackwell**  
Waterloo  
term expires April 2006

**Jamie Howard**  
Davenport  
term expires April 2008

**Thomas Simmons**  
Adel  
term expires April 2008

**Jerome Thomas**  
Dubuque  
term expires April 2008

**Loretha Teggatz**  
Fort Dodge  
term expires April 2008

**Vacant**  
term expires April 2006

**Vacant**  
term expires April 2009

**Walter Reed, ex officio**  
Director  
Department of Human Rights

### Staff

**Kimberly Baxter**  
Director

**Kim Cheeks**  
Program Coordinator

### Inside this issue:

ICSAA News	2-6
Hurricane Katrina	7-8
Resources	8
Calendar of Events	9
Support ICSAA	10

### Health

Decrease the  
Disproportionate Infant Mortality Rate of African-American Iowans

Iowa has the second highest African American infant mortality rate in the nation. Presently, African American babies die at a rate that is three times higher than that of whites. As part of the "Minority Health Advisory Committee", ICSAA will work with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) to help develop solutions.

Increase Health Education and Awareness

African-Americans are dying from heart disease, stroke and cancer at rates that are disproportionate to those of whites.

### Education

Increase  
African-American  
Teachers in Iowa

Iowa is experiencing a shortage of teachers of all ethnic backgrounds. ICSAA will assist the Iowa Department of Education with the evaluation of diversity initiatives within the comprehensive strategy for the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers.

Increase Diversity  
Training for  
Education Professionals

ICSAA will continue its educational outreach initiatives by presenting information to educators across the state about the condition of African American Iowans. ICSAA will continue to provide referrals for agencies and organizations that are interested in diversity consultation.

Expand  
Cultural Competency Curriculum

Although schools are legislatively mandated to have non-sexist, multicultural curriculum, very few are doing so satisfactorily. ICSAA will continue to serve as a resource to support multicultural curriculum through the provision of technical information and referrals.

### Criminal Justice

Decrease the  
Disproportionate  
Incarceration Rate of  
African-American Iowans

Iowa rates as the number two state in the nation in the incarceration of African Americans. While African Americans make up less than 3% of the total population, they are 23% of the prison population. ICSAA will serve on the "Governor's Task Force on the African-American Prison Population" to fully research the issue and to make recommendations to the Governor that will meaningfully address the issue.

Decrease Racial Profiling

Many states across the nation are beginning to take action against the illegal targeting of minority motorists by law enforcement. Iowa needs to face the reality that many of its African American citizens are subjected to harassment and civil rights violations by police and other officers on a daily basis. ICSAA will develop strategies for calling attention to this issue. Some initiatives include recommendations for legislation or executive orders that prohibit racial profiling and call for traffic studies.

### Economic Development

Decrease the  
Disproportionate  
Unemployment Rate of  
African-American Iowans

Although Iowa is experiencing record low unemployment levels, African-Americans in the state continue to have difficulty getting jobs. African Americans make up 2.3% of the labor force in Iowa, yet in some counties, notably Polk, Scott and Black Hawk counties, African American unemployment rates are in the double digits. ICSAA has met with the Iowa Department of Economic Development and Iowa Workforce Development to discuss progressive programs to target underutilized labor pools.

Support  
African-American  
Entrepreneurship

ICSAA has collaborated with the U.S. Small Business Administration to identify ways to do effective outreach to potential African American business owners.

## African-American Resource Directory Coming Soon

ICSAA is finalizing an African American Resource Directory. If you have a business or organization you would like to be included in the directory, please submit the information below.

- Organization/Business Name
- Contact Name / Contact Title
- Address
- City, State & Zip Code
- Primary Phone / Secondary Phone
- Fax Number
- Email Address
- Web Site Address
- Purpose or Mission
- Name of Newsletter / Publication (if applicable)

- How often is it printed?
- When is the deadline?
- What is the circulation of your publication?

Indicate which category best describes your organization.

