



# Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities



## 2013 Annual Report





## Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities

February 2014

**Pat Quinn**  
Governor

TO: THE HONORABLE GOVERNOR PAT QUINN  
AND THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Co-Chairpersons**

**Rocco J. Claps**  
Director, Department  
Of Human Rights

**Michelle R.B. Saddler**  
Secretary, Department  
Of Human Services

It gives us great pleasure to submit the Annual Report of the Illinois Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED) for fiscal year 2013. The Committee's mission, as defined in Section 19a of the Personnel Code, is:

- (a) To provide a forum where problems of general concern to State employees with disabilities can be raised and methods of their resolution can be suggested to the appropriate State agencies;
- (b) To provide a clearinghouse of information for State employees with disabilities by working with those agencies to develop and retain such information;
- (c) To promote affirmative action efforts pertaining to the employment of persons with disabilities by State agencies; and
- (d) To recommend, where appropriate, means of strengthening the affirmative action programs for employees with disabilities in State agencies.

To that end, this Annual Report documents the Committee's accomplishments throughout the fiscal year, including a program to place ICED interns in state agencies, presentation of a webinar on personnel procedures for applicants with disabilities, publication of the Committee's newsletter, ICED NEWS, and sponsorship of an awards ceremony. The Committee continues to operate without a budget or paid staff. Its objectives are accomplished through the volunteer efforts of members and cooperation of a variety of state agencies. We are grateful to the many agencies and individuals who have assisted the Committee with its work over the years.

Sincerely,

Rocco J. Claps  
Director

Michelle R.B. Saddler  
Secretary



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## ICED HISTORY

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The Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities was created in 1974 by Section 19(a) of the state Personnel Code and is composed of five state agencies and four employees with disabilities appointed by the Governor.

### **Co-Chairpersons:**

Director of the Department of Human Rights and the Secretary of the Department of Human Services

### **Other Statutory Agency Members:**

Directors of the Departments of Veterans' Affairs and Central Management Services, and the Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission

### **Employee Members Appointed by the Governor:**

Catherine Collier, Deborah Johnson-Small, Michael Knepler, Elaine Lazell, and Karl Moulton

### **Standing Committee Members:**

Departments of Employment Security, and Natural Resources, University of Illinois' Division of Specialized Care for Children, Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities, Secretary of State's Office, and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission.

## ICED MEMBERS

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## ICED MEMBERS

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Michelle R.B. Saddler, Secretary, *Department of Human Services, Co-Chairperson*  
Francisco Alvarado, Designee

Rocco J. Claps, Director, *Department of Human Rights, Co-Chairperson*  
Susan Allen, Designee

**Department of Agriculture**

Michael Knepler, Employee Member \*

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission**

Brandy Hayes, Member

**Central Management Services**

Simone McNeil, Acting Director

Carlos Charneco, Designee

Fred Stewart, II, Member

**Department of Children and Family Services**

Catherine Collier, Chairperson

**Civil Service Commission**

Garrett FitzGerald, Chairperson

Andrew Barris, Designee

**Council on Developmental Disabilities**

Margaret Harkness, Member

**Department of Employment Security**

Karl Moulton, Employee Member \*

Caroline Alamillo, Member

**Department of Healthcare and Family Services**

Elaine Lazell, Employee Member \*

**Department of Human Services**

Dan Dickerson, Member

Teresita Gonzalez, Member

Deborah Johnson-Small, Employee Member \*

Sue Masten, Member

Lisa Riegel, Member

**Department of Natural Resources**

Jason Brewer, Member

**Secretary of State**

William Bogdan, Member

**Department of Veterans Affairs**

Erica J. Borggren, Director

Fee Habtes, Designee

Mary Keen, Member

**University of Illinois' Division of Specialized Care for Children**

Debbie Matthews, Member

\* Governor Appointed Members

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ICED 2013 GOALS

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**Goal 1.** To provide educational programs on disability issues utilizing technology to reach the broadest possible audience of state employees.

