



ZACHARY S. GOODRICH
Executive Director
and Legal Counsel

BOARD MEMBERS:
James Albert, Chair
Elaine Olson, Vice Chair
Jonathan Roos
Daniel Jessop
Leah Rodenberg

IOWA ETHICS AND CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE BOARD

An Independent Agency of the Executive Branch

STRATEGIC PLAN FY2025

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board is to promote the public's trust and confidence in government by ensuring the integrity of political campaigns, the ethical standards for officials and employees of the executive branch of state government, and the lawful conduct of executive branch lobbyists.

VISION STATEMENT

Ensuring accountability and transparency for government officials/employees and political campaign operatives.

ASSESSMENT

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board is an independent state agency of the Iowa executive branch charged with application of Iowa Code chapters 68A and 68B, Iowa Code section 8.7, and Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 351. The Board is balanced by political affiliation as provided in Iowa Code section 69.16. Board members are appointed to six-year staggered terms.

2024 IECDB BOARD MEMBERS*

James Albert, <i>Chair</i>	term ends 4/30/2027
Daniel Jessop, <i>Board Member</i>	term ends 4/30/2028
Elaine Olson, <i>Vice Chair</i>	term ends 4/30/2027
Leah Rodenberg, <i>Board Member</i>	term ends 4/30/2028
Jonathan Roos, <i>Board Member</i>	term ends 4/30/2029

*as of June 28, 2024, the Board had one vacancy for a term ending 4/30/2029

2024 IECDB STAFF

Zach Goodrich, *Executive Director and Legal Counsel*
Tim Annee, *County & Local Campaign Auditor*
Jason Hacker, *PAC & County Central Committee Auditor*
Taylor McDonald, *Assistant Legal Counsel*
Vanessa Sayasane, *Legislative Campaign Auditor*

Marie Spilman, *Statewide & Legislative Campaign Auditor*
Nancy Wood, *Executive Secretary*

II. POPULATIONS SERVED

The Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board serves all Iowans. Specific populations and their corresponding interactions include:

- a. *Iowans seeking election to public office.* Communication with members of the public running for office can be two-fold; the agency not only serves as the hub for required campaign finance reporting, but is also available to answer legal questions with regard to Iowa Code Chapter 68A.
- b. *Iowans reporting campaign or government ethics violations.* Members of the public, including those not running for political office, can ask informal questions of Board staff or file formal complaints of violations of laws within the Board's jurisdiction.
- c. *Iowans searching for public information on campaign spending, personal financial disclosures, or agency gifts.* The Board plays host to a myriad of information that must be readily available to the public upon request.
- d. *Iowa's elected and appointed government officials.* In addition to members of the public, Board staff provides informal advice and receives formal complaints from government officials of the state and other political subdivisions, particularly regarding application of the government ethics laws in Iowa Code Chapter 68B.

III. NATIONAL TRENDS

Below is a summary of key national trends regarding campaign finance and government ethics regulation:

- a. *Artificial intelligence regulation.* The 2024 campaign cycle will include widespread influence by artificial intelligence. Few jurisdictions have adopted laws regulating artificial intelligence in political campaigns, and the Federal Election Commission has not provided states with any definitive guidance on the issue.
- b. *Campaign contribution limits.* Pew Research reports that 72% of American adults "say there should be limits on the amount of money individuals and organizations can spend on political campaigns."¹ While Iowa does not have contribution limits, the idea has been introduced in several recent legislative sessions. Any changes or limits to campaign contributions or expenditures will be overseen by the Board.
- c. *Public financing.* Over a dozen states, both in Republican and Democratic control, offer candidates public financing options through grants and donation matching programs.

¹ Andy Cerda & Andrew Daniller, 7 facts about Americans' views of money in politics (PEW Research Center, Oct. 2023) <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/10/23/7-facts-about-americans-views-of-money-in-politics/>.

Agencies similar to IECDB in these states are tasked with implementing and overseeing such programs.

