

# Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans Department of Human Rights

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Annual Report  
August 1999

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The Commission on the Status of African-Americans, formerly known as the Commission on the Status of Blacks, was created by statute in 1988. The nine members of the commission are appointed by the Governor and represent each region of the State. Meetings are open to the public. The commission sets policy for and provides direction to the Division of the Status of African-Americans within the Department of Human Rights. The division administrator is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Iowa Senate.

**Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans  
1998-99 Members**

THERESA CLARK-KLINE	Fort Madison	term expires 2000
TAMERA DIGGS-TATE	Des Moines	term expires 2000
JAMES HESTER	Davenport	term expires 2002
ISAIAH J. JOHNSON	Denison	term expires 2002
WILFRED JOHNSON	Waterloo	term expires 2000
DARRYL LIPSCOMB	Cedar Rapids	term expires 2000
GWENDA NAYLOR	Fort Dodge	term expires 2000
CAMILLE SCULLY	Waterloo	term expires 2002
JEROME THOMAS	Dubuque	term expires 2000

Ex-officio Member  
ROSE VASQUEZ, director  
Department of Human Rights

**Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans  
1998-99 Staff**

ROMELLE SLAUGHTER	administrator	appointed March 1995 resigned April 1999
TRAEVENA POTTER-HALL	administrator	appointed March 1999
KIMBERLY CHEEKS	program planner	joined staff in September 1997

### **ICSAA Mission**

The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans pursuant to Chapter 216A.142 of the Iowa Code is legislatively mandated to report on the status of Iowans of African-American descent. The Commission, with the support of staff, community leaders, public and private agencies and organizations, will consider, review, and recommend programs, services, policies, legislation and administrative rules that will improve the quality of life for Iowa's African-American population.

### **ICSAA Vision Statement**

The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans exists to promote the interests of African-Americans in the State of Iowa and in doing so, fosters the well being of the State's entire citizenry.

In the spirit of equity, inclusion and responsiveness this Commission, in partnership with the broader African-American community shall:

Educate itself and others regarding the needs of the state's African-American citizenry and regarding the issues that significantly impact them.

Inform the broader African-American community, legislative branches of government and the general public of those needs and issues.

Advocate for positive changes in policy, practices and programs that potentially or actually negatively affect African-American Iowans.

Network with organizations and individuals on behalf of the state's African-American population.

## Executive Summary

Prepared by Traevana Potter-Hall

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It is a unique challenge to summarize a year of commission activity when the leadership of the Division of the Status of African-Americans has undergone such a tremendous amount of transition. When I took over the administrative duties on April 12, 1999, I was not familiar with the challenges the staff was facing while planning the statewide African-American women's conference. At that time, I could only imagine the pressures of working in an office with two full-time employees who have attempted to do the work of a staff of ten. I did not realize that the Iowa Code authorizes my commission to do so much more than what was actually being done, nor did I fully appreciate the obstacles that prevented it from doing so.

From my predecessor, I have inherited a legacy of strong commitment to the African-American community in the State of Iowa. However, I have also inherited a commission that has yet to reach its fullest potential. During the next fiscal year, we are uniformly committed to taking our activities to another level by taking a systematic approach to information gathering in the African-American community and being more responsive to our constituency. This will involve doing a greater amount of advocacy within other state agencies and the legislature. Our quarterly newsletter, now available on-line, includes

information about pending issues that are important to black people in Iowa. We are hosting public hearings in various locations throughout the state during the fall of 1999, with the goal of increasing the visibility of the commission. The information gained from these hearings will be organized into an action plan to be implemented during the next legislative session. A technology consultant has been hired to advise the division about how we can manage statistical information more effectively and become a respected source for publications and information relative to African-American Iowans.

I am confident that the new administration is supportive of a more proactive approach to serving the black community in Iowa. Together, we will work towards the shared goals of increasing educational opportunities for black children and lowering disproportionate minority incarceration in Iowa. Additionally, the commission looks forward to forming coalitions with individuals and organizations across the state that are committed to addressing the concerns of African-Americans in Iowa. By establishing the commission as a vital contact, as an essential source of information and as a potential funding source for local programs, we will enter the next millennium with a renewed sense of purpose.

