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## Community Empowerment's Legislative News

Here's a recap of the current legislative session's events that effect Community Empowerment.

Four Community Empowerment Areas presented information to the Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee on January 23: Linn County, Clinton/Jackson, Lakes Area (Clay, Dickinson, Osceola and O'Brien) and Boost4Families (Cass, Mills and Montgomery). Two of those areas also made presentations to the Education Appropriations Subcommittee and the House Local Government Committee that day. The presenters did a great job and information was well received by the legislators.

The statewide perspective has been shared this session with the Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Health and Human Rights Appropriations Subcommittee, Senate Human Resources Committee, and the House Local Government Committee. An Empowerment briefing was presented to the Governor and Lt. Governor on February 1.

Thanks to everyone who participated at the Empowerment Exhibit Fair at the State Capitol on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Based on feedback, we were able to share information with legislators and others as well as to learn about others' activities and efforts. This event is summarized and includes photos on the Reconnecting Iowans website. It can be accessed at:

<http://www.reconnectingiowans.org/>.

Once you are at this home page, select In the News, and then Making Headlines.



Ann Stewart and Deb Rohlfs at the Empowerment Exhibit Fair on February 1, 2001.

Listed below are several items of legislation regarding community empowerment that are being considered. You can follow these bills as well as other legislative actions at [www.legis.state.ia.us](http://www.legis.state.ia.us).

**Senate File 379 formerly Senate Study Bill 1197:** Appropriates \$2.4 million from tobacco funds to Empowerment in order to allow the 27 areas first funded in FY 01 to receive an annualized 12-month grant. **ALIVE**

**House File 662 formerly House Study Bill 207:** Provides an annualized funding for areas initially funded in FY 01; retains the FY 01 funding level for the first 31 areas. **ALIVE**

**House File 177:** Appropriates \$20.8 million from the general fund for Iowa Empowerment fund. **ALIVE**

**House File 457 formerly House File 295:** Authorizes Area Education Agencies to serve as fiscal agencies for Community Empowerment Boards. **ALIVE**

**Senate File 212:** Allows community empowerment areas to address the needs of senior adults. **Died in funnel**

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Office of Empowerment  
 Dept. of Management  
 State Capitol Building  
 Des Moines, IA 50319

# Upcoming Events

## Empowerment Board Meeting Schedule for 2001

United Way of Central Iowa,  
Des Moines  
April 6  
July 13  
October 1

## Empowerment Advisory Council Meetings

Thursday, June 21, 2001  
Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001

All meetings will be held in the West Des Moines Resource Center in West Des Moines

## Kids First Conference

“Hand in Hand: Community Partnerships for Youth”  
April 19-20, 2001  
Inn at Merle Hay, Johnston, Iowa

## Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Conference

“Safe from the Start: What Communities Can Do to Prevent Child Abuse”  
April 23-24, 2001  
Holiday Inn, University Park

## Quarterly Contact/Coordinator Meetings

### Scheman Center, Ames

March 28, 8:30 – Noon  
May 25, - 8:30 – Noon  
July 25, -- 8:30 – Noon  
September 24, 1:00 – 4:30

## Every Child Reads Training Reading Module

April 3, 5, 11, 26, 2001

## Empowerment State Networking Conference

November 28-29, 2001  
Scheman Center, Ames, IA

# EMPOWERMENT TOOL

## Concise Fiscal Clarifications

### **Bricks and Mortar**

Iowa Empowerment Board, October 9, 1999 meeting adopted “Local Empowerment Boards shall not use Empowerment funds to purchase real property that would be subject to taxes.”

### **Liability and Insurance**

Iowa Empowerment Board, October 9, 1999 meeting adopted “Insurance and Liability costs are included under the administrative costs which shall not exceed 3% of the budget total and not exceed \$60,000 effective July 1, 1999.”

### **Interest Earned on Empowerment Funds**

Communities may earn interest on empowerment grant funds and apply the interest to implementation of their community plan. The following clarification was issued November 2000 on state law to meet the state treasurers’ requirements for investments (Iowa Code Chapter 12): Interest should be considered program funds to be invested in services according to the community plan. Interest is not part of the grant amount and not part of administrative allowable costs. Therefore, interest cannot be used for administrative costs.

### **Fiscal Year Carry Over**

The intent of Empowerment grant funds is to provide for expansion of current assets and/or for program and service gaps in the local communities for children 0-5 to meet the state empowerment results.