**Activity** - Conducted webinar on state employment procedures and opportunities for people with disabilities

**Goal 2.** To inform Illinois legislators and the Governor about the status of state government as a model employer of people with disabilities.

**Activity** - Prepared annual report to legislators and the Governor of ICED's accomplishments and an analysis of the state's disability hiring performance.

**Goal 3.** To educate state personnel officers and supervisory personnel about the advantages of a diversified workforce which includes employees with disabilities.

**Activities** - Issued newsletter ICED NEWS and maintained website.

### Attorney General Issues Parking Opinion Following ICED's Request

Sufficient numbers of accessible parking spaces for people with disabilities continued to be an interest of ICED. Many state agencies have requested the Committee's assistance in regards to requests for reasonable accommodation for parking for employees with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Illinois Human Rights Act require state agencies, as well as other employers, to provide reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities, and one form of accommodation is accessible parking. A separate law, the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act requires public building with parking lots to reserve a certain number of accessible parking spaces for employees with disabilities – the number is based on the total number of parking spaces provided. A parking lot with twenty or fewer spaces is only required to have one accessible parking place, while a lot with 100 spaces would have to have four such places. The Barriers Act doesn't specify whether the parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities can be assigned to employees with disabilities, or whether these spaces have to be reserved for visitors to the building. If employees and visitors share the accessible parking places, an employee may find the places filled when he/she arrives at work or returns from an appointment during the day. In an effort to clarify this issue and provide necessary guidance to state agencies, ICED requested an official opinion from Attorney General Lisa Madigan. On December 28, 2012, an opinion was issued on the matter, stating that accessible parking spaces required under the Illinois Barriers Act had to be reserved for visitors to a building. The opinion continued to say that state entities are free to reserve additional parking places for employees with disabilities in response to accommodation requests. ICED disseminated the opinion to state agency EEO/AA Officers and ADA Coordinators. The opinion is posted on the Attorney General's website at <http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/opinions/2012/index.html>, under OPINION 12-003, (December 28, 2013), CIVIL RIGHTS: Authority of State Agency to Designate Accessible Parking Spaces for Employee Use Only

## ICED HOSTS SUCCESSFUL WEBINAR ON APPLICATION PROCEDURES

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### *State Employment 101: An Introduction to the Hiring Process*

ICED sponsored a webinar in conjunction with the Department of Human Services on October 24, 2012 that addressed state application procedures and a special eligibility program for people with disabilities. Originally, one session was scheduled; however, interest was so keen that a second webinar was held on the same day. The webinar informed applicants with disabilities about positions available in agencies under the Governor and the Secretary of State. Application, testing, and interviewing procedures, including accommodations that are available for people with disabilities, were all discussed. In addition, the Successful Disability Opportunities program – an alternative eligibility procedure – was described. (A program summary appears in Appendix B.) Applicants with disabilities, centers for independent living around the state, and rehabilitation counselors participated in the program. This year for the first time, local libraries around Illinois participated in the webinar, helping ICED reach people across the state.

## TOPICAL PRESENTATIONS AT ICED MEETINGS

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Three presentations were made during ICED meetings in FY13. The first was provided by Deb Aggertt, of the Illinois State Library, regarding ISL services available to state entities, including ICED. Ms. Aggertt subsequently assisted the Committee in publicizing its educational programs, which attracted many libraries around the state to the sessions. On another topic this year, William Bogdan, an ICED member and a Secretary of State's Office employee, briefed the Committee about planned changes to accessible parking laws. ICED used this information to draft articles for an issue of ICED NEWS devoted to accessible parking. The third presentation concerned people with autism and was delivered by Wanda Bethel Satkas, the ICED 2013 Advocate of the Year (see following article for details on the awards program). Ms. Satkas discussed some of the attributes of a person with autism and behavior he or she could exhibit. Further, she explained how this condition could affect an individual's educational and employment experiences. Because autism is a hidden disability, employers may not know when an applicant or employee has this condition. Ms. Satkas agreed to help the Committee educate state agency staff about applicants and employees with autism.



