

ICED

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES



2021 Annual Report

(January - December 2021)

CO-CHAIRPERSONS:
James L. Bennett, *Director*
Illinois Department of
Human Rights

Grace Hou, *Secretary*
Illinois Department of
Human Services





ICED

June 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE GOVERNOR JB PRITZER
AND THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

It gives us great pleasure to submit the Annual Report of the Illinois Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED) for calendar year 2021. The past couple of years have included both challenging times and times of innovation. The coronavirus pandemic led to widespread shutdowns and stay-at-home orders throughout the country. Many were forced to adapt and shift to working remotely. Some of these adaptations have relied heavily on technology. This has created opportunities for employers to realize the benefits of hiring and retaining people from the disability community with employment opportunities, through the use of technology, from the comfort of their homes.

The mission of the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED) is as follows:

1. 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;
2. To promote a clearinghouse of information for State employees with disabilities by working with those agencies to develop and retain such information;
3. To provide affirmative action efforts pertaining to the employment of persons with disabilities by State agencies; and
4. 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 year including working with the State Legislature to ensure laws and policies create equitable opportunities and support for persons with a disability while also removing discriminatory practices and barriers. The highlight of the Committee’s year is the hosting of the ICED Annual Awards and Recognition Celebration where individuals and agencies around the state are honored for their efforts to promote access and opportunities for people with disabilities. The Committee’s objectives are accomplished through the volunteer efforts of members and in cooperation with other state agencies. We are grateful to all those who have worked diligently to enhance interagency collaboration and those who have assisted the Committee in its endeavors to advance the rights of people with disabilities in the State of Illinois.

Sincerely,

James L. Bennett
Director
Illinois Department of Human Rights

Grace Hou
Secretary
Illinois Department of Human Services

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ICED HISTORY

The Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities was created in 1974 by Section 19(a) of the state Personnel Code and was originally composed of five state agencies and four employees with disabilities appointed by the Governor. In 2015, legislation (P.A. 99-0314) was enacted to move the Committee to Section 2-106 of the Illinois Human Rights Act and expand its membership. Currently, the Committee's membership consists of five State Constitutional Officers, six state agencies under the Governor, and seven state 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 Department of Veteran's Affairs, the Department of Central Management Services, the Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission.

Constitutional Officer Members: The Lieutenant Governor, the Attorney General, the State Comptroller, the Secretary of State, and the State Treasurer.

Employee Members Appointed by the Governor: Matt Abrahamson, Elizabeth Grace, Glen Minks, Nathan Painter and Rahnee Patrick. We currently have two vacancies.

ICED MEMBERS

James L. Bennett, *Director, Department of Human Rights, Co-Chairperson*

Donna M. Hardy, *Designee*

Grace Ho, *Secretary, Illinois Department of Human Services, Co-Chairperson*

Ryan Croke, *Designee*

Members:

Lieutenant Governor, Juliana Stratton

Victoria Villalpando Sanchez, *Designee*

Attorney General, Kwane Raoul

Judith Levitan, *Designee*

Secretary of State, Jesse White

William Bogdan, *Designee*

State Comptroller, Susana A. Mendoza

Kevin Derrig, *Designee*

State Treasurer, Michael Frerichs

Rosemary Laudani, *Designee*

JJ Hanley, *Member*

Central Management Services

Janel L. Forde, *Director*

Mark Mahoney, *Designee*

Patricia Santoyo-Marin, *Designee*

Glen Minks, *Employee Member**

Mayra Magana, *Participant*

Barbara McDonald, *Participant*

Brandon Singer, *Participant*

Civil Service Commission

Timothy D. Sickmeyer, *Chairman*

Andrew Barris, *Designee*

Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

Kimberly Mercer-Schleider, *Director*

Margaret Harkness, *Designee*

Mariel Hamer Sinclair, *Participant*

Dennis Deany, *Participant*

Illinois Department of Employment Services

Elizabeth Grace, *Employee Member**

Illinois Department of Human Rights

James L. Bennett, *Co-Chair*

Donna Hardy, *Designee*

Alex Bautista, *Participant*

ICED MEMBERS

continued

Chet Pinski, Participant
Bryant Dunbar, Participant
Betsey Madden, Participant
Betsy Buttell, Participant
Adam Flores, Participant

Illinois Department of Human Services

Grace Hou, Co-Chair
Ryan Croke, Designee
Matt Abrahamson, Employee Member*
Nathan Painter, Employee Member*
Rahnee Patrick, Employee Member*
LaBraya Harris, Participant
Caronina Grimble, Participant

Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT)

Vickie Simpson, Participant

Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs

Terry Prince, Director
Matt Eddington, Designee

**Governor Appointed Members*

2021 ICED Accomplishments

Survey ICED Members

- Created a questionnaire to collect data from ICED members to improve responsiveness & effectiveness of ICED Committee. Input from committee members led to one of the most successful initiatives of 2021, a guest speaker series of subject matter experts in the field of disabilities. These experts offered content on an array of topics that educated, trained, and provided ICED members crucial information on inclusive practices and policies, in addition to keeping Committee members abreast of the latest state and federal laws.