## Programs and Events

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### 1999 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ceremony

Each year the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans sponsors the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday program held on the designated National Holiday, the third Monday in January. The 1999 ceremony, which was held in the auditorium of the Historical Building in Des Moines, began with the Traditional Bell-Ringing, where simulated bells are rang simultaneously around the United States at 12:00 noon eastern standard time. This serves as the appropriate opening to all state-sponsored events honoring Dr. King nationwide. It is a wonderful demonstration of unity that encourages all people to remember, celebrate, and act on the King Holiday.

Following the bell-ringing, the attendees joined in singing the Negro National Anthem "We Shall Overcome" while proceeding into the auditorium. The program featured musical selections by the Imani Singers of Waterloo and the Morning State Baptist Church of Des Moines, comments by the governor and lieutenant governor, and a keynote address by Reverend Alex Hanna of Union Baptist Church in Des Moines. Reverend Hanna reflected on the 1999 theme "From Words to Deeds", and emphasized how Iowans can transform their words into worthy deeds by using the teachings and philosophies that Dr King so dilligently set forth and by passing them on to the generations to come.

Attendees also witnessed the presentation of the MLK Lifetime Achievement Awards. The theme

"Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve" was the foundation behind the Second Annual MLK Lifetime Achievement Awards. Award recipients included Joy Corning, former Lt. Governor of Iowa; Reverend Wilson Rideout of Waterloo; Mary Louise Smith of Des Moines, who was honored posthumously; and Beulah Webb of Sioux City. The awards were made based on nomination forms that were submitted by community members who wanted to recognize someone they felt had shown a lifetime of commitment to service.

Each year the event has grown and the attendance for the 1999 program was standing room only. The program was planned with the help of these fellow state employees from other agencies: Victor Anderson, Information Technology Service; Harvey Andrews, Iowa Workforce Development; Annette Barnard, Department of Elder Affairs; Debra Carr, Department of Human Services; Mike Carrier, Department of Natural Resources; Marianne Chalstrom, State Auditor's Office; Jonetta Douglas, Legislative Service Bureau; Alphonso Eason, Department of Management; Janice Edmunds-Wells, Department of Public Health; Tracy Edwards, Department of General Services; Joseph Ellis, Department of Personnel; Carolyn Farrell-Moody, Iowa Law Enforcement Academy; Timothy Fitzgibbon, Iowa College Student Aid Commission; Tara Ganpat-Puffett, Department of Commerce; Donna Graves, Iowa Workforce Development; Darlene Greenfield, Iowa Department for the

Blind; Robert Johnson, Department of Transportation; Jeanine Juline, State Treasurer's Office; Maureen Lee, Citizen's Aid Ombudsman; Terra Levell, Department of Agriculture; Deena Logsdon, Department of Public Safety; Stephanie Pratt, Iowa Commission on the Status of Women; William Snyder, Judicial Department; Jacqueline Reeves, Department of Corrections; Dana Tate, Department of Inspection & Appeals; James Tyson, Department of Education; Sheri Weathers, Department of Revenue &

Finance; Charles Wright, Board of Regents.

Expenses for this event totaled \$4934.51 and included the costs of programs, awards, A/V equipment rental, advertising and memorabilia. The MLK Celebration scheduled for 2000 will include most of the traditional components while also incorporating additional activities. The goal of the commission is to supplement the event with some additional programming that will help promote the fight against inequality in the state of Iowa.

### **1999 African-American Women's Conference**

On June 11 and 12, 1999, nearly 200 participants convened at the Sioux City Convention Center to learn, laugh, and fellowship with one another at the Fourth Annual African-American Women's Conference. The theme of the event, "The Light That Shines" was an appropriate title with regard to its success because the conference was nearly canceled in 1999. The recent administrative transition in state government and within the ICSAA left the conference planning committee with only two months to organize. In spite of the circumstances, the staff of the commission, along with the Sioux City Planning Committee, led by Mrs. Flora Lee and Mrs. Linda Dean, prevailed and attendees were treated to an outstanding slate of workshops and dynamic speakers.