## ICED AWARDS CEREMONY

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*‘Celebrating those who make a difference’*

ICED sponsored its annual Awards Ceremony on May 22, 2013 at the Department of Agriculture’s auditorium in Springfield. Jason Brewer, a member, moderated the event. Following a welcome from Co-Chairs Rocco J. Claps and Michelle R.B. Saddler, Melissa Mooney of the Department of Corrections’ Helping Paws’ program and Amy Baker of Hearing Dogs International, demonstrated support dogs in action—performing functions such as retrieving objects and alerting their owners to ringing telephones. The dogs and their trainers proved to be one of the most popular segments of the Awards Ceremony in the last several years. The program continued with a panel discussion entitled, “Disabilities at Work,” with John Miller, Director of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission, Ben Dagay, of the Illinois State Police, Danny Hicks, of Memorial Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Office, and Patrick Hayes, of the Department of Human Services. Panel members gave first-hand accounts of working with disabilities. Award categories and recipients follow.

### **State Agency of the Year – Illinois Tollway**

**Kristi Lafleur, Executive Director and Lisa Williams, EEO/AA Officer**

According to the Illinois Tollway, which operates a system of nearly 300 miles of roads and serves over one million drivers a day, the richer the diversity of its staff, the better it functions as a state agency. “The Illinois Tollway vailes the diversity of our workforce and we are continually striving to improve access to our employment opportunities,” said Executive Director Kristi Lafleur. “While we have become more proactive when it comes to addressing the needs of people with disabilities, we always look to deepen the Illinois Tollway’s talent pool by hiring the best and brightest people available.”

Regarding disability diversity at the Tollway, almost 12% of staff has disabilities, compared to a 7% average for state government as a whole. At the time of the ceremony, the Tollway employed two student workers with disabilities. The agency EEO/AA Officer Lisa Williams reaches out to disability groups in disseminating job vacancy information and works to remove barriers in policies and practices to people with disabilities. Fifty-two accommodations were provided by the Tollway to staff members with disabilities in FY12, including provision of leaves of absence when needed, equipment, and readers. Training related to the Americans with Disabilities Act, including topics such as discrimination, harassment, and job accommodation, was provided to Tollway managers and supervisors during the year.



*DHR Director Rocco J. Claps, Lisa Williams, Tollway, and DHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler*

## Business of the Year Award – Schnucks Supermarket, Montvale Store in Springfield

Schnucks Supermarket's business is selling groceries, at which it has been very successful in Illinois (and other states). It has found, as other businesses have, that employing people with disabilities contributes to its success. This store has a long history of employing people with disabilities, who have become some of its best employees. Schnucks believes that employees with disabilities are an essential part of a winning business plan.

## Successful Disability Opportunities Program Recognition

The Department of Central Management Services' Successful Disability Opportunities Program (SD), summarized in Appendix B, is one of the primary affirmative action programs in state government for people with disabilities. Through this program, applicants with disabilities go on special eligibility lists, which agencies request to expand their recruitment pools and to meet affirmative action goals. Although use of the program is voluntary, several agencies regularly use the program (particularly the Department of Human Services), and in FY13, four new agencies participated in the program. Jaci DeBrun, who coordinates the program, and who has been responsible for much of the program's success over the years, presented awards to the following agencies.



*Denise Connelly, State Retirement System, and Jaci DeBrun, Department of Central Management Services*

Department of Children and Family Services (new to the program)  
Gaming Board (new)  
Department of Military Affairs (new)  
Department of Public Health (new)  
Department of Human Services  
Department of Natural Resources  
State Retirement System  
Department of Transportation  
Department of Veterans' Affairs

## State Employee of 2013 – Richard Jonathas

**Richard Jonathas**, a ten-year employee of the Division of Rehabilitation Services within the Department of Human Services, was described by his agency as caring, knowledgeable, and dependable – someone who takes work home and doesn't complain. It is a testament to this employee that this is the first time four separate nominations were made for the same person. Mr. Jonathas is the “go to” guy in the office because he knows more than anyone else and is willing to help. He empowers customers (people with disabilities) on a daily basis with a caring, positive approach. Over the years, Mr. Jonathas has volunteered in a number of disability organizations, including the Lake County Center for Independent Living and the Illinois Rehabilitation Association. One of his co-workers summed it up best, “Rich is just a great guy with a great outlook on life and enjoys helping everyone who needs it.”



