



Governor Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg
San Wong, Director

Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR) Minutes of Board Meeting

October 8, 2020 2:00-3:30 pm

The meeting was held virtually via Google Meet video and phone conference.

Members present

- Chair Floyd Winter, Public Member
- LaSheila Yates, Public Member
- Anna Brown, Commission on Community Action Agencies
- Elizabeth Coonan, Commission on the Status of Women
- Ben Jung, Commission of Asian/Pacific Islander Affairs
- Telina McKenna-Quintana, Commission of Deaf Services
- Judge Jeff Neary, Justice Advisory Board
- Karen Mackey, Commission of Native American Affairs
- San Wong, Director, Iowa Department of Human Rights (ex-officio)

Members Absent

- Michelle Ray Michalec, Commission of Persons with Disabilities
- Gilbert Nunez, Commission of Latino Affairs
- Rep. Holly Brink, Iowa House of Representatives (ex-officio)
- Rep. Phyllis Thede, Iowa House of Representatives (ex-officio)
- Senator Zach Wahls, Iowa Senate (ex-officio)
- Senator Zach Whiting, Iowa Senate (ex-officio)

DHR Staff Present

- Bill Brand, Administrator, Division of Community Action Agencies
- Jim Mezera, Fiscal Officer
- Steve Michael, Administrator, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning
- Monica Stone, Deputy Director and Administrator, Division of Community Advocacy and Services
- Sonya Streit, Executive Officer

Others Present

- Caroline Barrett, Assistant Attorney General
- Peggy Chicoine, ASL American Sign Language Interpreter
- Laura Lord, American Sign Language Interpreter

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Winter called the meeting to order. A quorum was present introductions were made.

2. Approval of Minutes

Karen Mackey moved to approve the minutes from the August 13, 2020, meeting. Judge Neary seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

3. Approval of the DHR FY2020 Annual Report

Director Wong highlighted the draft DHR FY2020 Annual Report. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and derecho, the department has elevated its work to serve lowans, particularly underserved lowans through communications, advocacy, and services. DHR also implemented alternative steps to continue to serve the public so that staff and lowans stay safe.

Judge Neary moved to approve the draft DHR FY2020 Annual Report, seconded by Anna Brown. Motion carried by voice vote.

4. Approval of FY2022-FY2023 Budget Proposal

Director Wong presented the FY2022-FY2023 budget proposal at status quo. Mackey moved to approve the proposed FY2022-FY2023 budget proposal, seconded by Jung. Motion carried by voice vote.

5. Board Updates

a. LaSheila Yates reported that the Multicultural Small Business Institute is collaborating with NewBo City Market to host Black owned business on two Saturdays, October 24 and November 14, at the Cedar Rapids-based market. The event will promote Black owned small businesses and entrepreneurship.

b. Commission of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (CAPI)

Ben Jung reported that in September the API Commission adopted two letters addressing concerns related to Iowa's Pacific Islander population specifically advocating on behalf of Iowa's Compact of Free Association (COFA) migrants numbering up to 1200 and located in Dubuque but also other part of the state including Sioux City and Ottumwa.

Since the health pandemic this year, the Marshallese have succumbed at higher and disproportionate rates related to chronic health conditions including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, respiratory, and chronic kidney disease. Specifically, the CAPI letter recommends the state seek a CMS waiver which provides federal oversight of state Medicaid programs, and to allow for Iowa's COFA migrant population to be included as part of the state's Medicaid program.

The Commission adopted at the same CAPI meeting date a letter to the Lt. Governor and the Secretary of State, bringing to light the Commission of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs' concern of undercounting Iowans as part of the 2020 Census. In particular while Iowa's self-response rate as of September is 'north' or over 70% this rate lags well behind previous response rates for our state. Iowa typically achieves a rate in the low 80's for a percent response rate to the decennial placing us in the top three of states behind Minnesota and Wisconsin. As of last count, Iowa ranks sixth in response rates as the window for completing in person or door to door counting looms closer to concluding for the 2020 Census.

In particular the Commission's letter seeks to cease and discontinue an agreement between the Iowa Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Commerce Census Bureau to share drivers license data related to officials at the Commerce Department's effort to rely on state's information in determining citizenship status which has been explicitly removed in previous attempts to insert a citizenship question in the Census count. Even as response rates reach percentages as high as 70% or higher in-person efforts are usually the most effective method to reach Iowa's harder to count populations which include persons with disabilities and limited language proficient Iowans.