Keynote addresses were provided by African-American women who are nationally recognized in their respective fields. Dr. Andrea Sullivan, author of "*A Path To Healing: A Guide to Wellness for Mind, Body and Soul*" delighted the audience with her insights on how black women can take an active role in their own disease prevention. Adrienne Watson,

the national director of the NAACP's Back to School / Stay in School Program, discussed the importance of advocating for our youth and was a great source of inspiration for the young people in attendance.

The spiritual brunch on Saturday featured the all-girl choir "Young and Blessed" who rocked the convention center with four songs, after which conference attendees had the privilege of hearing the testimonials of Cathee Connor and Rhonda Nelson. Both women have triumphed over adversity – one is a breast cancer survivor and the other was an unwed teen mother. Each of their testimonials was followed by a powerful dance interpretation of their struggles that brought many audience members literally to tears. Mixed in among the speakers were the workshops which provided an excellent forum for in-depth discussion of important topics. The conference finale was a dance troupe from Benin, West Africa, which performed at the closing session. The most often heard quote from

conference participants was, "Everyone who isn't here really missed something special."

The success of the conference could not have happened without the commitment of many volunteers. Members of the Sioux City Planning Committee included Flora Lee, Linda Dean, Sandra Hayes, Sylvia Flowers, Treyla Lee, Teri Strim, and Lois Tate. Volunteers from Des Moines were Joan Hill, Janice Edmunds-Wells, Paula Lane, Terra Levell, Barbara Robinson and Anita

Williams. Volunteers from Davenport were Shirleen Martin, Martha Spears, Janet Woods-Bragg, and Wanda Wyatt. Funds for the conference were raised by the commission and volunteers, exceeding \$25,000. The money came in the form of donations, grants, registration fees, and the sale of advertisements and memorabilia. Many of the major expenses included advertising, facility rental, meals and lodging, speakers honoraria and travel.



**Division on the Status of African-Americans  
 Department of Human Rights  
 Report of Expenditures as of June 30, 1999  
 FY99**

CATEGORY	TOTAL EXPENSES PAID AND ACCRUED	% OF BUDGET EXPENDED
SALARY & WAGES	\$101,686.76	78.3%
TRAVEL This includes: Mileage, transportation, meals and lodging for commissioners and staff	\$4,047.52	3.0%
OFFICE SUPPLIES This includes: Stationery, postage, periodicals, books, special forms	\$4,534.22	3.8%
OTHER SUPPLIES This includes: Film and film processing, video tape	\$1,965.03	2.0%
SUBTOTAL PRINTING This includes: Publications and supplies	\$4,050.59	3.0%
COMMUNICATION This includes: ICN charges, faxing, long distance, WATS, e-mail and rental fees	\$3,933.74	2.8%
CONSULTANTS AND TRAINING	\$890.00	0.7%
ADVERTISING & PUBLICITY This includes: Advertising, public information, promotional supplies	\$4,037.35	3.0%
DESKTOP PC	\$2,762.35	1.7%
ST PRINTER	\$933.15	0.7%
PC PARTS	\$658.93	0.6%
DP NON-INVENTORY	\$658.93	0.6%
TOTAL EXPENSES PAID AND ACCRUED	\$129,499.64	100%
TOTAL LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATION	\$129,500.00	
REMAINING FUNDS	\$0.36	

**1999 Iowa Code**  
**Subchapter 10**  
**Division on the Status of African-Americans**

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**216A.141 Definitions.**

For purposes of this subchapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. "Administrator" means the administrator of the division on the status of African-Americans of the department of human rights.
2. "Commission" means the commission on the status of African-Americans.
3. "Division" means the division on the status of African-Americans of the department of human rights.