In the event Community Empowerment funds awarded are not expended for programs and services for 0-5 children during the fiscal year, they may be carried over into the ensuing fiscal year.

The Early Childhood funds are federal funds and do have a time limit in which to be expended.

The School Ready funds do not have a time limit on carry over at this time.

### **Budget for Interest and Carry Forward**

The interest earned and the grant funds carried forward for School Ready and Early Childhood will need to be identified in the budget for the fiscal year into which they are carried to assure a current budget for all funds to support the Community Empowerment plan.

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# Promising Practice: Winnebago County Empowerment Victory

*Recently shared with the Office of Empowerment is the following information from Mr. Larry Hill who serves as the secretary for the Winnebago County Empowerment Group.*

Our team met for the first time just over two year and a half years ago. At that time our group was an uncoordinated group of professionals from a wide variety of fields. We knew each other by name and title but not beyond the things you find on a business card. Since that time we have met regularly, gotten to know each other better, shared our vision of what empowerment could become, and held passionate discussions around kids, families and systems. We have grown.

We now have a structure and have witnessed the benefit of empowerment dollars going directly to help young people and families with young children. We have a deeper understanding of the role each of us play in a complicated service system. We have a greater understanding of the wonderful programs that exist but have gone almost unnoticed until now by most of us.

One unique collaboration exists in western Winnebago County. Because of the strong efforts of Empowerment Chairperson Scott Helgeson and the Winnebago County Empowerment Board, the city of Buffalo Center, the Buffalo Center economic development group, the North Iowa Community School District, the Buffalo Center United Methodist Church, North Iowa Community Action, and the Charlie Brown Daycare board of Mason City have met numerous times.

The result is the start of a Head Start program married with the existing North Iowa Community School District’s Busy Bee Preschool program. This adventure has also given birth to the start of a Charlie Brown Daycare in the United Methodist Church (directly across the street from the school.) The church is asking only the expanded cost of utilities as rent.



The school district has committed funds to remodel and start the center, the city has waived utility costs for a period of time, and the economic development group is researching the construction of a new building to eventually house the center.

The school district and Head Start will each pay part of the salaries of the employees with Empowerment dollars helping offset the start-up salary costs of the daycare. It is an exciting collaboration that was given a start as a result of Empowerment Board discussions, advisory committee concerns, and motivated individuals. I felt it was important to share this victory.

*Thanks Larry, we felt it was important to share this victory as well. Keep up the collaborated efforts!*

**“Kids do well when their families do well.”**  
--Annie E. Casey foundation

## Meet State Empowerment Board Members

**Dr. Bob Koob, Chair**



Robert Koob is the eighth president of the University of Northern Iowa. His five-year tenure has been distinguished by efforts to promote and strengthen relationships

between the university and the citizens of Iowa, and to fully integrate use of cutting-edge technology campus-wide. These initiatives build on the university’s strengths in undergraduate education, teaching excellence and service to Iowa.

President Koob is a native of Hawarden who received his B.A. in education from UNI in 1962. He also holds a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Kansas. Prior to assuming the presidency at UNI, he was senior vice president and vice president for academic affairs at California Polytechnic University in San Luis-Obispo.

He is involved in numerous organizations, including the Iowa Empowerment Board, the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Services and the Governor’s Strategic Planning Council. He also serves on the Iowa Business Council, the Cedar Valley United Way, Cedar Valley Economic Development Corporation, the Iowa Technology Transfer Council, and the committee on Policies and Purposes, American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

The State Empowerment team appreciates and values Dr. Koob’s wonderful guidance and leadership as board chair.

### ***Carry Forward of Administration Limit***

Each annual grant award for the fiscal year allows for up to 3% of School Ready (and not to exceed the total amount of \$60,000) and up to 5% of Early Childhood to be calculated for the maximum administration expenses allowed.

In the event Community Empowerment funds calculated and budgeted for administration expenses are not expended for administration during the fiscal year, they may be carried over into the ensuing fiscal year. The administration funds budgeted may carry forward for the administration budget or the budget for the services/programs in the ensuing fiscal year.

### ***Community Provider Program/Services Administration***

Local Community Empowerment Boards are responsible for determining the allowable costs that community providers can utilize to administer services and programs for the implementation of the Community Empowerment plan.

### ***Audits***

The local Community Empowerment Board will be the entity audited. Funds should be included in the routine audit of the fiscal agent. Early Childhood funds require additional auditing if funds over \$300,000 are expended in a fiscal year. Local Boards should develop policies for tracking, monitoring, and reporting on use of Empowerment grant funds.

