



# Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities

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## **State of Illinois Honors the Promotion of Access, Independence and Opportunity for People with Disabilities** *Annual ceremony promotes increased opportunity for employees with disabilities in state government*

**SPRINGFIELD** – The state of Illinois today honored the achievements of those who have done an outstanding job providing equal opportunity and access to people with disabilities in state employment, including the Department of Employment Security and a number of other agencies that have participated in the Successful Disabilities Opportunities Program. The awards were presented by Governor Bruce Rauner and Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti at the annual Awards Ceremony hosted by the state’s Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED).

“Today we thank those who have made the commitment to ensure access, independence and opportunity for those who want to make a difference for others in state employment,” Governor Rauner said. “The individuals and organizations honored today are making great strides to encourage and support government employees with disabilities reach their full potential.”

ICED, co-chaired by Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) Director Rocco J. Claps and Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Secretary James Dimas, represents the interests of more than 3,000 employees with disabilities in state government. The ceremony at the Illinois State Library also featured a performance of the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired Concert Choir.

“People with disabilities cannot show what they can do if employers focus on what they can’t do. They are simply everyday people who want to live everyday lives,” said Secretary Dimas. “This ceremony honors those who prove that offering simple accommodations can unleash unlimited potential.”

“The work of ICED is incredibly important to ensure that state government properly reflects the entire community it serves, and I am especially proud that this ceremony showcases people and organizations across the state that are making a concerted effort to expand access and opportunity for people with disabilities in Illinois,” Director Rocco Claps said. “The Department of Employment Security deserves special recognition for its outstanding affirmative action record in employing people with disabilities, including recruitment, hiring, and accommodation practices.”

The ICED’s **Agency of the Year** award recognizes the Illinois Department of Employment Security for setting the standard among state agencies for its approach to implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Illinois Human Rights Act by fully engaging in a flexible and interactive process to explore reasonable, effective and sometimes creative accommodations. Over 15% of the department’s 1,196-member staff has disabilities, which is double the state’s overall representation.

In a new award category, the **Internship Employer of the Year Award** was presented to State Treasurer Michael Frerichs, and the **Intern of the Year** to William Sitter, of the Treasurer’s Office.

The **Legislator of the Year** award was presented to Senator William Delgado for his work to expand opportunities for people with disabilities around the state.

*Serving State Employees with Disabilities*

ICED gave **Certificates of Award** to the following state agencies for hiring employees through the successful Disability Opportunities Program: The Departments of Children and Family Services, Natural Resources, Human Services, Veterans Affairs, and Transportation.

The ICED award for **Employee of the Year** went to Nanette Larson, a Department of Human Services employee with 15 years of state service and a demonstrated commitment to improving the lives of people with disabilities in Illinois.

The ICED **award for a non-profit** went to the Chicago Community Trust/ADA 25 Chicago, whose Leadership Institute prepared people with disabilities for leadership roles in public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

The ICED **Advocate of the Year** award was presented to Glenda Corbett, of the Department of Human Services, for leadership and advocacy throughout her career on behalf of people with disabilities.

The ICED **Media Award** was presented to *The Herald-News*, for consistent and accurate coverage of disability rights and independent living issues.

For additional information on ICED, please visit [www.state.il.us/iced](http://www.state.il.us/iced) or contact Susan Allen at the Department of Human Rights, at (217) 785-5119 (V), 1-866-740-3953 (TTY), or [Susan.Allen@Illinois.gov](mailto:Susan.Allen@Illinois.gov).

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