**216A.142 Establishment.**

There is established a commission on the status of African-Americans to consist of nine members, appointed by the governor, and confirmed by the senate, to staggered four-year terms. At least five members shall be individuals who are African-American. Members shall be appointed representing every geographical area of the state. No more than a simple majority of the commission shall be of the same political party. The members of the commission shall appoint from its membership a commission chairperson and a vice chairperson and other officers as the commission deems necessary. Vacancies on the commission shall be filled for the remainder of the term of the original appointment.

**216A.143 Meetings of the commission.**

The commission shall meet at least once each quarter and may hold special meetings on the call of the chairperson. The commission may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A as it deems necessary for the conduct of its business. The

members of the commission shall be reimbursed for actual expenses while engaged in their official duties. Members may also be eligible to receive compensation as provided in section 7E.6.

**216A.144 Objectives of commission.**

The commission shall study the changing needs and problems of African-Americans in this state, and recommend new programs, policies, and constructive action to the governor and the general assembly including, but not limited to, the following areas:

1. Public and private employment policies and practices.
2. Iowa labor laws.
3. Legal treatment relating to political and civil rights.
4. African-American children, youth, and families.
5. Expanded programs to assist African-Americans as consumers.
6. The employment of African-Americans and the initiation and sustaining of African-American businesses and African-American entrepreneurship.
7. African-Americans as members of private and public boards, committees, and organizations.
8. Education, health, housing, social welfare, human rights, and recreation.
9. The legal system, including law enforcement, both criminal and civil.
10. Social service programs.

**216A.145 Employees and responsibility.**

The administrator shall be the administrative officer of the division and

shall be responsible for implementing policies and programs. The administrator may employ, in accordance with chapter 19A, other persons necessary to carry out the programs of the division.

**216A.146 Duties.**

The commission shall do all of the following:

1. Serve as an information clearinghouse on programs and agencies operating to assist African-Americans. Clearinghouse duties shall include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Service as a referral agency to assist African-Americans in securing access to state agencies and programs.
  - b. Service as a liaison with federal, state, and local governmental units and private organizations on matters relating to African-Americans.
  - c. Service as a communications conduit to state government for African-American organizations in the state.
  - d. Stimulation of public awareness of the problems of African-Americans.
2. Conduct conferences and training programs for African-Americans, public and private agencies and organizations, and the general public.
3. Coordinate, assist, and cooperate with public and private agencies in efforts to expand equal rights and opportunities for African-Americans in the areas of: employment, economic development, education, health, housing, recreation, social welfare, social services, and the legal system.
4. Serve as the central permanent agency for the advocacy of services for African-Americans.
5. Provide assistance to and cooperate with individuals and public and private agencies and organizations in joint efforts to study and resolve problems relating to

the improvement of the status of African-Americans.

6. Publish and disseminate information relating to African-Americans, including publicizing their accomplishments and contributions to this state.
7. Evaluate existing and proposed programs and legislation for their impact on African-Americans.
8. Coordinate or conduct training programs for African-Americans to enable them to assume leadership positions.
9. Conduct surveys of African-Americans to ascertain their needs.
10. Assist the department of personnel in the elimination of underutilization of African-Americans in the state's workforce.
11. Recommend legislation to the governor and the general assembly designed to improve the educational opportunities and the economic and social conditions of African-Americans in this state.

**216A.147 Additional authority.**

The commission may do any or all of the following:

1. Do all things necessary, proper, and expedient in accomplishing the duties listed in section 216A.146 and this section.
2. Hold hearings.
3. Enter into contracts, within the limit of funds made available, with individuals, organizations, and institutions for services furthering the objectives of the commission as listed in section 216A.144.
4. Seek advice and counsel of informed individuals and organizations, in the accomplishment of the objectives of the commission.
5. Apply for and accept grants of money or property from the federal government or any other source, and upon its own order use this money, property, or other

resources to accomplish the objectives of the commission.

**216A.148 Access to information.**

For the purpose of research and study, the commission and the administrator shall have access to all nonconfidential records, data, information, and statistics of all departments, boards, commissions, agencies, and institutions of this state.

