



Meeting Minutes

April 3, 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	IP	
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Donna Hardy</i>	IP	
Co-Chair, Human Services	Dulce Quintero, Secretary		A
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Steven Dennis, DRS</i>	V	
Attorney General	Kwame Raoul		A
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Judith Levitan</i>	V	
Central Management Services	Raven A. DeVaughn, Director		A
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Patricia Santoyo-Marin</i>		A
Civil Service Commission	Teresa Smith, Chairperson		A
<i>Designee</i>	Alexandra Myers	V	
Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities	Kimberly Mercer-Schleider, Director	V	
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Margie Harkness</i>	V	
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Mariel Hamer-Sinclair</i>		A
Lt. Governor	Juliana Stratton		A
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Eryn Jones</i>	V	
Secretary of State	Alexi Giannoulas		A
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Bill Bogdan</i>		A
State Comptroller	Susana A. Mendoza		A
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Kevin Derrig</i>		A
State Treasurer	Michael Frerichs		A
<i>Designee</i>	<i>Rosemary Laudani</i>		A
Veterans Affairs	Terry Prince, Director		A
<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>			
<i>Vacant</i>			
<i>Vacant</i>			
<i>Vacant</i>			
Other Attendees & Guests	Name	Present	Absent
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum	Mark Mahony	V	
Central Management Services	Angela Skaar	V	
Central Management Services	Chris Bond	V	
Central Management Services	Teresita Gonzalez	V	
Department of Employment Security	Anna D'Ascenzo		A
Department of Information Technology	Mike Scott		A
Department of Information Technology	Vickie Simpson	V	

Department of Human Rights	Betsy Buttell	V	
Department of Human Rights	Bryant Dunbar		A
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	Caronina Grimble	V	
Department of Human Services	Casey Burke	V	
Department of Human Services	Kerry Obrist	V	
Department of Revenue	Brent Stice	IP	
Department of Revenue	Kevin Richards	IP	
Department of Revenue	Kirbee Womble	IP	
Department of Revenue	Shelby Kaiser	IP	
Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission	Benro Ogunyipe	V	
Illinois Governor's Office	Edward Seol	PH	
Illinois Governor's Office of Equity	Alici McNeal	V	
Illinois Governor's Office of Equity	Dr. Atiera Coleman	V	
Illinois State Board of Education	Mike Keeney	V	
Illinois State Board of Education	Teresita Gonzalez	V	
State Treasurer	Stephanie Kanter		A
State Treasurer	JJ Hanley		A

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

1. Call to Order

- a. Director Bennett called the meeting to order at 11:03am on April 3, 2025

2. Roll Call

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

3. Co-Chair Remarks

- a. Director Bennett
 - i. Motion to approve minutes for 12/5/24 and 2/6/25
 1. Motion to Approve: Glen Minks
 2. Motion Seconded: Chet Pinski
 - ii. Growing challenges within Federal Government
 1. State agencies are facing overwhelming challenges with the constant changes taking place within the federal government.
 2. The biggest challenge facing IDHR is with EEOC and HUD (limitations on cases, funding cuts, etc.)
 - a. IDHR receives many of its housing charges through nonprofits that rely on HUD funding, which has been cut. We are working directly with nonprofits to build a network and support system to allow them to continue their work.
 - b. IDHR is encouraging trans individuals to submit cases directly to local or State Human Rights Agencies. We are working out our approach on how best to coordinate with EEOC given their change in direction in addressing discrimination claims for the trans community.

- 3. Almost every Federal agency that handles discrimination is experiencing issues (ex. JAG officers, who handle Veterans cases, have been eliminated)
 - a. The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights has been eliminated. They handle all the disability charges.
 - 4. Please reach out to IDHR (Donna Hardy, Director Bennett or Xavier Potts) if there are any changes or questions.
 - 5. We are working with outside groups on portals to accept and filter cases
 - iii. IDHR has created "Know Your Rights" presentations and resources for the LGBT Community, headed by Dr. Chris Smith.
 - iv. Dynamic between the federal government and Illinois
 - 1. Executive orders do not have the weight of law, and the Illinois Human Rights Act supersedes any executive orders.
 - 2. If there is any doubt as to the validity or jurisdiction of charges, IDHR wants those cases to determine if we can have jurisdiction,
 - a. We do not have jurisdiction of federal agency or office, but if the federal office is meeting in a state-owned building, then there is enough room to consider jurisdiction.
- b. Kimberly Mercer- Schleider
 - i. Thanked Director Bennett for sharing information regarding changes and challenges facing the state and nonprofits as well as pathways to adapt to some of the Federal changes.
 - ii. Watching Civil Rights changes closely that could impact Council on Developmental Disability, particularly the restructuring and job losses at HHS that pose a threat to ICDD.
 - 1. Part of the restructuring is the dissolution of the Administration for Community living, which houses programs for aging Americans, people with developmental disabilities, etc. Unclear where these programs are going to land.
 - 2. Restructuring also includes Equip for Equality and the IL Protection Advocacy Unit which absorbs and receives a lot of the civil rights issues, especially regarding institution transition and special education advocacy.
 - iii. Dissolution of ACL & threats to Centers for Independent Living, IL Department of Aging, Meals on Wheels, etc.
 - iv. Advocacy needed now more than ever.
 - v. Suggestion: Create a standing agenda topic to cover updates in this sphere.
- c. Steven Dennis
 - i. Job Access With Speech (JAWS) Training – DHS, DRS, DoIT collaboration
 - 1. Worked with 20 employees, mostly from Chicago
 - 2. The first JAWS training for individuals with visual impairment since 2013
 - 3. JAWS assists those with visual impairments in reading computer screens.

