



Bruce Rauner, Governor

The **Illinois African American Family Commission** (the Commission) was created in 1994, as an extension of state government, to advocate for and promote the well-being of African American families and children. In August 2004, Public Act 093-0867 expanded the scope and purpose of the Commission to guide the efforts of and collaborate with various state agencies including but not limited to: the Department on Aging, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Public Aid, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Transportation, and others.

This is accomplished by:

- Monitoring and commenting on existing and proposed legislation and programs designed to address the needs of African-Americans in Illinois;
- Assisting state agencies in developing programs, services, public policies, and research strategies that will expand and enhance the social and economic well-being of African-American children and families;
- Facilitating the participation and representation of African-Americans in the development, implementation and planning of policies, programs, and services; and
- Promoting research efforts to document the impact of policies and programs on African-American families.

In 2014, SB 121 was introduced into the 98th General Assembly in order to update the IAAFC statute while providing more current statistical data and information relative to various indicators of well-being for African Americans in Illinois. This bill was signed into law becoming Public Act 98-0693 which became effective on January 1, 2015.

OUR MISSION

The Illinois African American Family Commission develops, evaluates and advocates for public policies, plans, research and programs that will strengthen and preserve families, family economics, workforce participation, health status, safety, education and training, and quality of life for African Americans.

OUR VISION

The Illinois African American Family Commission is a catalyst that facilitates partnerships between governments and communities to ensure a safe, healthy and secure environment for African American children and families, throughout the state of Illinois.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Commission is a fifteen-member statewide commission whose members are appointed by the Governor of Illinois.

ILLINOIS AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY COMMISSION

DISPARITIES FACING AFRICAN AMERICANS

Over 12 million people live in Illinois. In 2010, African Americans represented approximately 15% of the population and 25% of the residents living in Cook County. Despite some progress over the last few decades, African Americans in Illinois continue to lag behind other racial groups relative to indicators of well-being in education, employment, income and health. In 2010:

- African Americans made up 32% of the total Illinois unemployment population.
- The median household income of African Americans was nearly \$20,000 below the state average of the median household income made by Whites; they also made the least amount compared to every other racial group.
- African American children comprised 56% of the children in foster care. Of the 16,533 children in substitute care in Illinois, 9,102 of them were African American children.
- African Americans make up more than half (58%) of the adult prison population and nearly two-thirds (60%) of the juvenile prison population.
- Just 26% of African Americans over 25 years of age completed their high school education.

To address these disparities, the Commission is implementing its **AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE (AACI)**. The AACI is a vision for the future of all African Americans residing in the state of Illinois and seeks to connect all relevant and pertinent components to ensure thriving communities.

The cornerstone of the AACI will include a focus on guiding the efforts of and collaborating with the state agencies that operate and are appropriated the resources for programs and services that are pertinent to building strong African American communities. As shown above, African American communities continue to face disparities in key indicators for quality of life such as health, education, employment, housing, and economic well-being. The Illinois African American Family Commission will work to remove the systemic and institutional barriers that bring about these disparities and limit equal opportunities.

The Commission seeks to establish safe, healthy and sustainable communities that provide a measurable quality of life for African Americans and other Illinois residents. The Illinois African American Family Commission will continue to move forward in improving the responsiveness of government to the African American community. The Commission believes that African Americans must have equal access to the resources necessary to achieve economic prosperity and to obtain the best education available, and that we must be politically empowered at all levels.

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