

Beth Townsend
11541 NW 107th Court
Granger, Iowa

EXPERIENCE:

Executive Director, Iowa Workforce Development *January 2015-present*

Appointed in January 2015, as the Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) by Governor Terry Branstad. As the Executive Director, I took over an embattled agency that was hamstrung by legal actions, battles with the legislature, a constant stream of bad press and significant distrust between staff and management. My priorities externally included reengaging key stakeholders, rebuilding strained relationships, strengthening relationships with legislators and reestablishing agency credibility in the performance of primary responsibilities. Internally, I wanted to reassure staff, improve morale, streamline business processes, create a sense of urgency in customer service and return focus to goals of the agency: delivering competent, timely services to Iowans in the form of unemployment benefit payments and assistance with finding and keeping better jobs. With the assistance of an outstanding senior staff, most of whom joined IWD in 2015-2016, IWD focuses on providing quality workforce services; working daily to close the middle skills gap; oversees the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act across multiple state agencies; provides improved customer service to all customers (claimants and businesses); and working collaboratively with key partners in economic development, education, business and industry leaders, nonprofits, and other state agencies and legislators to assure continued improvement of the delivery of workforce services.

Executive Director, Iowa Civil Rights Commission *February 2011–January 2015*

In February 2011, I was appointed as the Executive Director of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC) by Governor Branstad. As the Executive Director I oversaw the day to day management of the Commission, supervising 27 employees and ensuring effective enforcement of the Iowa Civil Rights Act. My primary goal was to make the ICRC an effective and credible law enforcement agency. I created new policies, rewrote and revamped existing policies, and introduced a sense of urgency and accountability at the Commission. There was not a single area of the ICRC that was not revised and improved beginning with the complaint form and questionnaires through conducting public hearings. Production standards, work rules and accountability were established and implemented. Personnel were evaluated, reassigned duties and where necessary, disciplinary proceedings were undertaken to address shortcomings. New staff was hired and trained through a comprehensive program with special emphasis on effective writing. The entire non-housing investigative process was rewritten. In June, 2013, the non-housing investigative backlog was completely eliminated (including over 150 cases, dating as far back as 10 years old). Cases moved through the agency in a streamlined manner without periods of significant delay. The mediation program was revised and staff members trained in mediation as well as volunteer attorneys working in the area of employment law, provided meaningful assistance to parties appearing before the Commission. Public hearings were held and the feedback I received from the legal community was overwhelmingly positive.

Townsend Law Office, 939 Office Park Road, Suite 105, West Des Moines, Iowa, *October 2005-January 2011*

As a solo practitioner, I practiced in the area of employment law representing plaintiffs. My primary work involved all facets of litigation including drafting pleadings; conducting and responding to discovery; taking and defending depositions; filing and responding to motions; working with expert witnesses, trial work and appellate practice. I represented individuals in every aspect of litigation from the administrative process through trial and appellate courts in state and federal jurisdictions. I appeared before state and federal courts including the Eighth Circuit, the Iowa Court of Appeals and Iowa Supreme Court as well as a case that was heard by the United States Supreme Court. (*Gross v. FBL Fin. Servs., Inc.*, 555 U.S. 1066 (2008) (Certiorari Granted); 557 U.S. 167 (2009) (vacated and remanded).

Fiedler, Townsend and Newkirk, PLC, 5501 NW 86th St Ste 100, Johnston, IA 50131, *August 2001-September 2005*

The practice primarily focused on employment law representing plaintiffs. Our practice included representing individuals before the Iowa Civil Rights Commission and in state and federal courts and also included all facets of litigation.

Judge Advocate General, United States, United States Air Force and Reserve, *September 1989-August 2010*

Served in multiple capacities over the course of 21 years of service including prosecuting and defending airmen and in my last assignment, serving as a Military Judge. Given my extensive litigation experience, I also provided advocacy training for the local JAGs and continued at the JAG school. I was handpicked for the Air Force TRIALS (Training by Reservists in Advocacy and Litigation Skills) program, an elite cadre of litigators who travel to military installations world-wide conducting advocacy training. In June 2004, I was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. I retired in August 2010.

EDUCATION:

UNIVERSITY, NEBRASKA SCHOOL OF LAW
Juris Doctorate, May 1989

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-KEARNEY
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, December 1985

BAR:

Nebraska State Bar September 1989-2002 (active); 2003-present (inactive)
Iowa State Bar February 2001-present