



510 East 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

www.ipib.iowa.gov

Charlotte J.M. Miller, J.D.
Executive Director
(515) 393-8339
charlotte.miller@iowa.gov

IPIB FY2027-FY2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

IPIB MISSION STATEMENT

To provide an official, efficient, and free legal resource addressing Iowa's open meetings and public records law.

IPIB VISION STATEMENT

The trusted resource in ensuring transparency by Iowa's governmental bodies.

ASSESSMENT

There are more than 14,500 elected officials subject to the Iowa Sunshine Laws. There are thousands of governmental entities and their employees subject to the public records law across the state. The scope of records and ability to gather continue to expand as technology continues to increase. At the same time, IPIB has three employees and only eight of its nine Board positions filled. In CY2025, IPIB handled 235 formal complaints in addition to responding to hundreds more inquiries for information and resources through email, telephone, and training. The importance of government transparency and resources to address issues will continue to rise.

In CY2025, the legislature expanded penalties for violations of Iowa Sunshine Laws significantly and included a new training requirement for elected or appointed public officials. These changes increase the need for assistance in compliance with the laws from government bodies covering cities with 200 citizens, drainage districts, school boards, large cities, and state agencies. At the same time, many individuals serving in these roles are volunteers who need assistance in complying with the law.

Strengths

- Focus is only on Iowa Code Chapters 21 (open meetings) and 22 (public records).
- Knowledgeable Board filled with representatives from government, the media, and the public.
- Processes and procedures established for accepting and responding to complaints and inquiries.
- Changes implemented to enhance efficiencies and transparency in Board deliberation and complaint processes.
- Strong understanding of Board's objectives and focus.

Weaknesses

- Small staff that has experienced turnover, causing delay and limitations on outreach. Even at full capacity, the Board employs only three full-time staff members. As there has been an exponential increase in staff caseloads since FY24.
- Significant number of potential complainants, respondents, and entities across the state.

Board Members

Joan Corbin • E. J. Giovannetti • Barry Lindahl • Catherine Lucas
Luke Martz • Monica McHugh • Jackie Schmillen • vacant • vacant

- Timeframes must include review by Board at monthly meetings.
- Complacency on upgrading materials and outreach for several years.

Opportunities

- Taken steps to upgrade to an electronic case management system and need to continue to find ways to enhance efficiencies.
- Hired more experienced staff to address backlog of updates to materials, policies, and resources due to turnover and other delays.
- Training opportunities are limitless and the need will continue to grow with yearly election turnover and continued focus on government transparency and accountability.

Threats

- Limitations on what can be realistically done with small staff and budget.
- Large payouts for any small success in litigation against government bodies encourages litigation over IPIB process, which defeats the purpose of IPIB.
- Focusing on resolution of issues rather than incorporating fines and other measures when applicable.
- Loss of faith in IPIB due to potential overwhelm of agency with increase in complaints and small staff.

OPERATIONAL GOALS

Training and Education

- Goal: Provide one online, interactive training session monthly by FY2028.
KPI: Develop and host two online, interactive training sessions in FY2026.
- Goal: Provide at least one in-person training to government bodies or organizations monthly in FY2027.
KPI: Provide at least 10 in-person training to government bodies or organizations in FY2026.

Complaint Process Improvement

- Goal: Provide initial acceptance or dismissal of Complaints for 75% of IPIB complaints within 90 days by FY2028
KPI: Provide initial acceptance or dismissal for 60% of IPIB complaints within 90 days in FY2027. This metric can be tracked monthly in IPIB case management system.
- Goal: All complaints are reviewed and opened, if applicable, within two weeks of receipt by FY2028.
KPI: All complaints are reviewed and opened, if applicable, within one week of receipt by FY2027.

Outreach and Resources

- Goal- All IPIB formal complaints (from FY15-FY24) have clear keywords attached for easier search and cataloging of past decisions by FY2028
KPI-All formal complaints posted on IPIB website in FY2027 have clear keywords attached for easier search and cataloging of decisions.
- Goal- All FAQs rewritten to incorporate changes in the law and advisory opinions by FY2028
KPI- At least an average of one FAQs rewritten and shared with partners and approved by IPIB monthly in FY2027