*DHR Director Rocco J. Claps, Richard Jonathas, Employee of the Year, and DHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler*

## 2013 Advocate Award – Wanda Bethel Satkas



*DHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler, Wanda Bethel Satkas, and DHR Director Rocco J. Claps*

A strong candidate for the inaugural use of this category, Ms. Satkas' disability advocacy efforts resulted from a personal connection – a family member has an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This personal interest prompted a search for information on therapy and educational programs for children with ASD. Many programs of this nature were available in Chicago suburbs, but not easily accessible to parents on the Southside of the city. Along with another mother, she started the “Chicago Southside Autism

Support Group (CSASG)” in 1997. Many volunteer organizations start up and fold over the years, but CSASG continues to meet the third Saturday of each month for the last 16 years. The organization provides free educational workshops for families in collaboration with well-known experts in the fields of Autism, Developmental Disabilities, and Special Education. During the group's meetings, care is provided for the children with autism – allowing parents

to attend without making alternative arrangements. Due to the popularity and success of this parent support group, the name was changed to the Chicagoland Autism Connection (CAC).

The group sponsors a “Spring Fling” for Autism in April, which is Autism Awareness month. CAC sponsors a children’s group for young people with ASD called the “A Team,” which meets monthly offering recreational activities such as bowling and field trips. Ms. Satkas served as President of CSASG/CAC and President of the CAC Advisory Board for many years. She has been a member and an officer in the Autism Society of Illinois over the years and served as a parent representative in “The Autism Program of Illinois (TAP)” when it began in 2003.

Ms. Satkas works at the Department of Human Services (DHS), and during her employment there, she was instrumental in advocating for the placement of the Easter Seals Therapeutic School in an empty building on the DHS Tinley Park/Howe campus. She is currently a board member and officer of Community Service Options, an organization serving adults with developmental disabilities in Chicago. In her many years as an advocate for children with ASD, Ms. Satkas met with educators and state legislators to discuss numerous issues facing families with children having ASD. She appeared on numerous television programs, including the Oprah Show and commented on a network news program about the fatal shooting of a young boy with autism by a policeman in Calumet City. As many parents will gladly testify, Wanda and the Chicagoland Autism Connection have made a tremendous difference in the lives of children with autism.

### **The Carl Suter Award for the Legislator of the Year – Representative Gregory Harris**

ICED honored Representative Gregory Harris for his work in preventing the abuse and neglect of people with disabilities in the State of Illinois. One example of his commitment to this mission is a public hearing Representative Harris convened to probe the failure of the DHS Inspector General to open an investigation into the deaths of 53 disabled adults who were suspected victims of neglect and abuse.

Representative Harris began his first term in the Illinois House of Representatives on December 1, 2006, representing the 13th District. Representative Harris’s legislative priorities include public safety, education, LGBT and HIV issues, affordable housing, accessible health and mental health care, and economic development. Some of his honors and awards include: Outstanding Young Chicagoan in 1992, Human Rights Campaign Equality Award in 1997, and Greater Chicago Committee for HIV/AIDS Humanitarian Award. Representative Harris has been recognized for service to various Chicago communities by awards from Travelers and Immigrants Aid, Voice of the People, the Uptown Chamber of Commerce, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, the Chinese Mutual Aid Society, Ethiopian Community Organization, Korean American Community Services, Asian Human Services, Chicago House and Social Service Agency, the NAMES Project, among many others.