Subject Matter Experts - Guest Speaker Series ~ Topics covered:

- **February 2021** ~ John S. Herring, Executive Director Illinois Network Centers for Independent Living (INCIL).
Topic: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and the Disability Community.
- **April 2021** ~ Nanette V. Larson, Deputy Director, Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health.
Topic: How to Support Employees with Lived Experience and Psychiatric Disabilities.
- **June 2021** ~ Michelle Andre, Staff Attorney, Illinois Department of Human Rights and Robin Jones, Director, Department of Disability and Human Development, University of Illinois at Chicago.
Topic: Reasonable Accommodations, State and Federal Requirements.
- **August 2021** ~ Kimberly Mercer-Schleider, Executive Director, Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD).
Topic: A Comprehensive Overview of Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities Goals for Illinois.



2021 ICED Accomplishments

continued

Recruitment of New Members:

ICED started the year with five vacancies for State Employees with Disabilities. We are excited to report that three of the five vacancies are now filled.

Rahnee Patrick, *Illinois Department of Human Services*

- Rahnee is Director of the Division of Rehabilitation Services at the Illinois Department of Human Services and holds a Master of Arts in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Her father is an Air Force veteran who met her mother, a native of Thailand, during the Viet Nam Conflict. She graduated in 1996 from Indiana University at South Bend, with a Bachelor of Arts in English writing and a Women's Studies minor. In 2008, the national organization American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) awarded Rahnee the Paul Hearne Award, as an emerging national disability rights leader. Subsequently, she served for two years on AAPD's board of directors. Rahnee and her spouse since 2006, Mike Ervin live in downtown Chicago with their two small dogs.

Elizabeth Grace, *Illinois Department of Employment Services*

- Elizabeth Grace has worked for the Illinois Department of Employment Services since 2018. Prior to joining the State, she had a rewarding career as a Disability Studies and Education academic with prior experience in the non-profit sector. She maintains connection through her membership on the International Editorial Board of the Journal Curriculum Inquiry. Elizabeth is autistic and "a proud disabled government worker." She's excited to be a member of ICED and is looking forward to contributing to this important work.

Glen Minks, *Illinois Department of Central Management Services*

- Glen has worked for the State of Illinois for seven years. He is currently an Internal Auditor with the Illinois Department of Central Management Services. Glen enjoys volunteering and has been very active. He is the former Treasurer for Mood Tides of Decatur. He's very involved in several projects at his church, the Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Glen is on the autism spectrum. He says that his "autism has presented challenges" in his life "but also opportunities" to use his "life experiences to help bring social improvement." Glen is "excited to serve on ICED to bring the experience of an autistic state worker into discussions that could impact policies to help the experience for fellow state workers."



2021 ICED Accomplishments

continued

Legislative Victories 2021:

Effective January 1, 2022, HB1839/Public Act 102-0233

- Prohibits discrimination against any individual resulting from their association with a person with a disability. This protection extends to people who provide care to family or friends with physical or mental disabilities and is critical to protecting this group from discrimination in areas such as employment, real estate transactions, public accommodations, and financial credit.

Effective October 4, 2021, Executive Order 2021-26

- Requires contractors with the State of Illinois to pay at least the minimum wage to people with disabilities. It states “All current and future contracts entered into by the State of Illinois with a not-for-profit agency that is qualified to participate in the State Use program in accordance with 30 ILCS 500/45-35 shall provide for payment of no less than the applicable local, if higher, or Illinois minimum wage for all employees performing work on the contract, notwithstanding any provision that would permit payment of a lower wage rate. This requirement shall apply to and include employees of any subcontractors performing work on the contract.”

Effective August 27, 2021, HB 2616, Public Act 102-0600

- Intended to eliminate unnecessary delays in the acquisition by State agencies of assistive technology, adaptive equipment, modifications, adjustments, including replacement parts and repairs needed by an agency’s employees, customers or job applicants with disabilities. It exempts such acquisitions from the State Procurement Code.

Effective August 13, 2021, HB 292, Public Act 102-0343

- Eliminates a work disincentive by allowing a resident of a licensed CILA to retain their after-tax earned income instead of providing a significant portion of their earnings toward housing costs.

Effective August 20, 2021, HB 3950, Public Act 102-0516

- HB 3950 is a transition services improvement bill that addresses access to community college courses including dual credit courses, and updates language in the School Code regarding potential independent living skills goal areas and participation in Career and Technical Education.



