



Iowa Treatment Law Report Card

Last Updated: January 2026

Method and scoring: State involuntary civil commitment laws are evaluated using a 100-point grading scale. The scoring criteria are in accordance with TAC's values and policy recommendations. Up to 50 points are awarded to a state based on the quality of its inpatient commitment law, and up to 50 points are awarded based on the quality of its outpatient commitment law. *Grades reflect solely what is written in law and not how those laws are implemented or applied.* Final letter grades are computed using the following scale:

97 or above	A+	87–89	B+	77–79	C+	67–69	D+	59 or below	F
93–96	A	83–86	B	73–76	C	63–66	D		
90–92	A-	80–82	B-	70–72	C-	60–62	D-		

PART ONE: Inpatient Commitment Statute (up to 50 points)

Criterion	Citation	Specifications	Points
1. Citizen access to court, emergency evaluation (5 pts)	Iowa Code §§ 229.6(1), 229.11	☒ Authorizes family/enumerated adults (3 pts) ☒ Authorizes any responsible adult (2 pts)	5
2. Quality of emergency petition process (5 pts)	Iowa Code §§ 229.11, 229.22	☒ Process specified and reasonable (2 pts) ☒ Timelines specified and reasonable (2 pts) ☒ Responsible entities identified (1 pt) ☐ Requires certification by more than one professional (-2 pts) ☒ Emergency evaluation criteria inconsistent with inpatient commitment criteria (-5 pts): (See comment 1 below)	0
3. Emergency hold duration (5 pts)	Iowa Code § 229.22(3)	☒ At least 48-hour hold allowed (3 pts) ☐ At least 72-hour hold allowed (2 pts) Not to exceed 48 hours	3
4. Citizen access to court, inpatient petition (5 pts)	Iowa Code § 229.6(1)	☒ Authorizes family/enumerated adults (3 pts) ☒ Authorizes any responsible adult (2 pts)	5
5. Quality of criteria for harm or violence to self or others (up to 10 pts)	Iowa Code § 229.1(22)	☒ Contains explicit criteria (10 pts) ☐ Language is vague/ambiguous (-3 pts) ☐ Harm must be imminent (-3 pts)	10
6. Quality of criteria for grave disability/basic needs (up to 10 pts)	Iowa Code § 229.1(22)(c)	☒ Contains explicit criteria (10 pts) ☐ Language is vague/ambiguous (-3 pts) ☐ Endangerment must be imminent (-3 pts) ☐ Criteria require family to turn person out of home to receive treatment (-3 pts) ☐ Unreasonably high risk of harm (-3 pts)	10
7. Quality of criteria for psychiatric deterioration (up to 10 pts)		☐ Contains explicit criteria (10 pts) ☐ Language is vague/ambiguous (-3 pts) (See comment 2 below)	0
SUBTOTAL			33
PART ONE: Extra Credit			
1. Specifies in which court a petition for inpatient commitment shall be filed (1 pt)	Iowa Code § 229.6(1)	District court where the person resides or is located	1
Extra Credit			1
PART ONE TOTAL			34

PART TWO: Outpatient Commitment Statute (up to 50 points)

Criterion	Citation	Specifications	Points
1. AOT explicitly authorized (5 pts)	Iowa Code § 229.14(2)	☐ Requires local government to adopt (-3 pts)	5

2. Citizen access to court for AOT (5 pts)	Iowa Code § 229.6(1)	☒ Authorizes family/enumerated adults (3 pts) ☒ Authorizes any responsible adult (2 pts) ☐ Authorizes citizen petition to mental health system only (-2 pts)	5
3. Criteria sufficiently broad to provide actual access (up to 10 pts)	Iowa Code § 229.1(22)(d)	Evaluate applicable provision only: ☐ If inpatient/outpatient criteria are the same: ☐ Inpatient criteria include psychiatric deterioration standard (10 pts) or ☐ No psychiatric deterioration standard, adequate grave disability standard (5 pts) or ☒ If outpatient criteria are distinct from inpatient criteria: ☒ Allows consideration of length of treatment history ≥ 36 months (2 pts) ☐ Does not exclude periods of incarceration or hospitalization (-1 pt) ☒ Does not limit application to those currently dangerous or unstable (4 pts) ☒ Does not limit application to those refusing service or currently lacking insight (4 pts) Shared criteria, however, subsection (d) adequately considers commitment based on history of lack of compliance.	10
4. Authorizes AOT directly from community (5 pts)	Iowa Code § 229.14(2)		5
5. Procedures sufficiently detailed to guide practitioners (up to 5 pts)	Iowa Code §§ 229.13 to 229.15	☒ Process specified and reasonable (1 pt) ☒ Timelines specified and reasonable (1 pt) ☒ Responsible entities identified (1 pt) ☒ Periodic reporting to court required (1 pt) ☒ Renewal process expressly specified (1 pt)	5
6. Procedures require the treatment plan to be shared with the court (5 pts)			0
7. Specifies procedures and consequences for nonadherence (5 pts)	Iowa Code §§ 229.13(7), 229.14(2)(d)		5
8. Duration of initial order	Iowa Code § 229.14	☐ = 90 days (2 pts) or ☒ > 90 days (5 pts) Indefinite term	5
9. Duration of continued order	Iowa Code § 229.15	☐ = 180 days (2 pts) or ☒ > 180 days (5 pts) No need for continuations because initial order is periodically reviewed but indefinite in length	5
SUBTOTAL			45
PART TWO: Extra Credit			
1. Specifies court for AOT (1 pt)	Iowa Code § 229.6	District court where the person resides or is located	1
2. Court monitoring of voluntary settlement agreements (5 pts)			
Extra Credit			1
PART TWO TOTAL			46

FINAL SCORE	
PART ONE TOTAL	34
PART TWO TOTAL	46
TOTAL	80
TREATMENT LAW GRADE	B-

Comments:

- Emergency standard adds “likely to injure” to inpatient criteria.

2. Under Iowa Code § 229.1(22)(c), grave disability can be interpreted to encompass continued psychiatric treatment in in 'essential medical care' to prevent deterioration or relapse, but additional detail to clarify that psychiatric treatment is intended as an inclusion is recommended to remove ambiguity.