## Individual Certificate Winners

Hope Evangelical Free Church Deaf Ministries, Nonprofit  
North Chicago VA Medical Center, Nonprofit  
Elisabeth Mann, Employee, Department of Human Services  
Benro Ogunyipe, Employee, Department of Human Services  
Geneseo Republic, Media  
Wal-Mart Supercenter Store in Zion, Business

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## ICED OUTREACH

### ICED Website

The ICED website, [www.state.il.us/ICED](http://www.state.il.us/ICED), provides a wide variety of information about the Committee, as well as offering links to disability organizations, such as the Council for Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois, the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, and the Great Lakes ADA Center. The Committee's newsletters and other publications are posted on the website, including the Committee's minutes, agenda, and a variety of reports. Employment resources for both state agency managers and employees with disabilities are added to the website on a regular basis. ICED issued a series of fact sheets for ADA Coordinators, EEO/AA Officers, and employees with disabilities, which are posted on the website. The website provides a link to the Department of Central Management Services's Diversity Enrichment Program webpage to provide information about state job vacancies and application procedures. To highlight National Disability Employment Awareness Month, celebrated during October of each year, ICED hosted a disability trivia contest for state employee—posting questions each week about disability issues. Warren Smith, of the Department of Human Services, won the contest and was presented with a gift basket (at no cost to the State) at an ICED meeting.

### ICED NEWS

The ICED newsletter, ICED NEWS, now in its thirteenth year, reports on Committee activities and developments of interest to people with disabilities. Given the Committee's focus on accessible parking this year, the publication featured articles about new parking provisions for people with disabilities, a profile of William Bogdan, an ICED member and accessible parking expert, and a series of questions and answers on this subject. The newsletter goes out to several hundred individuals and is posted on the Department of Human Rights' website, [www.state.il.us/dhr](http://www.state.il.us/dhr).



## ICED ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF ITS MISSION

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### ICED Internship Program

The ICED Internship Program for Students with Disabilities was initiated in 2000 to meet the following objectives:

- To provide employment opportunities to qualified students and new graduates with disabilities
- To diversify state government's workforce
- To provide a qualified pool of applicants with disabilities for state agencies
- To demonstrate the abilities of employees with disabilities
- To further affirmative action objectives
- Provide a transition for students with disabilities from school into the workplace



*Krystal Martinez, an intern in the Office of the State Fire Marshal in Chicago*

Agency placements are sought in a variety of positions across the State to match the skills of the interns. In some instances, interns obtain permanent employment with the State, when agencies have vacancies and the students are able to meet the job requirements.

Students with disabilities are recruited from the Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services' customers. During FY13, three students were hired, one each at the Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Department of Human Rights, and the Department of Transportation. Work performed ranged from legal administrative to engineering. Supervisory feedback was positive resulting in successful experiences for both the students and the employing agencies. One agency administrator had the following comment about his ICED intern, "In the time she's been with the Office Fire Marshal, Krystal has been a tremendous help to all of our staff. She has proven herself as a quick learner who is willing to take on projects that keep our agency running smoothly." – Larry, Matkaitis, State Fire Marshal.

## MONITORING EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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The Committee tracks the composition of the state's workforce as one indication of the state's commitment to serving as a model employer of people with disabilities. The chart in Appendix A shows disability employment data in state agencies over the last 15 years. The number of state employees with disabilities decreased over the years by 23% -- about 1,000 individuals -- however, during that period the total number of state employees decreased by an even larger percentage, 31%. Consequently, the percentage of state employees with disabilities has grown over the years, from a low point of about 5% to a high this year of 7.5%. In 2012, the state instituted an online disability survey that may capture more employees with disabilities than the print survey did in previous years.

Another indicator of the success of disability-based affirmative action programs in state government is a comparison of state utilization of employees with disabilities with the labor market availability of this group. The Department of Human Rights set the labor force availability rate for employees with disabilities in Illinois at 4.4% (4.4% of people in the Illinois labor force have disabilities, according to the American Community Survey for 2008). The percentage of state employees with disabilities, 7.5%, is significantly higher than the availability figure.