Community\_\_\_\_\_ Educational\_\_\_\_\_

Multicultural\_\_\_\_\_

Government\_\_\_\_\_ Faith-based\_\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

Submit information to:

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans  
 Department of Human Rights  
 Lucas State Office Building  
 Des Moines, IA 50319  
 Fax: 515-242-6119

Phone: 515-281-7283 or 800-351-4659  
 Email address: dhr.icsaa@iowa.gov

## ICSAA Needs Citizens to Serve on State Boards and Commissions

The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans (ICSAA) is currently seeking to fill two vacancies. Like all other state boards and commissions, the fundamental objective of the agency is to provide much needed citizen input into the process of state government. The primary responsibilities for ICSAA commissioners include attending day-long meetings which are held on a quarterly basis and serving on at least one subcommittee. About half of the quarterly meetings are held in Des Moines and the rest are held in other parts of the state.

Once selected, individual commissioners are appointed by the Governor, must be confirmed by the Senate, and serve a four-year term. The process begins with an application that can be accessed from

the Governor's website at [http://www.governor.state.ia.us/bc\\_search.asp](http://www.governor.state.ia.us/bc_search.asp). Applicants may apply for positions on more than one board or commission based on their individual interests or expertise.

African-Americans in Iowa are needed to participate on the boards and commissions that shape policies that affect people of color, such as economic development, health and education. ICSAA strongly encourages interested individuals to consider applying to become an ICSAA commissioner or a member of any other board or commission in which they have an interest. Application forms may be obtained on line (see above) or by calling 515-281-0215.



**ICSAA Annual Report 2005**  
**Available on the website:**  
<http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa/publications>

## Speak Up & Be Heard—Grassroots Advocacy

Advocacy is a powerful tool for producing social change where we live and work. It can be a starting point for change at the state and national levels as well. Without grassroots advocates taking action in their communities, an advocacy initiative will not be successful. Being an advocate means being willing to speak up, speak out and challenge the status quo. It means being willing to take action and be a voice for positive change.

Communicating with lawmakers through meetings, letters, phone calls, faxes, e-mails, etc. is one major way advocates may exercise their constitutional right to speak out on an issue. Here are some tips to get started:

### Send a Letter

As a constituent, writing a letter to your lawmakers is one way you can really make a difference. Express your position on a specific bill or issue and tell why they matter to you.

#### Tips for Writing a letter:

Include your name and home address, to confirm that you are a constituent who lives **and** votes in the lawmaker's district or state.

- Keep your letter short.
- Explain why the issue is important to you on a personal level. (Remember to ask for a reply)

### Send an E-mail

Please follow the same rules for writing a letter that you would for sending an e-mail. You can take action by sending an e-mail to your federal and state legislators directly.

### Make a Phone Call

By calling your lawmakers, you're choosing the quickest way possible to communicate with your legislators. We will often encourage you to call your legislators when a vote on an important issue is on the horizon.

#### Tips for Phoning your Elected Officials:

- Introduce yourself by saying your name and address, so that the receptionist knows that you're a constituent who lives **and** votes in the lawmaker's district or state.
- Be brief and speak clearly. Let them know who you are, what issue you're calling about, why you care and ultimately - what you want the legislator to do. Complete your call by asking for your lawmaker's position on the issue.

### Face-to-Face Meeting

A face-to-face meeting is the most effective way to communicate with your lawmakers. The first step is to schedule an appointment. If the lawmaker is unavailable, ask to meet with the staff member who handles your issue. Remember - most of your elected officials will have district offices, so unless you're in the Washington, D.C., area, choose the office closest to where you live. During your meeting, remember to share your personal story, as this can often make the most compelling case for an issue. After your meeting, send a thank-you note to the lawmaker and his/her staff to let them know you appreciate their time and attention to the issues you discussed.

### Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor are a great way to get information published in newspapers, magazines, newsletters or electronic publications. Lawmakers often rely on published Letters to the Editors to stay aware of issues of concern back in their districts and states.

#### Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor:

- **Be short and to the point.** Most publications will print guidelines for letters to the editor in their editorial section. Be sure to review these before you start writing. Make sure you include your name, address and telephone number, so they can verify your submission, as they often will not print letters that do not have this information included. In general, try to keep your letters 125 words or less and state the reason you're writing in the first paragraph.
- **Write on current issues.** You have the best chance of getting your letter published, if you respond to current issues that appeared in the publication. Write in support of or in opposition to an issue, so you can make a clear case.

