ABOUT THE COMMISSION

Originally established as the governor’s Spanish-speaking task force through legislative action on April 1974. At the time its primary mission was to study the issues facing Spanish-speaking persons. The Task Force produced a report titled “Conóceme en Iowa”.

Two years later on July 1, 1976, the Sixty-sixth General Assembly approved and Governor Robert Ray signed into law the Spanish-Speaking People’s Commission. Ten years later, in 1986, during an overall reorganization of state government the Iowa Department of Human Rights was formed, under which was placed the Spanish-Speaking People’s Commission. In 1990, the Commission and the Division were renamed Latino Affairs.

During the 2011 reorganization the Division of Latino Affairs was renamed again as the Office of Latino affairs.

DUTIES UNDER IOWA CODE

Like all statewide boards and commissions, the Latino Affairs Commission is balanced for gender and political affiliation and it’s made up of seven Governor-appointed community members who volunteer their time to represent the Latino community in Iowa. According to Iowa Section Code Section 216A.15, the Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs has the following duties:

- Study the opportunities for and changing needs of the Latino population of this state.
- Serve as liaison between the office and the public, sharing information and gathering constituency input.
- Recommend to the board for adoption rules pursuant to chapter 17A as it deems necessary for the commission and office.
- Recommend to the department director policies and programs for the office.
- Establish advisory committees, work groups, or other coalitions as appropriate.
WHY A LATINO HALL OF FAME?

Many outstanding Latinx individuals helped shape Iowa and continue to contribute their talents and skills to improve the quality of life in this state. To recognize and honor these achievers and to provide visible examples for tomorrow’s Latino leaders, the Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs established the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame in 2017 with the goal of ensuring that the efforts of Latino leaders are honorably recognized and celebrated.

Among the many strong Latino leaders are political and social activists, scientists, educators, writers and spiritual and community leaders. They represent the Latinos who have helped shape Iowa, the United States, and the world. Their induction into the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame will enhance the visibility of their contributions to their work, communities, and the status of Latinos in Iowa.

IOWA LATINO HALL OF FAME

On Saturday, October 17, 2020 six Iowans were inducted into the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame.

2020 HONOREES

- Elizabeth Balcarcel - Des Moines
- Claudia Gabriela Rivera - Coralville
- Michael R. Reyes - Davenport
- Iowa Latinx Youth Leadership Award: Crystal Ambriz - Columbus Junction
- Iowa LGBTQIA Leadership Award: Buffy E. Jamison - Des Moines
- Robert D. Ray Award for Equity and Justice: Henny Ohr - Johnston
LATINO HERITAGE MONTH
PROCLAMATION

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Latino history in Iowa dates back centuries and continues to influence the future, and
WHEREAS, in recognition that Latinos descended from Native Americans whose indigenous civilizations developed and thrived thousands of years before Columbus reached the Americas, and
WHEREAS, Latino Heritage Month is an opportunity to celebrate the culture and traditions of people whose ancestry can be traced to the Caribbean Islands, Central America, Mexico, and South America; and
WHEREAS, as part of this celebration, the Iowa Commission of Latino affairs recognizes and honors the outstanding and significant cultural, political, social and economic contributions to Iowa by Latinos through the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame; and
WHEREAS, Elizabeth Buczek; Michael R. Reyes; Claudia Gabriela Rivera; Crystal Ambriz, recipient of the Iowa Latino Youth Leadership Award; Buffy E. Jamison, recipient of the Iowa LGBTQA Leadership Award; and Henry Ohr, recipient of the Robert D. Ray Award for Equity and Justice, symbolize Iowa’s strengths in demonstrating outstanding achievements and play a vital role in Iowa’s economy and workforce as well as our communities with the cultural, educational, and political influences of their culture that can be seen and appreciated in all aspects of our life, from farm-worker struggles for housing and equal wages to incredible and gifted artists, professionals, vibrant businesses, music and community festivals;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Kim Reynolds, Governor of the State of Iowa, do hereby proclaim September 15 - October 15, 2020 as

LATINO HERITAGE MONTH

in Iowa and urge citizens to increase their cultural awareness by learning and celebrating the important contributions of Latinos in Iowa.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I HAVE HERETOunto
subscribed my name and caused the great
seal of the State of Iowa to be affixed. Done
at Des Moines this 15th day of September in the
year of our Lord two thousand twenty.