Even though the State's affirmative action program for people with disabilities is successful, employment problems remain for this group in Illinois. People with disabilities continue to have one of the highest unemployment rates of any group in the nation. Many surveys show that as much as 70% of this group is unemployed. A diverse workforce that includes people with disabilities enables agencies to better meet the needs of the public. ICED will continue its efforts to advocate for employees with disabilities including the following efforts: 1) informing state managers and supervisors of the importance of hiring people with disabilities; 2) identifying ways to make the state hiring process easier for applicants with disabilities to negotiate; 3) identifying ways to assist current state employees with disabilities in career advancement; 4) improving retention of employees with disabilities through compliance with reasonable accommodation and accessibility requirements, and 5) increasing use of the Successful Disability Opportunities Program and other recruitment efforts for individuals with disabilities.

## MEMBER ACTIVITIES AND TRANSITIONS

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Several ICED members attended training programs during the year to learn about the requirements of the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act. This statute requires state offices to be accessible to people with disabilities. The information gained will be used to guide state agencies in their access audits and allow the Committee to respond to accessibility inquiries.

Two longtime ICED members, Michael Knepler and Elaine Lazell, who were both appointed to the Committee by the Governor, resigned during the year. Mike Knepler served as the Committee's webmaster, organized the first Legislative Reception, and delivered many presentations on behalf of ICED. Elaine Lazell brought organizational and managerial skills to ICED, as well as her editing expertise. Both individuals will be missed. ICED is looking for good members. To nominate yourself, visit the following website, <http://appointments.illinois.gov/>.

## PLANS FOR FY2014

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ICED has identified the following goals for which activities will be planned during fiscal year 2014:

**Education** - to work towards a workforce that is inclusive and supportive of employees with disabilities;

**Promotion** - to increase the visibility of ICED, its activities, and efforts to assist agencies and employees;

**Monitoring State's Employment Posture** - to analyze employment trends and to seek ways to increase the number of state employees with disabilities, and

**Technical assistance** - to provide information and assistance to agencies, state employees, and applicants on issues relating to disability.

## APPENDIX A

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### Employees with Disabilities in State Government 1998 to 2013

<i>DATE</i>	<i>TOTAL STATE EMPLOYEES</i>	<i>EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES</i>
June 30, 1998	63,375	4,343 (6.85%)
June 30, 1999	65,415	4,205 (6.43%)
June 30, 2000	65,641	4,096 (6.24%)
June 30, 2001	65,974	3,952 (5.99%)
June 30, 2002	64,838	3,706 (5.72%)
June 30, 2003	54,443	2,781 (5.11%)
June 30, 2004	55,108	2,675 (4.85%)
June 30, 2005	53,284	2,561 (4.81%)
June 30, 2006	52,723	2,734 (5.19%)
June 30, 2007	51,843	2,596 (5.01%)
June 30, 2008	50,513	2,483 (4.92%)
June 30, 2009	49,229	3,122 (6.34%)
June 30, 2010	47,798	3,051 (6.38%)
June 30, 2011	48,501	3,399 (7.01%)
June 30, 2012	45,132	3,346 (7.35%)
June 30, 2013	43,620	3,286 (7.53%)

## APPENDIX B

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### Department of Central Management Services Successful Disability (SD) Opportunities Program

- The Successful Disability Opportunities Program provides persons with disabilities a greater access to employment opportunities with the State.
- Applicants must be a customer of the Division of Rehabilitation Services and have a Certificate of Eligibility completed by their Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services' vocational rehabilitation counselor for each title on file at the time of testing.
- Applicants are able to select the SD option at the same time as they are taking a test for an open competitive position title. Immediately upon completion of the test and receiving a passing grade, in addition to their open competitive grade, their SD grade will be issued.
- SD grades are valid for one year.
- An agency may request the SD eligible list when there is a vacancy to be filled by other means.





[www.state.il.us/ICED](http://www.state.il.us/ICED)

Programs, activities and employment opportunities in the Illinois Department of Human Services are open and accessible to any individual or group without regard to age, sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin or religion. The department is an equal opportunity employer and practices affirmative action and reasonable accommodation programs.

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