- d. *Increasing threats to election workers.* All over the country, regulators of political campaign and elections face increased harassment on the job, which has led to high turnover and a loss of institutional knowledge from election to election. Internally, Board staff received threatening and/or harassing communications during the 2023 city and school board campaign cycle and will have to prepare for similar treatment in FY2025.

IV. FY2025 SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- a. *Staff.* For the first time in several years, all Board staff positions are filled. Having seven full-time employees will allow the agency to respond to questions, audit, investigate formal complaints, and offer informal advice faster.
- b. *New technology.* In FY2024, IECDB has made much-needed upgrades to both its website and web reporting system. Updated, more user-friendly technology will allow both Board staff and the public to find answers to frequently asked questions with ease.

WEAKNESSES

- a. *Board vacancy.* The Board has one current vacancy. Scheduling and ensuring quorum for Board action would be easier if the Board were full. The current vacancy represents the longest running Board seat vacancy in the agency's history.
- b. *Increasing auditor caseloads.* Even at full capacity, the Board employs only four full-time auditors. As there has been an exponential increase in candidates and PACs, especially for local office, that reach the threshold requiring committee registration and financial reporting with the Board, there has been an increase in staff caseloads, some as much as 10x more than five years ago. New technology has allowed for more efficient auditing to help offset the significant increases in political campaign activity, but is not enough.
- c. *Lack of enforcement mechanisms.* In FY2024, the Board pre-filed legislation that would have allowed for enhanced enforcement mechanisms against candidates and committees who do not pay the fines levied against them for violating the government ethics and campaign laws. The bill was not successful, and many fines remain unpaid with political candidates/operatives and government officials not being held accountable.

OPPORTUNITIES

- a. *Increase in candidate committees.* As previously mentioned, there is an increasing number of candidates reaching thresholds requiring registration and contact with our office. New candidates can serve as new touchpoints and opportunities to reach novel audiences through educational tactics.

- b. *SF 2096 (2024)*. In April, Governor Reynolds signed SF 2096, a measure which eliminated the gender balance requirement for Iowa’s boards and commissions. Eliminating this requirement may ease the appointment process for an additional Board member.

THREATS

- a. *Physical threats to Board staff*. Most recently during the 2023 election cycle, staff members were met with noncompliance and even threats due to mistrust in political campaigns and government generally. Lack of enforcement mechanisms allow for these violations to go virtually unanswered with little consequence for violators.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES, GOALS, AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1: Increase Iowans trust in campaigns, elections, and officials.

- **Goal 1:** Increase compliance amongst regulated communities, thus decreasing complaints.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2: Decrease staff time spent on small infractions and minor questions from the public where answers can be found online.

- **Goal 1:** Increase regulated communities’ knowledge of the requirements of the appropriate statutes and rules.
- **Goal 2:** Increase public awareness of the information filed with the Board and how to access it. Redirect inquiries to the Board’s website which features additional information, such as frequently asked questions.

ACTION ITEMS	TEAM MEMBER	IGOV PRIORITY
Conduct 8 trainings with affected parties	Vanessa, all	5
Post to agency social media with updates/deadlines	Taylor, Nancy	5
Launch new website	Zach, Nancy, contractor	5
Launch WRS updates and move all reports to electronic filing	Zach, Nancy, contractor	5
Develop educational brochures, candidate booklets, and other educational materials	Vanessa, Taylor, all	5

Key Performance Indicators:

- Graduate 200 attendees of campaign finance training
- Promote training and tutorials on an ongoing basis
 - **TIMELINE:** before Election Day November 2025
- Increase social media reach by 50% on LinkedIn, Facebook, and X
 - **TIMELINE:** 2x/week, ongoing basis
- Increase traffic to the website and WRS by 50%
 - **TIMELINE:** April 2025, check in January 2025. Increase measurement in 2025 to align with FY2026 goals.