### ***Mileage Reimbursement***

The state of Iowa reimburses at a limit of \$.29 and the federal/IRS limit is \$.345. Mileage reimbursement exceeding federal/IRS limit is subject to individual taxable income. Local Boards determine the mileage reimbursement. The Board will need to identify for local providers reimbursed on a "unit rate", if the mileage cost is included in the "unit rate."

### ***Equipment Purchase***

Early Childhood funds have federal guidelines for purchase and usage of equipment. Expenses under \$5,000 are considered consumable but equipment over this amount must be inventoried and tracked.

### ***Fidelity Bonds***

Fidelity bonds that are a part of a program requirement would not be part of administrative cost limits. Fidelity bonds for local Empowerment Board members and staff would be part of the administrative cost limits.

## **Other Activities**

### **Risky Business Conference**

April 3, 2001

### **Advancing Youth Development in Southwest Iowa:**

*A State and Community Dialogue*

Monday, April 9, 2001

Montgomery County Family YMCA  
Red Oak, Iowa

### **Medical Homes Conference**

By Iowa Academy

April 19, 2001

### **Midwest Association for Education of Young Children**

April 19-21, 2001

### **Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Safe From the Start Conference**

April 23-24, 2001

Holiday Inn, University Park  
West Des Moines, IA

### **Success 4 Conference**

June 13-14, 2001

**FYI -- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month**

# Literacy Initiatives

*Partnering with the State Library*

*Article submitted by Mary Cameron, State Librarian*

Last year during National Library Week, First Lady Christie Vilsack announced that seven pilot communities would be involved in the first year of her literacy initiative, Iowa Stories 2000. During the past year, Algona, Ames, Bayard, Belle Plaine, Cherokee, Independence, and Oskaloosa have conducted a focus group and a community forum to complete a literacy inventory of their communities.



The Library Partners (public librarians, school library media specialists, and academic librarians) in these pilot communities spent the months after April, 2000 planning and organizing their activities for this project. First Lady Christie Vilsack “kicked off” the local literacy initiatives during September with a local press conference.

Also, in September, the pilot communities conducted focus groups with their Advisory Panels. Advisory Panels are 10-12 community members representing the libraries, the media, the local chamber of commerce, local civic organizations, city government, community businesses, human services, the arts, etc.

The role of the Advisory Panel is to identify literacy programs currently taking place in the community, identify underserved segments of the community, identify potential community partners and projects to reach the underserved, identify overlaps

in service or groups served, and to raise awareness of community literacy activities.

In October, each community conducted a public forum to ascertain related literacy activities currently being done in their community. The goal was to provide the community with a literacy inventory of activities that can be kept in the local public library for future reference or future projects.

Finally, in November, after all the data was collected the Advisory Panels chose a local Iowa Stories 2000 project. Presently communities are working on their projects. Projects chosen included ABC (Activities and Books for Children), a community literacy fair, and an intergenerational storytelling community event.

The second year of the project will kick-off on March 26. If a community would like to participate, they may contact Mary Cameron, Youth Services Consultant, State Library of Iowa, 1112 E. 12<sup>th</sup>, Des Moines, Iowa 50319 (515)281-7571 or [mcamero@mail.lib.state.ia.us](mailto:mcamero@mail.lib.state.ia.us).

## Lee/Van Buren Childcare Enhancement Conference

*(Thanks to Beth Mohrfeld for submitting this article.)*

On January 20, 2001, the Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Area held their first Childcare Enhancement Conference in Ft. Madison. The conference was open to all childcare providers in Lee & Van Buren Counties at no cost. Seventy-five childcare providers participated. A Trade Show was set-up poolside that allowed local vendors and providers to display the many resources that they have available for childcare providers.

The conference was funded using Early Childhood funding. It was planned by the Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Childcare Committee, which consists of a number of individuals representing various agencies, organizations and parent volunteers. Committee members solicited local businesses for door prizes, which were given out throughout the day’s events. In all, we were able to give out around 60 door prizes!

Our first year goal for the conference was to educate childcare providers about the local and State Empowerment initiative and provide educational opportunities that will enhance the quality of childcare providers in Lee & Van Buren counties. Kris Bell, Iowa Department of Management’s Community Empowerment Facilitator, was gracious enough to be our opening guest speaker. We certainly appreciated Kris taking the time to come down and help us with our first Conference endeavor! Kris’s presentation clearly outlined the State’s plan and commitment to Empowerment. Following Kris’s presentation, Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Board Member Matt Mohrfeld enlightened the group with a brief history of the two-county designation into Empowerment and what had taken place locally.