Kim Reynolds
Governor of Iowa

ATTEST:

Paul Secrest
Secretary of State
RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNOR KIM REYNOLDS

As Latinos in Iowa are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, the Iowa Commission recommends the following to Governor Kim Reynolds:

I. Join 42 other states in this fight and execute an order for shelter-in-place. The Commission urges Governor Kim Reynolds to put Iowans first and slow the spread of infection, and the number of deaths across our State.

II. Require all state agencies to provide ALL information regarding COVID-19 in multiple languages.

III. Provide PPE (facemasks, gloves, hand sanitizer, etc.) to essential workers for work and home.

IV. Have representation from the Latino Affairs Commission in the Governor’s State Emergency Operations Center. The Commission appoints our Vice-Chair Marlu Abarca to be the representative.

The Governor’s focus should be the number of people being impacted by the coronavirus. Right now the Latino Communities are the ones that are being disproportionately affected by the lack of information and support from Iowa’s Government. It is the Governor’s duty to ensure the quickest economic recovery possible, which cannot be attained until we flatten the curve in our State, and ensure Iowans can return to work and provide for their families.

The Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs is a governor-appointed Commission comprised of public members who:

- Study opportunities and changing needs of the Latino population of this state;
- Serve as a liaison between the Department and the public;
- Recommend legislative and executive action to the General Assembly and Governor;
- Establish advisory committees, workgroups of other coalitions to achieve goals.

2019-2020 COMMISSIONERS
Jeannette Brown, Chair
Marlu Abarca, Vice-Chair
Lorena Gingerich, Secretary
Alfonzo Perez
Caleb Knutson
Gilbert Nunez
Valerie Nolte
San Wong, Ex-Officio, Director of Iowa Department of Human Rights

OFFICE OF LATINO AFFAIRS
Sonia Reyes
Sonia.Reyes@iowa.gov
LATINO DAY ON THE HILL

The Commission held their third Latino Day on the Hill on March 9 2020 reaching their goal of serving as a bridge to connect Iowa’s Latino community with the Capitol.

The event was planned and put together by the commission’s legislative committee: by Marlu Abarca, Commission Chair
Val Nolte, Commissioner
Cecilia Martinez,
Erica Johnson with American Friends Service Committee and other community partners.
LATINO DAY ON THE HILL

COMMISSIONERS

Marcela Bivens, Chair
Maria Alvarez, Vice Chair
Lorena Gingerich, Secretary
Al Perez | Casdi Karlson | Gilbert Nunez, Val Nunez

COMMISSION INITIATIVES

Latino Day on the Hill
Iowa Latino Hall of Fame
Iowa Queer Communities of Color Coalition
Legislative Committee
PILA (Association of Latinx Iowa Professionals)
CALD (Friends of Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs)

CONTACT

Sonia Reyes, Executive Officer of Latino Affairs
sonia.reyes@iowa.gov
515-281-4081

SOCIAL

https://www.facebook.com/IowaCommissionOfLatinoAffairs/
https://www.facebook.com/IowaQueerCommunitiesOfColorCoalition/

BREAKFAST SPONSOR

LATINO DAY ON THE HILL 2020

ABOUT

The Iowa Latino Day on the Hill was established in 2018 as an initiative of the Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs Legislative Committee. The committee was created in 2017 to create intentional ways to inform and empower Latinx in Iowa to become politically and civically active. The committee also seeks to be a bridge between Legislators and the Latino community.

AGENDA

REGISTRATION & LIGHT BREAKFAST / REGISTRACIÓN Y DESAYUNO LEVE
Uptown, outside of Room 116 | 8am-9am

RESOURCES TABLE/ MESA DE RECURSOS
Rotunda | 8am-10am

WELCOME/BENVENIDA
Rotunda | 9:10am, Sonia Reyes | Sheila Hernandez/Ella | Executive Officer of Latino Affairs
Legislative review: Cecilia Martinez | (Reyes/Thiessen/Ersig) - Legislative Committee 10:15am
Commission Legislative Priorities: Val Nunez | Sheehan/Heim/Bruce
Overview of the day: Maria Alarcon | Sheehan/Heim/Bruce - Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs, Carlos E. Ineke Johnson | Sheehan/Heim/Bruce - American Friends Service Committee, Executive Director