4. Guest Speakers: Shelby Kaiser, Kirbee Womble, Brent Stice & Kevin Richards

- a. Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR)
 - i. IDOR is a voluntary participant in the Disabled Workers Training Program (DWTP)
 - ii. Power Point Presentation on DWTP
 - 1. DWTP is extremely important to IDOR due to Willard Ice, an integral figure in IDOR's history. He was known as Mr. Revenue because of his extensive knowledge of Revenue Statutes. He served as Director of Revenue and was

a disabled individual who was blind. The Illinois Department of Revenue's headquarters in Springfield, known as the Willard Ice Building, is named after Mr. Willard. IDOR embodies the quote: "When you give someone a chance, the results can be truly amazing, even life-changing-not only for the individual but also the organization!"

2. Determining Need for the Program
 - a. Extensive work was done internally to determine the job title/role that would open the doors for the largest group of individuals with disabilities to obtain meaningful employment. A new title of 'Clerical Trainee' was created as an introductory role for the DWTP
3. Posting and Interviewing
 - a. One vacancy posted, thirty-nine candidates applied, nineteen of those were invited to interview, 13 were actually interviewed.
 - b. All interviews were conducted in person to accommodate various accessibility needs.
 - c. Interviewing Challenges: Five candidates did not pass the interview. candidates often spoke little and needed to be prompted, some candidates brought family members who needed to wait outside, one candidate was emotional and crying throughout the interview.
 - d. Interviewing Successes: Panel of interviewers enjoyed the face-to-face interaction, the candidates were energetic and enthusiastic, the candidates were so high quality that the number of vacancies were increased from one to five, and three of the five were filled. This was the most rewarding part of the process for all involved.
4. Individual Success Stories
 - a. Individual A (Hired through the DWTP)
 - i. Hired as a clerical trainee through the DWTP on 08/16/24 and was rapidly promoted due to their hard work, eventually landing in the role of Revenue Tax Specialist I on 09/03/25, with the expectation of continued promotion. This individual was also nominated for Rookie of the Year Award.
 - b. Individual B
 - i. Hired as a clerical trainee on 08/01/23. Eventually promoted through to Certified Office Assistant as of 12/01/2024. They have excelled in their current position, and were nominated as 'friendliest employee', and 'most outgoing employee'.
5. Questions:
 - a. Rahnee Patrick: What about Kevin made him the ideal choice to lead the initiative at IDOR?
 - i. Kevin is open, friendly, and patient. He is proactive about reaching out to employees and getting to know them. Caring about them and their jobs on a deep level.

5. New Business

- a. Goal 1: Stephanie Kanter
 - i. Had to leave meeting
 - ii. Donna Hardy reports continued efforts on ICED website.
- b. Goal 2: Steven Dennis

- i. Reasonable Accommodations Training and Disability Awareness
 - 1. Have begun outline including Guest Speaker from Great Lakes
 - 2. Training planned for Spring/Early Summer

6. Old Business

- a. Four Vacancies – exploring larger agencies
 - i. Looking for participants from larger agencies
 - ii. Send nominees to Donna Hardy
 - iii. Good time to get names into Boards and Commissions

7. Public Comment

- a. None

8. Future Meeting Schedule

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

9. Adjournment

- a. Director Bennett offered motion to Adjourn
 - i. Motion to Adjourn: Rahnee Patrick
 - ii. Motion Seconded: Chet Pinski
 - iii. None opposed
- b. Meeting adjourned at 12:09pm on April 3, 2025