

IOWA ETHICS AND CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE BOARD

An Independent Agency of the Executive Branch

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BOARD MEMBERS:
James Albert, Chair
John Walsh, Vice Chair
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2015 BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE QUESTIONS

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

- a. Do you have defined outcomes or measurements for your program(s)? What are they and are these measures listed somewhere so the public can see them?

ANSWER: Yes, we submit an annual performance plan to the Department of Management. See attached spreadsheet for Fiscal Year 2015 targets and our performance data for the last 5 years. The Board's performance plan is available on DOM's website. However, the performance data is not published www.resultsiowa.org because the Board is not covered by the Accountable Government Act (Chapter 8E of the Iowa Code).

- b. What data is available to show Iowans that your program(s) are an effective investment of taxpayer dollars? Where can Iowans find this data?

ANSWER: The Board is the designated recipient for a vast area of data and reports: It receives campaign disclosure reports from every state and local candidate, every state and local PAC, every state and county political party. In addition, it receives executive branch agency gift reports, personal financial disclosure reports from executive branch officials and employees, as well as various other ethics reports. All of these reports are available on the Board's website for the public to view. The Board has a powerful search engine for campaign disclosure reports, which allows the public and press to quickly obtain data on candidates, contributors, PACs, and independent expenditures.

- c. Can you provide the committee with performance data for your programs over the last 5 or 10 years?

ANSWER: See attached spreadsheet.

PROGRAM EFFICIENCY

- a. Have you examined what other states are doing to improve performance and reduce costs?

ANSWER: Yes. The Board's director monitors what other states are doing through COGEL (Council on Government Ethics Laws) and the SUN Center (States' Unified Network Center).

- b. Can you share with the committee what other states are doing?

ANSWER: Many states are requiring all campaign disclosure reports to be filed electronically.

- c. Which of these ideas are you considering for implementation here in Iowa?

ANSWER: The Board proposed SSB1063, which among other things, requires electronic filing for all campaign disclosure reports.

- d. Are there websites or organizations we could go to obtain more information on what other states' programs are doing to provide more efficient services?

ANSWER: COGEL tracks what other states are doing with respect to campaign finance and government ethics.

- e. Do you have an email address or a comment section on your website where Iowans can suggest improvements to your program or agency?

ANSWER: The Board has a "contact the Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board" link on the homepage of its website. The website does not explicitly solicit suggestions on how to improve the agency or its website.

PROGRAM DUPLICATION

- a. Are there any other programs that are providing the same or similar services?

ANSWER: No.

- b. Is there a reason why we need more than one program providing the same or similar service?

ANSWER: Not applicable.

- c. Have you had any discussions with the other agencies or programs to find ways to maximize the use of the taxpayer's dollars?

ANSWER: No.

- d. Are there any laws or administrative rules that would limit your ability to work with the other programs or departments?

ANSWER: No.

- e. Are there any laws or administrative rules that could be changed to make your program or agency work better?

ANSWER: The Board's work would be more efficient if all campaign committees were required to file their disclosure reports and statements electronically. Electronically filed reports are available immediately on the Board's website whereas paper reports have to be scanned in by staff. Paper reports must be postmarked by the date the report is due which can cause further delay before the report is publicly available. Additionally, if there were no paper reports, the Board's staff would not need two internal databases to monitor reporting – one for electronic filers and one for paper filers. The Board's electronic filing system can be used to monitor committees that file electronically whereas the Board's staff has to maintain a separate database to track paper filings and the audits of those reports. It is much easier and faster for the Board's staff to audit electronically filed reports due to the ability to run queries using the electronic filing system.

OTHER

- a. Would it be a burden to your agency to ask that your presentations be delivered to the Legislative Services Agency 48 hours in advance of your appearance before the committee?

ANSWER: No.

- b. If you are required to reduce your budget by 1%, 5%, or 10%, where would you suggest we focus our attention?

ANSWER: The Board is the second smallest state agency. Its annual appropriation does not leave much money for discretionary spending. Nearly all of the Board's budget is used for payroll and services provided by DAS. All staff members, with the exception of the director, are covered by the AFSCME contract. Thus, their salaries and benefits are set by the contract. The Board does not have the ability to negotiate with DAS for the price of services nor is it able to obtain services from a third-party. If the Board's budget were reduced, the Board would be forced to reduce its staff from 6 to 5 members.