



Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2025 11:00am – 12:30pm

Hybrid Meeting conducted In-person & via Webex

For additional meeting information, [click here](#)

Ex-Officio Members	Name	Present	Absent
Co-Chair, Human Rights	Jim Bennett, Director	V	
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Donna Hardy</i>	IP	
Co-Chair, Human Services	Dulce Quintero, Secretary		A
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Steven Dennis, DRS</i>	IP	
Attorney General	Kwame Raoul		
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Judith Levitan</i>		A
Central Management Services	Raven A. DeVaughn, Director		
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Patricia Santoyo-Marin</i>		A
Civil Service Commission	Teresa Smith, Chairperson		
<i>Designee</i>	Alexandra Myers	V	
Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities	Kimberly Mercer-Schleider, Director		A
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Margie Harkness</i>	V	
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Mariel Hamer-Sinclair</i>		
Lt. Governor	Juliana Stratton		
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Eryn Jones</i>	V	
Secretary of State	Alexi Giannoulis		
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Bill Bogdan</i>	V	
State Comptroller	Susana A. Mendoza		
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Kevin Derrig</i>		A
State Treasurer	Michael Frerichs		
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Rosemary Laudani</i>	V	
Veterans Affairs	Terry Prince, Director		
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Matt Eddington</i>	V	
Employees with Disabilities	Name	Present	Absent
Department of Human Services	Nathan Painter	V	
Department of Human Services	Rahnee Patrick	IP	
Central Management Services	Glen Minks	V	
<i>Vacant</i>			
Other Attendees & Guests	Name	Present	Absent
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum	Gloria Legette	V	
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum	Mark Mahoney	V	
Central Management Services	Angela Skaar	V	
Central Management Services	Chris Bond	V	
Central Management Services	Teresita Gonzalez	V	
Department of Information Technology	Mike Scott	V	

Department of Human Rights	Amy Meeks	IP	
Department of Human Rights	Betsy Buttell	V	

Department of Human Rights	Bryant Dunbar	V	
Department of Human Rights	Chet Pinski	V	
Department of Human Rights	Dr. Chris Smith	V	
Department of Human Rights	Marcio Mendoza	V	
Department of Human Rights	Xavier Potts	V	
Department of Human Services	Andy Losasso	V	
Department of Human Services	Caronina Grimble	V	
Department of Human Services	Casey Burke	V	
Department of Human Services	Jake Lee	V	
Department of Human Services	Kerry Obrist	V	
Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities	Dennis Deany	V	
Illinois Governor's Office of Equity	Alici McNeal	V	
Illinois State Board of Education	Mike Keeney	V	
State Treasurer	Stephanie Kanter	V	

*Present: In Person (IP) / Virtual (V) / Phone (PH)

1. Call to Order

- a. Director Bennett called the meeting to order at 11:03am on February 6, 2025

2. Roll Call

- a. Donna Hardy conducted Roll Call
- b. Quorum established

3. Co-Chair Remarks

- a. Director Bennett
 - i. Discussed the shift in administration and made clear that the Illinois Human Rights Act remains in place, as well as all of the protections it provides, including around disability and accessibility. If there are any questions from ICED members or their partners on rights afforded by the IHRA, please reach out to the department.
 - ii. Introduced Amy Meeks as new Deputy Director at IDHR
 - iii. Discussed Dignity in Pay Bill Signing Event, 1/21/25
 1. Director Bennett thanked and acknowledged everyone in attendance. He especially wanted to thank Ryan Croke. Everyone in attendance at the event acknowledged Ryan for his dedication to this issue. It was a bi-partisan effort and both sides were represented. Comments from Margaret Harkness, Dennis Deany, Bill Bogdan:
 - Margaret: The Council on Developmental Disabilities is taking the lead on pulling people together to prepare the plan for transformation which needs to be submitted by June. There is still a lot of work to be done and they will be heavily involved in leading the charge. She also wanted to acknowledge the hard work of Director Kimberly Mercer-Schleider and Mariel Hamer-Sinclair for their tireless efforts to help get the bill passed.
 - Dennis: One of the people he mentors, Erin Compton, was able to give testimony at the signing AND during the legislative process.
 - Bill: Thrilled to be part of history, we still have our work cut out for us, but it is a big win, eight years in the making.
- b. Steven Dennis
 - i. IDHS DRS Updates
 1. New requirement of accessible email signatures (addressed issues with screen reader)
 2. DHS is converting from One Net to SharePoint, timeline of about a year, kudos to Mike Scott / DoIT. Monthly meetings being held to ensure that the conversion comes with full accessibility.
 3. CMS has made improvements to the Standardized Hiring Plans Standardized Hiring Plans C and E now include Successful Disability (SD) candidates under certain conditions. Mike thanked Vicky Simpson for her contributions.
 4. Meeting 2/5/25 (and on-going) with Alica McNeal & Caronina Grimble on program development/education on disability in the workplace.
 - ii. Director Patrick
 1. Secretary Quintero has been confirmed as the Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services. recently introduced Value Points for IDHS, and accessibility is at the top of the list
 - iii. Director Bennett noted shortened meeting format for today