2021 ICED Accomplishments

continued

A new committee was formed “Hiring Process Review and Outreach Committee.”

All 3 committees met regularly throughout the year.

Hiring Process and Review Committee

- **Purpose:** To review the hiring process for people with disabilities and remove barriers to accessing employment with the State of Illinois. Build collaborative relationships with community organizations that serve people with disabilities; and serve as a resource for state agencies and employees with disabilities.

Nomination Committee

- **Purpose:** To recruit State of Illinois Employees with a disability to serve on the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED) for vetting and approval by the Governor’s Office as a statutory member of the Committee.

Annual Awards Ceremony Committee

- **Purpose:** Host Annual Awards Recognition and Celebration event to honor persons and agencies who promote access and opportunities in the following categories:
 - Outstanding Employee of the Year
 - Outstanding State Agency of the Year
 - Exceptional Advocate of the Year
 - Outstanding Legislator of the Year



2021 ICED Annual Awards Celebration

October 7, 2021

The awards categories and this year's recipients are as follows:

Outstanding Employee of the Year



Brandon Singer: Brandon has worked as a part of the Central Management Services (CMS) team since 2004, and is currently serving as the Coordinator of Disability Assistance Programs, including the Alternative Employment Program (AEP), the Successful Disabilities Program (SD), the Accommodated Testing Program, and the Disabled Workers Trainee Program. Brandon serves as needed as a representative of CMS to both ICED and EEOPD committees to help provide information on the State hiring process. Brandon also works alongside IDHS, DRS Vocational Rehabilitation counselors to provide career counseling to disabled applicants seeking state employment through the Successful Disabilities Program. Outside of work, Brandon enjoys spending time with his lovely wife of 17 years and two children, who are all

avid sports fans and spend their weeknights and weekends at various practices and sporting events.



2021 ICED Annual Awards Celebration

continued

Outstanding Advocate of the Year

The Workforce Development Unit is part of the Operations Unit of the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and supports the DRS mission of assisting people with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining quality employment. To this end, Workforce Development staff facilitate long-term business relationships with DRS and provide support and resources to vocational rehabilitation field staff across the state.

We would like to thank Francisco Alvarado, Administrator of Operations, and Labraya Harris, Manager of the Planning & Business Development Unit (PBDU) for their valuable input and strategic management in assisting with the directives assigned to the Workforce Development Unit. Also, a big thank you to the Workforce Development Unit members for their hard work and dedication to expanding competitive, integrated employment opportunities for all persons with disabilities.



Sherry Sparks
Manager



Stephanie Lipe



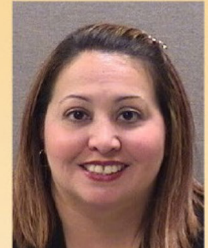
Arthur Hawkins



Biswa Phuyal



Gianni Serrano



Michele Velez

Not pictured are Workforce Development Unit members:
Marcus Deamer, Nathan Painter, and Rose Parker

**Illinois Department of Human Services
Division of Rehabilitation Services**



2021 ICED Annual Awards Celebration

continued

Outstanding State Agency of the Year



Illinois State Treasurer's Office (Treasurer Michael W. Frerichs): Michael Frerichs was first elected Illinois State Treasurer in November 4, 2014 and re-elected on November 6, 2018. In Illinois, the Treasurer's Office predates the state's incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office. Frerichs is the 74th person to serve in this role. In Illinois, the Treasurer is the state's Chief Investment and Banking Officer. The office invests money on behalf of the state and local units of government. Frerichs also believes in providing individuals with financial tools so that they can invest in themselves.

Under Treasurer Frerichs' leadership, Illinois launched the Illinois Achieving a Better Life Experience Program (ABLE), a savings and investment program that allows people with disabilities and their families to save and build financial wellness without risking federal benefits. Illinois leads the 17-state bipartisan National ABLE Alliance, which offers people with disabilities nationwide a high-quality, low-cost ABLE savings and Investment program.



Outstanding Legislator of the Year



Laura Fine is serving her first full term as the State Senator of the 9th District in Illinois, which encompasses Chicago's Northern suburbs. Senator Fine serves as the chair of the Behavioral and Mental Health Committee and is a member of the Appropriation-Human Services, Environment and Conservation, Health Access and Availability, and Insurance committees.

Prior to serving in the Senate, Senator Fine served as the State Representative for the 17th District for six years. Her legislative focus has been on consumer protection, expanding mental health services and insurance coverage, protecting the environment, and advocating for young adults and the disabled community. Senator Fine lives in Glenview with her husband, Michael, and has two sons.