**216A.149 Annual report.**

Not later than August 1 of each year, the commission shall file a report with the governor and the general assembly of its activities for the previous fiscal year and its programmatic priorities for the current year beginning July 1. The commission may submit with the report any recommendations pertaining to its affairs and shall submit recommendations for legislative consideration and other action it deems necessary.

**1999 Administrative Rules\***  
**Status of Blacks Commission [434]**  
**IAC 8/17/94**

\* Administrative Rules were amended, effective August 18, 1999, to reflect a change in the title of the commission from “Status of Blacks” to “Status of African-Americans”.

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CHAPTER 1  
ORGANIZATION

**434-1.1(601K) Commission on the status of blacks.**

**1.1(1) Commission established.** The commission on the status of blacks is established, pursuant to Iowa Code section 601K.142, consisting of nine members. The members of the commission are appointed by the governor, to serve terms of not more than four years per appointment, and confirmed by the senate. In addition, the director of the department of human rights will serve as an ex-officio member of the commission.

**1.1(2) Nominations.** Nominations for commission officers shall be made in March of each year. An official ballot shall be prepared and ballots shall be cast at the May meeting.

**1.1(3) Election.** Officers shall hold office for one year, July 1 through June 30, unless removed by two-thirds vote of the commission. No officer shall hold the same office for more than three consecutive terms.

**1.1(4) Meetings.** The commission on the status of blacks shall meet every other month and may hold special meetings on the call of the chairperson. Six members of the commission shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority of the quorum is necessary to carry or defeat a motion.

*a.* Nonattendance. In accordance with Iowa Code section 69.15, any person who has been appointed to serve on the commission shall be deemed to have submitted a resignation from the commission if any of the following occurs:

- (1) The person does not attend three or more consecutive regular meetings.
- (2) The person attends less than half of the regular meetings in any period of 12 calendar months, beginning July 1.

*b.* Persons wishing to appear before the commission shall submit a written request to the division administrator not less than four weeks prior to a scheduled meeting. The written request shall include ten copies of any materials the requester desires the commission to review. Presentations may be made at the discretion of the chairperson and only upon matters appearing on the agenda.

*c.* Special meetings may be called by the chairperson only upon finding good cause and shall be held in strict accordance with Iowa Code chapter 21.

*d.* Cameras and recording devices may be used at open meetings, provided they do not obstruct the meeting.

*e.* The presiding officer of a meeting may exclude any person from the meeting for repeated behavior that disrupts the meeting.

*f.* Cases not covered by these rules shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order (newly revised edition).

**1.1(5) Minutes.** Minutes of the commission meetings are prepared and sent to all commission members. Approved minutes are available at the division office for inspection during regular business hours.

**1.1(6) Duties.** In accordance with Iowa Code section 60IK.146, the commission shall serve as an information clearinghouse on programs and agencies operating to assist blacks. Clearinghouse duties shall include, but are not limited to:

- a. Serving as a referral agency to assist blacks in securing access to state agencies and programs.
- b. Serving as a liaison with federal, state, and local governmental units and private organizations on matters relating to blacks.
- c. Serving as a communications conduit to state government for black organizations in the state.
- d. Stimulating of public awareness of the problems of blacks.
- e. Conducting conferences and training programs for blacks, public and private agencies and organizations, and the general public.
- f. Coordinating, assisting, and cooperating with public and private agencies in efforts to expand equal rights and opportunities for blacks in the areas of employment, economic development, education, health, housing, recreation, social welfare, social services, and the legal system.
- g. Serving as the central permanent agency for the advocacy of services for blacks.
- h. Providing assistance to and cooperating with individuals and public and private agencies and organizations in joint efforts to study and resolve problems relating to the improvement of the status of blacks.
- i. Publishing and disseminating information relating to blacks, including publicizing their accomplishments and contributions to this state.
- j. Evaluating existing and proposed programs and legislation for their impact on blacks.
- k. Coordinating or conducting training programs for blacks to enable them to assume leadership positions.
- l. Conducting surveys of blacks to ascertain their needs.
- m. Assisting the department of personnel in the elimination of underutilization of blacks in the state's workforce.
- n. Recommending legislation to the governor and the general assembly designed to improve the educational opportunities and the economic and social conditions of blacks in the state.

