

# **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 seven of its nine Board positions filled. Last year, IPIB handled 137 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. Last year, the legislature looked to expand penalties for violations of Iowa Sunshine Laws significantly. These penalties will likely be increased next year and will 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's open meetings and 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.
- Significant number of potential complainants, respondents, and entities across the state.
- Timeframes must include review by Board at monthly meetings.
- Complacency on upgrading materials and outreach for several years.
- Failure to update administrative rules to address advisory opinions or other changes for several years.

### **Opportunities**

- Taken steps to upgrade to an electronic case management system and need to continue to find ways to enhance efficiencies.
- Redefining positions to require all three employees to be attorneys.

- 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.
- Inability to get quorum for monthly Board meetings to review complaints in a timely manner.

## OPERATIONAL GOALS

### Training and Education

- Goal- Provide one online, interactive training session quarterly by FY26.  
KPI- Develop and host two online, interactive training sessions in FY25. (Process and development to be tracked monthly.)
- Goal- Provide online video explanations for all IPIB advisory opinions within one week of acceptance by FY27  
KPI- Provide online video explanations for IPIB advisory opinions by end of the quarter in FY25.
- Goal- Provide at least one in-person training to government bodies or organizations monthly in FY26.  
KPI- Provide at least 10 in-person training to government bodies or organizations in FY25.

### Complaint Process Improvement

- Goal- Provide initial acceptance or dismissal of Complaints for 75% of IPIB complaints within 60 days by FY26  
KPI- Provide initial acceptance or dismissal for 60% of IPIB complaints within 60 days in FY25. (Can be tracked monthly in Salesforce)
- Goal- All complaints are reviewed and opened, if applicable, within 2 business days of receipt by FY26.  
KPI- All complaints are reviewed and opened, if applicable, within one week of receipt by FY25.

### Outreach and Resources

- Goal- All IPIB formal complaints (from FY15-FY24) have clear keywords attached for easier search and cataloging of past decisions by FY27  
KPI- All formal complaints posted on IPIB website in FY25 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 FY26  
KPI- At least an average of 5 FAQs rewritten and shared with partners and approved by IPIB monthly in FY25

## ALIGNMENT WITH ENTERPRISE PRIORITY

**Building a Strong, Competitive Iowa-** ensuring transparency in government will help with trust in local communities and enhance economic development opportunities and growth.

**Saving Iowans Money** ensuring transparency in government will enable accountability in the use of public funds and programs.