ICED Goals for 2022

Goal 1: Create a Public Service Announcement (PSA)/ Training video for all state agencies and employees on the topic of Reasonable Accommodations. Video will include both Co-Directors of ICED discussing employee rights, the process for requesting accommodations and how to file a complaint.

Goal 2: Convene leaders in charge of Reasonable Accommodation (RA) requests/programs throughout state to review RA process and determine best practices and accountability

Goal 3: Convene leaders of EEO to garner ideas on specific needs or topics that should be addressed state-wide.

Goal 4: Collaborate with the Employment Economic Opportunity for People with Disabilities (EEOPWD) group to determine where we can work together to create model program for employing people with disabilities.

Goal 5: Expand Trainee Program for people with disabilities by continuing to work with CMS to employ more people with disabilities.



APPENDIX A

Employees with Disabilities in State Government 2012 - 2021

DATE	TOTAL STATE EMPLOYEES	EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES
June 30, 2012	45,516	3,346 (7.35%)
June 30, 2013	43,620	3,286 (7.53%)
June 30, 2014	43,932	3,248 (7.39%)
June 30, 2015	45,012	3,191 (7.53%)
June 30, 2016	45,542	3,097 (6.80%)
June 30, 2017	44,451	2,994 (6.74%)
June 30, 2018	44,507	2,841 (6.38%)
June 30, 2019	45,483	2,604 (5.75%)
June 30, 2020	46,848	2,451 (5.23%)
June 30, 2021	46,374	2,294 (4.95%)

Monitoring Employment of People With Disabilities

The Committee continues to track the composition of the state's workforce to monitor its affirmative action efforts regarding people with disabilities. The chart in Appendix A shows employment figures in state government over the last 10 years for employees who have self-identified as having a disability through a survey process.

The data shows that the number of state employees has remained steady over the last ten years and the number of employees with disabilities decreased by 31%. A further review of the data shows that the percentage of people with disabilities has decreased from 7.35% in FY12 to 4.95% in FY21.

During this time, according to the data on disabled persons from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, the state of Illinois workforce for people with disabilities was at a slightly higher percentage of 4.95% than the state civilian labor force of 4.79%.

It should be noted that the state began a more reliable system of identifying employees with disabilities in 2011 through an online survey, which might explain some of the increase in the percentage of employees with disabilities from 2012 to 2014.

People with disabilities have one of the highest unemployment rates of any demographic group in the country. According to the U. S. Department of Labor, the unemployment rate for persons with a disability was at 12.6% in 2020, an increase to 5.3% nationally, from the previous year. Their jobless rate continued to be much higher than the rate for those without a disability at 7.9%. A large percentage of people with disabilities are currently unemployed, but have the ability to work, and have an interest in working. Diverse workforces, especially people with disabilities, enable agencies to meet the needs of the public in a more effective and inclusive way.

ICED will continue to advocate for employees with disabilities, including the following efforts:

- Informing state managers and supervisors of the importance of hiring people with disabilities;
- Identifying ways to make state hiring process easier for applicants with disabilities to negotiate;
- Improving retention of employees with disabilities through compliance with reasonable accommodation and accessibility requirements; and,
- Increasing use of the Successful Disability Opportunities Program and other recruitment efforts by all agencies with respect to hiring individuals with disabilities.



APPENDIX B

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

- The purpose of the Successful Disability Opportunities Program (SD) is to provide persons with disabilities greater access to employment opportunities with the State.
(<https://illinois.jobs2web.com/>)
- Currently, applicants for this program must be a customer of the Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and have a CMS184 'Certificate of Eligibility' and narrative completed by their DRS vocational rehabilitation counselor for each job title they wish to pursue. The Certificate must be received by the CMS Disabled Worker Coordinator prior to scheduling any SD testing or sending applications for grading. One signed copy of a 4/2021 version CMS100 is required as well at this time for most titles, however some titles the applicant may be able to apply directly through their profile and posting on the website.
- Applicants must receive a passing grade on an exam to be eligible for the job title. If the targeted title requires testing, applicants may test through the automated testing system for both the SD grading and the regular Open Competitive grading at the same. The SD grading is simply Pass or Fail. Some titles are Training and Experience based grading and do not require testing. Open Competitive and Successful Disability Program grades are valid for one year.
- Effective January 1, 2020 CMS began implementing P.A. 101-0192 which amended the Personnel Code requiring CMS to issue the SD list along with the OC eligible list when an agency gets to the point of other means filling of vacancy guidelines.
- In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Illinois Human Rights Act, State agencies must ensure that the employment process is accessible to persons with disabilities. Specifically, these laws require that the State provide reasonable accommodations upon request by individuals participating in all steps of the employment process.

ICED

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES



Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities

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