TRAINING/ENTRENAMIENTOS
Rotunda & Room 116 | 9:30am-10:30am
- Media Spokesperson Training (Rotunda)
- Consent 101: How a Bill Becomes a Law (Rotunda)
- Ecomundo: Abriendo por el Medio Ambiente (Rotunda, presented en Español)
- Advocacy and Lobby Training (Room 116)

ADVOCACY & LOBBYING
11am-6pm

LEADERSHIP MEETINGS
1:00pm - 4:00pm

COMMISSION MEETING 2:00PM-3:30PM
(CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)
IOWA STATE CAPITOL, LEGISLATIVE DRAWGROOM

AWARDS

Public Members Present:
Joanne Alvarez, Community Member
Stacey Cole, Storm Lake Schools Superintendent
Anna Maria Formichella, Buena Vista University
Mayra Lopez, United Community Health Care
Emilia Marroquin, School Board Member
Mayra Martinez, Storm Lake City Council
Maria Ramos, United Community Health Care
Mike Porsch, Mayor

Meeting virtually

From top left:
Sonia Reyes, Office of Latino Affairs
Caleb Knutson, Commission Chair, Hardin County
Louis Moreno, Commissioner, Polk County
Dalila Avila Sajadian, Cerro Gordo County
Lorena Gingerich, Secretary, Cedar County
Monica Stone, Iowa Department of Human Rights
Mission: The Iowa Queer Communities of Color’s mission is to use an intersectional lens to address the inequity of services, lack of support and space, socioeconomic disparities, and institutional racism experienced by our communities through education, advocacy, and intentional inclusivity and organizing.

Vision: Queer Communities of color in Iowa will be empowered to take collective action resulting in social change to obtain holistic wellness, equity, and interpersonal growth.

BLACK LIVES MATTER – UNITY MARCH AND RALLY

In partnership with Des Moines Black Lives Matter, Iowa’s Black Transgender, LGBQ+ Black communities, LGBQT+ non-Black Communities, Africans, Asians, Latinx, Refugees, Immigrants, and Allies, IQCC held the BLM Unity March and Rally on June 14, 2020, with support from the Iowa Cubs. Over 1500 people participated.

COMING OUT STORIES

Coming out and being out looks different for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) for many reasons: fear of isolation, job loss, and many other forms of violence, both mild and extreme, interpersonal and structural are among these reasons. At IQC3’s inception, we heard from members of our community across the state. Photos by Jami Milne.
PILA’s mission is to support and empower Iowa’s Latinx professionals by creating an inclusive space and providing opportunities for Self-Advocacy, Professional Development, Networking, and Connections to Iowa’s Employers. It was established in 2018.

INITIATIVES

NETWORKING
Partnerships with existing organizations that serve professionals

WEBINAR SERIES
PILA facilitates webinars on the second Monday of each month, based on topics identified by its members.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Monthly Newsletter provides employment and professional development opportunities for Latinx professionals in the state.

CULTURAL SPECIFIC PROGRAMING
PILA hosts networking events around the state with local Latinx professionals.

WEBINAR SERIES!
The Office of Latino Affairs invites you to participate in PILA’s bi-monthly live webinars 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM:
April 2  Getting Counted - The U.S. Census
June 4  Serving as a Board Member - What you must know
August 6  Serving as a Board Member - What you must know
October 1  Intersectionality within the Latino Community
December 3  Microaggressions in the workplace
Register today to be a PILA member and stay up to date with our networking events and our 2020 live webinars.
The Office of Latino Affairs, the Iowa Spanish Helpline Task Force (Directors from Latino Centers and other Latino Leaders across Iowa), the Commission, and EMBARC, Iowa’s first refugee-led social service organization, released the established the Iowa Spanish Helpline. This initiative was created to address the need for COVID-19 language access needs for Spanish speakers in the state of Iowa.