**If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.** Most publications receive many more letters than they can print. They usually will print one as a representation of others they have received. So, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

### Call a Talk Show

Calling a local, state or national television or radio talk show is a great way for you to let a large audience know about your issues. Of course, the talk show topic should be something that lends itself to your specific issue. In order to ensure that the topic is discussed in a particular show, you can call a producer of a show to recommend a specific topic. If the program is confirmed, inform friends, colleagues, family, and others so there is good participation.

## ICSAA Seeks Nominations



The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ceremony is a state celebration sponsored by the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans. The program includes participating in the nationwide bell-ringing ceremony and features special guests, entertainment, refreshments and the presentation of the Annual MLK Lifetime Achievement Awards. The awards recognize individuals, including **youth**, who have demonstrated a commitment to the vision of Dr. King by promoting the racial equality of all people in Iowa. In order to be considered for this award, one must have demonstrated a lifetime commitment to helping others, diversity, cultural awareness, and active community participation.

### 2006 Nomination Form Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award

*Please type or print neatly.*

**Nominee:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Organization (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone / E-mail (home) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone (office) \_\_\_\_\_

**Person submitting nomination:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Organization (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone / E-mail (home) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone (office) \_\_\_\_\_

*Include the following with the completed nomination form:*

A summary of the nominee's contributions that reflect the theme of the award;

Three (3) letters of support;

A biographical sketch of the nominee (a resume may be used); and

Three other items of supportive material: This could include, but is not limited to, video presentation, pertinent newspaper and/or magazine articles, primary works, published material, etc.

Application materials must be postmarked no later than December 4, 2005. Mail to:

**Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans**  
Department of Human Rights  
Lucas State Office Bldg.  
Des Moines, IA 50319

If you have any additional questions, please call Kim Cheeks

(515)-281-3274 or (800)-351-4659

Email: kim.cheeks@iowa.gov

Visit our website at [www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa](http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa)

# 2006

## *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Project*

*State of Iowa*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Planning Committee*

"Everybody can be great because anybody can serve." Americans in communities across the nation took these words of Martin Luther King to heart January 19, 1998, making the King Holiday a day of service – A Day On, Not a Day Off.

With the leadership of national service programs, communities are transforming the observance of Martin Luther King's birthday into a day of service, fulfilling the goal of the King Holiday and Service Act of 1994. Throughout the nation on this day, service activities reflect Dr. King's life and teachings, bring people together, break down barriers, and help solve problems through citizen action.

The State of Iowa Dr. King Planning Committee would like to extend this opportunity for you, as a citizen of Iowa, to get involved by participating in some type of service project to strengthen your community. The Planning Committee will present a Service Project Award to the project best representing Dr. King's call to service. Following are just some examples of worth-while service projects: literacy programs, renovating low-income and senior housing, organizing neighborhood watches, building playgrounds, restoring schools, delivering services to the elderly or homeless, serving as companions to youth or elderly, reading to children at shelters, and mentoring youth.

To be considered for the Service Project Award, your project should be completed (or in progress, if it is an on-going project) by December 2005. Please provide a brief description of your service project and its impact on your community, using the attached form. Mail or fax the completed form to the address or fax number listed. The award will be given to the individual, group or organization whose project has had the greatest impact on their respective communities. The award will be presented at the Annual State of Iowa, MLK, Jr. Ceremony on Monday, January 16, 2006.

**Responses must be postmarked by December 4, 2005.**

**2006  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Service Project**

- Individual
- Group
- Youth

(Please attach additional pages if necessary)

Name of Project	Contact Person:
Group participants	
Address (if a group, please complete for all names) City, State, & Zip	
Telephone	E-mail address
Brief description of service project:	

Date project started

Please feel free to submit photographs, videos, or any promotional items involved with your project.

NOTE: these items will not be returned.

Record the total number of hours dedicated to your community service project.

