

ICSAA

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

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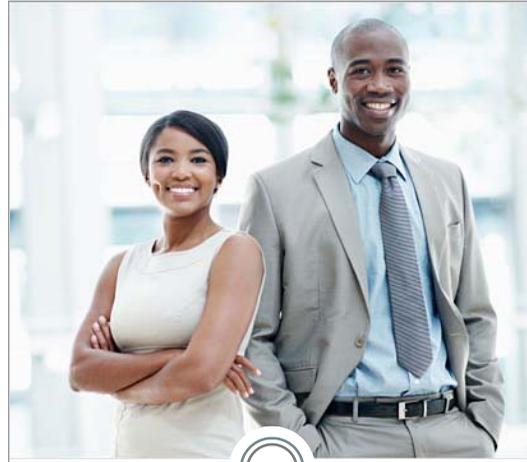


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The Iowa Department of Human Rights brings strength to our rich Iowa heritage.

We eliminate cultural and economic barriers, and work to empower Iowans.

We are the voice for many.

Iowa Department of Human Rights
WE GROW OPPORTUNITY.

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans

Policy Agenda



The **Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans (ICSAA)** seeks to improve the quality of life for Iowa's African-American population, and in doing so, fosters the well being of all Iowans. In the spirit of equity, inclusion and responsiveness, the **ICSAA**:

- Educates itself and others regarding the needs of the state's African-American citizenry and regarding the issues that significantly impact them.
- Informs the broader African-American Community, legislative branches of government and the general public of those needs and issues.
- Advocates for positive changes in policy, practices and programs that potentially or actually negatively affect African-American Iowans.
- Networks with organizations and individuals on behalf of the state's African-American population.

ICSAA continuously focuses on policy initiatives in the areas of:

- Criminal Justice
- Economic Development
- Economic Equity
- Education
- Health

ICSAA Policy Initiatives



Criminal Justice

Decrease the disproportionate incarceration rate of African-American Iowans. Iowa leads the nation in the incarceration of African-Americans. While African-Americans make up less than 3% of the total population, they are 26% of the prison population. ICSAA will continue working with state, local and federal agencies to address the sentencing laws and court system on reducing the number of African-American adult and juvenile inmates in Iowa prisons.

Decrease racial profiling. Iowa, like many states across the nation, is beginning to take action against the illegal targeting of minority motorists by law enforcement. Iowa's African-American citizens have complained that they have been subjected to harassment and civil rights violations by police and other officers on a daily basis. ICSAA will continue to work with state, local federal, and law enforcement agencies to develop strategies for calling attention to this issue, developing plans to mitigate such, and recruiting and retaining police officers.

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 and local school districts with the evaluation of diversity initiatives for the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers.

Increase cultural competency training for education professionals and expand cultural competency curriculum. ICSAA will continue its educational outreach initiatives by disseminating 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 and be a resource to support multicultural curriculum.

Increase access and the number of African-Americans enrolled in higher education. There is concern with "for-profit" higher education institutions who appear to be predatory in both lending and educational practices. ICSAA will work with local, state, and federal agencies to learn about financial and educational assessment tools available to students to offer guidance and assistance in avoiding these predatory institutions.

Increase opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs for African-American youth. ICSAA continues working with the state STEM initiative to empower and prepare young women to consider higher learning and career opportunities in STEM.

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. Iowa's state-wide unemployment rate is hovering around 4%, while African-American unemployment rates remain in the double digits. ICSAA will continue to work with local organizations, state and federal agencies to discuss progressive programs to target underutilized labor pools.

Increase support of African-American entrepreneurship. ICSAA continues to collaborate with local organizations, state, federal agencies, and Black Business Coalitions to identify ways to provide effective outreach and education to potential African-American business owners.

Economic Equity

Increase voter registration and voting among African-Americans. The laws of Iowa should be just and equitably applied for all regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic status. Helping African-Americans understand their responsibility for voting by providing training and voter mobilization will increase the opportunity to prosper and take advantage of the rights afforded by government.

Health

Increase health promotion of African-American Iowans. African-Americans are dying from heart disease, stroke and cancer at rates that are disproportionate to those of whites. ICSAA will continue to work with state and local agencies to distribute health awareness information to our constituents throughout Iowa. ICSAA will continue to partner with various state and local agencies to develop health programs and local initiatives that will serve to educate the African-American community and promote healthy lifestyles.