The Spanish HelpLine Task Force is composed of members from the following organizations:
Centro Latino of Iowa, Council Bluffs
Diversity Service Center of Iowa, Muscatine
Latino Empowerment And Development (L.E.A.D.), Dubuque
Hispanics United for Perry
Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs
Latinos CAN-College Access Network
La Luz Centro Cultural, Hampton
Ottumwa LULAC
Storm Lake LULAC
Young Parents Network, Cedar Rapids

This task force has now evolved into the Iowa Latino Alliance.
Navigating the TestIowa website including completing assessments for testing eligibility

Filling out forms for unemployment, small business relief funds, and public benefits

Providing educational assistance for students and parents including filling out the FAFSA application.

Facilitating advocacy in navigating the healthcare system and any other systems as necessary

Accessing local and state assistance and finding other sources for clients who cannot access local and state assistance

Finding employment and other financial resources

Reading important mail and forms in English that the client would not otherwise be able to access

Providing up-to-date information regarding questions and concerns related to COVID-19 in Iowa

Locating an appropriate provider in their area for clients who do not have a medical home or connecting with their current medical home regarding medical concerns or questions

Connecting with their local Latino-led organization for support, connection, and advocacy

And more.

The Iowa Spanish HelpLine provides more than resources to the callers— it connects clients to virtual case management services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery, such as:

- Navigating the TestIowa website including completing assessments for testing eligibility
- Filling out forms for unemployment, small business relief funds, and public benefits
- Providing educational assistance for students and parents including filling out the FAFSA application.
- Facilitating advocacy in navigating the healthcare system and any other systems as necessary
- Accessing local and state assistance and finding other sources for clients who cannot access local and state assistance
- Finding employment and other financial resources
- Reading important mail and forms in English that the client would not otherwise be able to access
- Providing up-to-date information regarding questions and concerns related to COVID-19 in Iowa
- Locating an appropriate provider in their area for clients who do not have a medical home or connecting with their current medical home regarding medical concerns or questions
- Connecting with their local Latino-led organization for support, connection, and advocacy
- And more.

Thanks to EMBAR’s AmeriCorps RISE Program, the Spanish Helpline was staffed in June by 14 Bilingual and Bi-Cultural AmeriCorps Members who helped provide case management, resources, and information to callers. They also created a comprehensive asset map. All supervised by the Office of Latino Affairs.
Still supervised by the Office of Latino Affairs, the now funded Iowa Spanish Helpline has a full-time coordinator and four AmeriCorps staff members.

Meet the Iowa Spanish Helpline Staff

Nayely Hurtado, Iowa Spanish Helpline Coordinator

Katherine Berber-Solis, RISE AmeriCorps Member
Iowa State University student

Laura Meza, RISE AmeriCorps Member
Simpson College student

Lizbeth Salinas-Reyes, RISE AmeriCorps Member
Wellesley College student

Shalome Musigñac Jordán, RISE AmeriCorps Member

Línea de Ayuda en Iowa

515-344-3936
https://www.facebook.com/LineadeAyudaIowa

¡Llámenos para recibir ayuda en español, le podemos ayudar confidencialmente a:
• Llenar formularios
• Leer correspondencia
• Conectarlo con recursos locales, estatales o federales
• Proveer abogacía
• Contestar todas sus preguntas
Nota: nosotros no proveemos ayuda financiera, solamente le damos información sobre las agencias que proveen la ayuda.

Iowa Spanish Helpline

515-344-3936
https://www.facebook.com/LineadeAyudaIowa

Call us for help in Spanish, we provide confidential assistance to:
• Fill out forms
• Read correspondence
• Connect you to local, state or federal resources
• Provide advocacy
• Answer any type of questions

Note: We do not provide financial aid, we provide information about the agencies that provide the aid.
On October 14, the Commission led the Latino Affordable Housing Panel during the 2020 Upper Midwest APA Conference. The panel focused on current events that have highlighted inequality throughout the country. In Iowa, predominantly rural affordable housing is still an issue to many of its residents, especially those residents that are in vulnerable populations and underserved communities.

The panel was led by Commission Chair, Caleb Knutson.
COMMISSIONERS

Marlu Abarca  
Vice-Chair

Lorena Gingerich  
Secretary

Caleb Knutson  
Chair

Louis Moreno

Dalila Avila Sajadian

Vacancy

Vacancy

OFFICE OF LATINO AFFAIRS

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