<u>Month 1</u>	<u>Month 2</u>	<u>Month 3</u>	<u>Month 4</u>
Week 1	Week 1	Week 1	Week 1
Week 2	Week 2	Week 2	Week 2
Week 3	Week 3	Week 3	Week 3
Week 4	Week 4	Week 4	Week 4

**Application materials must be postmarked no later than December 4, 2005. Mail to:**

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans  
Department of Human Rights  
Lucas State Office Bldg.  
Des Moines, IA 50319

If you have any additional questions, please call Kim Cheeks  
(515)-281-3274 or (800)-351-4659

Email: kim.cheeks@iowa.gov

Visit our website at [www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa](http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa)

## Iowans Aide in Hurricane Katrina Efforts

### HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEE ASSISTANCE

Evacuees should first contact the nearest RED CROSS Office:

Assistance available from the American Red Cross includes:

Monetary assistance for IMMEDIATE DISASTER-CAUSED NEEDS including food, clothing, medications, and shelter.

Evacuees are entered into the Red Cross internal communication network for family reunification and location information.

All applicants will be interviewed to verify personal identification showing their pre-disaster address; their immediate emergency needs; their local resources; and their long-term recovery plans.

Referrals to local resources for mental and physical health and state, county or community resources.

Evacuees should also contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency via the registration hotline 800-621-3362 (800-462-7585 for hearing and speech impaired) or online at <http://www.fema.gov/register.shtm>

**NOTE:**  
RED CROSS may assist with contacting FEMA.

Housing Assistance  
Lodging expenses reimbursement  
Rental assistance  
Home repair cash grant  
Home replacement cash grant  
Permanent housing construction in rare circumstances  
Other Needs Assistance  
Medical, dental, funeral costs  
Transportation costs  
Other disaster-related needs

FEMA can also provide referral for the following resources:

Low-interest loans  
Veterans benefits  
Tax refunds  
Excise tax relief  
Unemployment benefits  
Crisis counseling  
Free legal counseling  
Excise tax relief  
Unemployment benefits

The following agencies and organizations should also be contacted for assistance:

**COUNTY HUMAN SERVICE OFFICE:**  
[http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/dhs2005/dhs\\_homepage/children\\_family/getting\\_help/map\\_offices.html](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/dhs2005/dhs_homepage/children_family/getting_help/map_offices.html)

County Department of Human Service Offices will determine eligibility for and coordinate:

**LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT:**  
<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/common/pdf/publications/SFYcountycontracts.pdf>

Local Public Health Departments will complete a health screening and make appropriate referrals for identified health concerns:

Food assistance  
Medicaid or medical assistance  
Cash assistance  
Housing outplacements  
Pertinent health/medical history  
Immunization status  
Clinical assessment  
Communicable Disease

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:**

The local Iowa Workforce Development office will:

Expedite your disaster unemployment insurance claim  
Assist in locating emergency job opportunities  
Provide career assessment resources  
Assist with general job placement

To utilize these resources, contact your local IWD office by calling 800-562-4692 or access [www.iowaworkforce.org/centers/files/offices.html](http://www.iowaworkforce.org/centers/files/offices.html).

## Hurricane Katrina Assistance

### HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEE ASSISTANCE

**Additional Community Resources Suggested by the  
Iowa Department of Human Rights**  
515-242-6171

#### Local Community Action Agencies

Contact your local agency or access information at  
[www.iowacommunityaction.com](http://www.iowacommunityaction.com)

#### Status of African Americans

For information on statewide and national resources  
contact the Commission on the Status of African Ameri-  
cans at 1-800-351-4659 or [dhr.icsaa@iowa.gov](mailto:dhr.icsaa@iowa.gov)

#### Latino Affairs

For information on securing translation services or on  
other resources contact the Commission on Latino Af-  
fairs at 515-281-4080 or [rossany.brugger@iowa.gov](mailto:rossany.brugger@iowa.gov)

## Resources



### Elpis Ministries, Inc.

*"restoring hope in the lives of God's people, by sowing into their needs"*

Greek Word for "Hope" is *ELPIS*  
*"favorable, confident expectation"*

#### THE MISSION

*"To establish platforms of proven means that will  
transform the lives of individuals and families, thereby  
producing healthy communities."*

#### SERVICES

Spiritual Counseling  
Financial Planning/Management  
Career Development Services  
Education

#### OUTREACH

Family Intervention Services  
"M25Alive" Emergency Services  
Incarceration/Re-Entry "Back to Life" Support  
Services