**1.1(7) Additional authority.** In accordance with 60 1 K. 147, the commission may do any or all of the following:

- a. Do all things necessary, proper, and expedient in accomplishing the duties listed in 1. 1(6) and this subrule.
- b. Hold hearings.
- c. Issue subpoenas, in accordance with Iowa Code section 17A. 13, so that all departments, divisions, agencies, and offices of the state shall make available, upon request of the commission, information which is pertinent to the subject matter of the study and which is not by law confidential.
- d. Enter into contracts, within the limits of funds made available, with individuals, organizations, and institutions for services furthering the objectives of the commission as listed hereinbelow:

The commission shall study the changing needs and problems of blacks in this state and recommend new programs, policies, and constructive action to the governor and the general assembly including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- (1) Public and private employment policies and practices.
- (2) Iowa labor laws.

- (3) Legal treatment relating to political and civil rights.
- (4) Black children, youth, and families.
- (5) The employment of blacks and the initiation and sustaining of black businesses and black entrepreneurship.
- (6) Blacks as members of private and public boards, committees, and organizations.
- (7) Education, health, housing, social welfare, human rights, and recreation.
- (8) The legal system, including law enforcement, both criminal and civil.
- (9) Social service programs.
- e. Seek advice and counsel of informed individuals and organizations in the accomplishment of the objectives of the commission.
- f. Apply for and accept grants of money or property from the federal government or any other source, and upon its own order use this money, property, or other resources to accomplish the objectives of the commission.

**434-1.2(601K) Division on the status of blacks.** The division on the status of blacks, within the department of human rights, was created pursuant to Iowa Code section 601K. I and is required to advocate, coordinate, implement, and provide services to, and on behalf of, black citizens. The commission on the status of blacks is responsible for establishing policies for the division on the status of blacks to be carried out by the administrator of the division as set out in Iowa Code section 601 K. 145.

**434-1.3(601K) Organization.**

**1.3(1) Location.** The division on the status of blacks consists of an office located in the Department of Human Rights, first floor, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. The telephone number is (515) 281-3855. The hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**1.3(2) Composition of staff.**

*a. Administrator.* The governor shall appoint the administrator, subject to confirmation by the senate. The administrator shall serve at the pleasure of the governor. The administrator is responsible for the overall administration of the program. The administrator recruits, interviews, appoints, trains, supervises, evaluates, and terminates staff; plans and oversees the execution of the budget; ensures provision of adequate services in the application of policies, rules, and regulations; determines the number and type of personnel and makes staffing and budgetary recommendations to the commission; develops, establishes, and maintains cooperative working relations with public and private agencies and organizations; identifies legislative issues; interprets program objectives and promotes public interest in and the acceptance of the division on the status of blacks; and maintains an adequate reporting system for necessary records.

*b. Consultants.* The consultant is responsible for planning programs for the division; developing training activities consistent with program requirements; facilitating and presenting training activities to private and public agencies; identifying and making application to grant programs to assist with program initiatives; organizing and implementing informational programs that serve the public; and conducting research and studies that are necessary to program operations.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 601K.141 to 601K.149.

[Filed 1/2/91, Notice 11/28/90-published 1/23/91, effective 2/27/91]

[Filed emergency 7/22/94-published 8/17/94, effective 7/22/94]

CHAPTER 2  
PUBLIC RECORDS AND FAIR  
INFORMATION  
PRACTICES

**434-2.1(22) Adoption by reference.** The commission adopts by reference 421-Chapter 2, Iowa Administrative Code.

**434-2.2(22) Custodian of records.** The custodian for the records maintained by this division is the division administrator.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 22.11.  
[Filed 1/2/91, Notice 11/28/90-published 1/23/91, effective 2/27/91]