4. Guest Speaker: Steven Dennis, IDHS DRS

- a. Disability Awareness and ADA Overview

Here are some of the highlights from the presentation

- i. Creating Accessible Work Environments for Employees with Disabilities
 1. Existing barriers include assumptions that hiring an individual with a disability is more costly (this is not always true), difficult hiring process, fear of negative judgement, lack of workplace accessibility, unwillingness/lack of knowledge on how to accommodate disabled workers, and perceived liability issues.
 2. Benefits of hiring people with disabilities include increased profit, increased diversity in office culture, reduction in turnover rates, making use of an untapped pool of talented workers, and tax advantages.
 3. Creating an inclusive work culture involves changing training programs to be more inclusive, creating mentoring programs, creating a more accessible worksite with regards to environment and technology, restructuring and reviewing job descriptions when possible, and advocating for inclusive policies and practices.
- ii. General Disability Awareness
 1. Stay up to date on preferred language around disability, for example: Wheelchair bound (offensive) person who uses a wheelchair (preferred); Blind (offensive) person who is blind (preferred); Retarded (offensive) Person with an intellectual disability (preferred); Handicapped (offensive) person with a disability (preferred).
 2. Remain aware of how to interact with people with disabilities, for example: do not push, lean on, or hold a person's wheelchair without their permission, if you are speaking to someone who is Deaf and has an interpreter, look at the person who you are speaking to, rather than their interpreter, etc.
- iii. Myths About Disability and Employment
 1. There are many myths around disability and employment. Including, but not limited to: Disabled people don't want to work (people with disabilities have goals, dreams, and needs like everyone else), there's no support for employers who hire staff with disabilities (there are many support networks included Great Lakes ADA Center, ICED, etc.), workplace adjustments or modifications will be expensive (many people with disabilities need little to no adjustments in the workplace).
- iv. ADA Overview
 1. The ADA became law in 1990 and prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in many areas of public life, including employment.
 2. The ADA protects qualified individuals with disabilities from employment discrimination, be they an applicant or an employee.
 - An individual is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (walking, talking, hearing, etc.), if they have a record of such an impairment, or are regarded as having such an impairment.
- v. Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Overview
 1. RA is a modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment, or the way things usually are done that enables a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity. Some examples include: Modification or adjustment to job application process; work environment or modifications or adjustments that enable a covered entity's employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment as are enjoyed by its other similarly situated employees without disabilities.

RA requests usually begin with a request from the employee with the disability. The request should describe the nature of the disability and its resulting limitations, the need for an accommodation, and a specific requested accommodation, if known.

5. Future Meeting Schedule

- a. April 3, 2025
- b. May 29, 2025
- c. August 7, 2025
- d. October 9, 2025 (Annual Award Celebration, Springfield)
- e. December 4, 2025

6. Adjournment

- a. Director Bennett offered motion to Adjourn
- b. Motion to Adjourn: Glen Minks
- c. Motion Seconded: Chet Pinski
- d. None opposed
- e. Meeting adjourned at 11:58am on February 6th, 2025

-   Casey Burke
Me
-   Marcio Mendoza (el/he/him)
Host
-   Donna Hardy
Cohost
-   Alexandra Myers
-   Alici McNeal
-   Betsy Buttell (she/her)
-   Bill Bogdan
-   Bryant Dunbar
-   caronina (she|her)
-   Chet Pinski
-   Chris Bond
-   Chris Smith (She/hers)
-   Dennis Deany
-   DHR CHICAGO 555 MONROE
-   Eryn Jones
-   Glen Minks

-   Gloria Legette
-   Jim Bennett
-   Kanter, Stephanie
-   kerry.obrist2@illinois.gov
-   Laudani, Rosemary
-   Margaret Harkness
-   Mark Mahoney
-   Matt Eddington
-   Mike Keeney
-   Mike Scott
-   nathan.painter2@illinois.gov
-   Steven Dennis
-   Teresa.Rodriguez3@Illinois.gov
-   Teresita Gonzalez
-   Xavier.Potts@illinois.gov