#### INFORMATION AND REFERRALS

Information & Referral Services

#### Sign Language Interpreters

For information on finding interpreters for deaf or hard  
of hearing evacuees contact Deaf Services Commis-  
sion of Iowa at 800-221-3724 or [dhr.dsci@iowa.gov](mailto:dhr.dsci@iowa.gov)

#### Disability Issues

For resources to assist persons with disabilities contact  
800-532-1486 or [dvrs.webmaster@iowa.gov](mailto:dvrs.webmaster@iowa.gov)

#### Domestic Violence

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence at 515-244-  
8028 or the Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-942-  
0333

#### Sexual Assault

Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault at 515-244-7424  
or the Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-284-7821

#### THE PURPOSE

Elpis is a not-for-profit social faith based organization,  
established to enrich and empower the lives of  
individuals, families, and then our communities. Elpis  
is committed to equipping and transforming the lives of  
the low income, disenfranchised and underprivileged,  
by fostering economic independence, promoting  
self-sufficiency and strengthening families.

Our mission is to provide programs, seminars,  
teachings and services that will transform lives. We  
are here to strengthen, impact, change and restore the  
family foundation. We believe it is viable to sow into  
the consumers needs with the objective of  
enlightening individuals with relevant tools, strategies,  
guidance and information that will alleviate some of  
the conditions caused by their circumstances.

Elpis Ministries, Inc. out sources and partners with  
other outreach ministries, organizations, businesses  
and other resource services. Elpis Ministries, Inc. also  
focuses on meeting needs of homeless shelters,  
battered women shelters, kids of incarceration and  
other mission agencies.

Tammy L. Harris, CEO  
900 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50314-1129  
(515) 237-8000 office  
(515) 237-8003 fax  
[tlh\\_elpis@qwest.net](mailto:tlh_elpis@qwest.net)

## Mark Your Calendars



**Families, Workers, & Neighbors:  
Discovering Our Hidden Assets  
Conference • October 17, 2005  
Institute • October 18, 2005**  
Scheman Center, Iowa State University, Ames  
For registration information visit:  
<http://www.iowadiversity.org/conference/index.html>

### Mark Your Calendars!

The Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males  
*presents*  
The Seventh Annual African-American Male National Conference

### "Education vs. Incarceration"

October 26-28, 2005

Hilton Hotel  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Look for registration  
information at  
[www.IN.gov/icssbm](http://www.IN.gov/icssbm)



For more information please contact:

Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males  
(317) 234-1389 • [Steven.Ingram@fssa.in.gov](mailto:Steven.Ingram@fssa.in.gov) • [www.IN.gov/icssbm](http://www.IN.gov/icssbm)



**Save The Date!**

*The Des Moines Branch of the NAACP Announces its  
90th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.  
This year's theme is "Conscience of a Nation."*

*When: Saturday, Nov. 12, 2005 at 5:30 PM*

*Where: The Des Moines Marriott Downtown*

*700 Grand Ave. in Des Moines*

*Banquet tickets are \$40.00 per person and include a one-year membership to the NAACP. Information on corporate sponsorships is also available. For your tickets, please contact Cedric Windley at (515)224-2136 or Mary Mc Cracken at (515) 252-8996.*

*Please join members of the Des Moines Branch of the NAACP and the greater Des Moines community as we celebrate justice and equality for all who make this city their home!*

# ICSAA

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Department of Human Rights  
Lucas State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Staff:  
Kimberly Baxter, Director  
Kim Cheeks, Program Coordinator

Phone: 515-281-7283 or 800-351-4659  
Fax: 515-242-6119  
Website: www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa  
Email: dhr.icsaa@iowa.gov

Fall 2005 Edition  
Editor: Kim Cheeks

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Des Moines, IA  
Permit No. 1195

**The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans needs your support!  
Yes, I want to make a difference in the lives of African American Iowans.**

Please use my/our gift to support the following:

- Printing costs
- Educational, Health, Economics, or Criminal Justice Programs
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home & business): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Options**

My Check or Money Order for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is Enclosed

Please make payable to the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Please include my/our name in the Annual Report      Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_