It was shared at the October 8 virtual commission meeting of CAPI that the Commission may have an opportunity to work with a liaison from the governor's office to discuss further and speak in more detail the Commission of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs' effort to ensure that all of our population receives adequate healthcare especially those Iowans who are most susceptible during COVID-19 and also advocate so that every Iowan regardless of their citizenship status is actually counted in the 2020 Census.

There is much at stake and data from the decennial will have an impact on Iowa's place not only in representation but also to keep critical resources to fund important programs which ensure the well-being and health of our citizens.

The Census is adjusting its operations and timelines due to COVID-19 and court rulings.

c. Commission of Native American Affairs

Karen Mackey reported that the Commission of Native American Affairs continues to provide education on the use of Native American mascots. The Commission is developing a new letter to go to schools that still have Native American mascots.

d. Justice Advisory Board

Judge Neary reported that the Justice Advisory Board areas will be considering of study and making appropriate recommendations. Topics of consideration include racial disparities, correctional systems, sex offender treatments, impact on prisons, and resources.

e. Commission of Deaf Services

Telina McKenna-Quintana is the Chair of the Commission of Deaf Services. There are three new members on the Commission. The Commission met on October 7, 2020. They are developing new strategies for short-, mid-, and long-term goals.

The Commission will be addressing education for deaf children and reasonable accommodations. Iowa has a shortage of American Sign Language interpreters. Some schools don't have interpreters. The Commission is working with universities to provide an interpreter program in Iowa such as a bachelor's degree in sign language.

The Commission is working on healthcare communication needs. There are pros and cons on using video vs. in-person interpreters in medical settings and its effects on the deaf population. Some persons who are deaf also have visual impairment. The Commission will work with healthcare providers on interpreter services, how to choose interpreters for patients that will be a good match, and allowing patients to have a say in choosing their interpreter.

f. Commission on the Status of Women

Beth Coonan reported that the Commission on the Status of Women, along with partners, placed the Mary J. Coggeshall Votes for Women Marker on the state capitol grounds for the 19th Amendment centennial. Mary Jane Coggeshall was part of the suffrage movement in Iowa.

Due to COVID-19, the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame induction ceremony was not held in person. A video montage will be made for the honorees.

The Commission is partnering with groups to support the passage of Senate Joint Resolution (SJR 6). The resolution would eliminate the expired deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) which prohibits discrimination based on sex.

6. Division Updates

a. Division of Community Advocacy and Services (CAS)

Monica Stone reported that CAS continues to identify gaps in the system and focus on equity. Some commissions are holding strategic planning meetings to address the root causes of inequities.

The Data Officer position in CAS has been filled by Tina Shaw who worked in the Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs. The Department, Offices, and Commissions will use data for strategic planning to help others connect to underserved communities.

CAS collaborated with Mosaic, a mental health organization, to develop a webinar series focused on mental health for service providers. This series was offered “live” on Facebook, and is available on YouTube.

Each year, the Iowa Latino Hall of Fame inductees are recognized at a special Iowa Latino Hall of Fame ceremony. This year, due to COVID-19, the ceremony will include only Commissioners and inductees and will be recorded for public viewing.

b. Division of Community Action Agencies (DCAA)

Bill Brand reported that DHR/DCAA received \$4.2 million in LIHEAP CARES Act funding. These supplemental funds will be used primarily for crisis assistance for households facing disconnection. Approximately 60% of the funds have been expended through September. DCAA is waiting for an award announcement for the regular LIHEAP federal funds to begin on October 1 of the new federal fiscal year.

The Weatherization Assistance Program has been suspended since mid-March due to COVID concerns and the in-home nature of the program. DCAA developed health and safety policies and protocols to begin a phased-in approach restarting of the program beginning in July.

c. Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP)

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Council has developed its three-year plan. CJJP staff will present the plan to the Justice Advisory Board in November to see if the Justice Advisory Board has an interest in some of the topics.

CJJPS collects data on arrests, detentions, and other information in the usual course of business. CJJP is looking to see how this information has been affected by COVID-19 and what lessons can be learned from it.

DHR is organizing two youth work groups with specific topics – Racial Justice and COVID-19. Both work groups will learn leadership skills, advocacy techniques, how to research topics, and based on research develop ideas to address specific issues. DHR is recruiting youth between 12 and 24 years of age to participate virtually for ten weeks.

7. **Public Comment.** No members of the public were present, no comment from the public.
8. **Next Meeting:** The next DHR Board meeting will be scheduled at a later time.
9. **Adjournment:** Beth Coonan moved to adjourn, seconded by Ben Jung. Motion carried.