We were fortunate to secure two speakers for the day whose expertise in early child development is well known throughout the state of Iowa. Dr. Ed Schor, Medical Director, Iowa Department of Public Health spoke on the research completed, sharing the importance of early brain stimulus in infants. His message helped to underscore the importance of early childhood caregivers and the critical role they play in the development of children. Dr. Schor’s information was very well received and had providers looking very differently at their daily interactions with children.

Our last speaker was Mr. Tom Rendon, Iowa Public Television’s Ready To Learn Coordinator. Tom spoke on the effects, both positive and negative, that

television has on the development of children. His message helped childcare providers learn more about developing a healthy emotional life for children, which is essential to learning and appropriate behaviors. He was very instrumental on educating childcare providers on how television can be used to both educate and inspire young children during these formidable years. Tom proved to be a very interactive, high-energy presenter, engaging the audience in a variety of fun activities.

Reviews from the participants were very positive! So much so, that the Childcare Committee has decided to host another conference in January 2002. Childcare providers left with the increased sense that what they do is extremely important. Our hope is that we can open up next year's event to any and all childcare providers in Southeast Iowa who would be interested in attending. We've already secured two of our three speakers for next year.



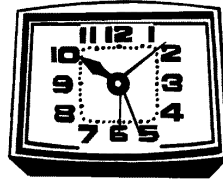
*This is Lee/Van Buren Empowerment Board Chairperson Kenneth Crabill. Kenny attended the conference, and as you can see, enjoyed himself!*

I'd like to take a moment and brag a little bit about our Childcare Committee that was responsible for planning this first conference. This has been a very active committee consisting of individuals who I would call "doers". We joke at our committee meetings that this group is "vicious" if you don't have your assigned homework completed by the next meeting! I suppose small committees have to be if you ever want to get anything done.

One important lesson we learned after hosting the conference was how much you can get for practically nothing. In

all, our first Conference cost right around \$3,500. Not having done this before, we anticipated that the cost would be considerably higher. We were able to find speakers who were free, businesses that donated door prizes, and a group of dedicated individuals who were willing to invest their time into the cause of enhancing childcare. Those of us involved felt it was well worth the time and effort!

## Tick Tock, Tick Tock.



Don't forget to complete your Community Empowerment Technical Assistance Funding Application. To date we have received seven applications. They are due by June 30, 2001. If you need the application, you may get it from the website: [www.empowerment.state.ia.us](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us).

## Links to Empowerment web sites

- State:** [www.empowerment.state.ia.us](http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us)
- Woodbury:** [www.siouxlandship.org](http://www.siouxlandship.org)
- HAWC:** [www.HAWC-Iowa.com](http://www.HAWC-Iowa.com)
- Linn:** [www.linnempowerment.homesite.com/homepage.html](http://www.linnempowerment.homesite.com/homepage.html)
- Polk:** [www.humanservicesplanningalliance.org](http://www.humanservicesplanningalliance.org)
- Buchanan Delaware Fayette:** [www.bdfempowerment.org](http://www.bdfempowerment.org)
- Scott:** [www.scottcountyempowerment.org/](http://www.scottcountyempowerment.org/)
- Floyd, Chickasaw, Mitchell:** [www.fmccom.org](http://www.fmccom.org)

**Send us your web site address and we'll include it in the next newsletter**

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### **House File 462 formerly HF 362.**

Permits AEA's to keep 100% of medical assistance reimbursement for services provided to children 0-3 under Part C. **ALIVE**

As we move closer to the end of this legislative session, we will be sharing information. If you have questions, though, feel free to contact the Office of Empowerment.

## State Networking Conference

Plans are underway for the next State Networking Conference. Mark your calendars for November 28-29, 2001. This year's conference will be held at the Scheman Center in Ames, Iowa. Based on feedback from last year's event, we hope this will be more centrally located for attendees.

If you haven't submitted your application for Technical Assistance dollars, remember that this event would be a great training event to send board members.

A team of local contact persons will be helping with the design and focus of the conference, but we welcome all comments. So, if you have a suggestion for workshop or presenter, feel free to contact your regional contact person or Shanell Wagler at [shanell.wagler@idom.state.ia.us](mailto:shanell.wagler@idom.state.ia.us) or by phone at (515) 281-4321.

Look forward to seeing you there!

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