



Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds  
San Wong, Director



iowa commission on the status of women

## MINUTES

### Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW)

July 29, 2015

#### Strategic Planning Retreat

Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge, Prairie Learning and Visitor Center,  
9981 Pacific St, Prairie City, IA 50228

#### **Commissioners present**

Phyllis Peters, chair  
Tom Carnahan  
David Gudenkauf  
Beth Coonan  
Aaron Sewell

#### **Commissioners absent**

Sherill Whisenand  
Rachelle Hunt Russian

#### **DHR/ICSW staff**

San Wong, Director, Iowa Department of Human Rights  
Monica Stone, Deputy Director/Division Administrator, Community Advocacy and  
Services, Iowa Department of Human Rights  
Kristen Corey, Program Planner, Office on the Status of Women

#### **Members of the public - present for all or part of the meeting**

Cindy Axne, Principal, Axne Consulting Group (facilitator)

#### **Call to order**

Called to order by chair, Phyllis Peters at 9:45 a.m.

Peters introduced Cindy Axne, Principal of Axne Consulting Group and facilitator for the day's strategic planning retreat.

#### **Public comment**

None.



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### **Iowa Department of Human Rights update**

Director San Wong gave an overview of where the Department is moving in the future. Wong stated that the Department needs to collaborate with other state agencies and organizations so that underrepresented Iowans have what they need to move forward. Wong also gave an update on staffing: DHR staff of around 50 full-time employees. She added that DHR also has around 130 commissioners appointed to serve on a DHR board/commission, which are all volunteer positions. She added that as DHR moves forward, the Department hopes that the Commission's work will be aligned.

Discussion followed, then ended with Director Wong stating that most of the other commissions, as well as the offices within the Community and Advocacy Services division, will engage in a strategic planning process.

### **Discussion of vision, mission, goals and key strategies to reach these goals**

Facilitator Cindy Axne started the discussion by going over the 2008-2011 strategic plan, 2015 Iowa Commission on the Status of Women Issues and Policy Priorities and stating the commission's current mission, motto, vision, and goals. Axne stressed the importance of looking at what is currently working and what is not working and then talking about what routes and strategies are the best for getting to the end goals.

According to the 2008-2011 strategic plan, the following are the ICSW's current mission statement, motto, vision, and goals:

- **Mission statement:** Through responsive advocacy, the ICSW champions the success and well-being of women and girls in Iowa.
- **Motto:** "Iowa's commitment to women."
- **Vision:** Growing Iowa's opportunities so every woman and girl can reach her full potential.
- **Goals:**
  - 1) Girls in Iowa are safe, healthy, and prepared for success.
  - 2) Women, girls and their allies are fully engaged with the ICSW vision.
  - 3) Systems are in place to support and challenge women to reach their full potential and enhance Iowa's future.

Axne started with asking the group if the commission would like to modify the current mission statement, motto, vision, and goals. Axne stated that an organization's mission gives a message to partners or potential partners about what the organization does and also gives direction to staff; whereas its vision articulates a message to the general public of what an organization does.



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Axne asked commissioners and staff to make a list of what is working and what is not working. The commissioners collaboratively came up with the following lists:

*What is working well/strengths:*

- Institutional knowledge
- Understanding advocacy
- Systems focus
- Celebrate and put focus on Iowa women's successes
- New website and its information
- Part of collaborative groups
- Have direct access and influence
- Friends board
- Annual events and programs

*Needs not being met/needs improvement:*

- Not working from a plan
- Commissioners don't have an engagement plan for them
- Community outreach and feedback connection to be more collaborative to up channel information to fix systems
- Understanding and promoting best practices
- Fragmentation of DHR divisions
- Understanding the value of ICSW
- Limited staff and need to support Commission and Friends board (basically 1 FTE)
- Status quo budget

*Opportunities for improvement:*

- Pay scales disproportionate to societal impact
- Single mother data and what it impacts (childcare, economic package, healthcare)
- Finding a new way to make the change
- Not everyone who needs to be at the table is at the table
- Inform Iowans on successes and how they can fix problems



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- Connect with other underrepresented groups
- Creating value for other related underrepresented groups
- Being more effective in different and changing demographics

*Threats:*

- Cultural barriers to change

After much discussion, the commissioners present settled on the following preliminary draft plan to discuss during the upcoming commission meeting on Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015:

- **Draft mission statement:** The ICSW advocates for and leads collaborative efforts that champion the success and well-being of women and girls.
- **Draft motto (possibility):** "Changing systems to achieve success."
- **Draft vision:** Empower Iowa women and girls to achieve their full potential.
- **Draft goals:**
  - Goal #1: Iowa has a statewide coordinated effort to advocate for the needs of women and girls.
    - Strategy #1: Coalitions are established to identify and address areas of need and opportunity that support the ICSW vision.
    - Strategy #2: Establish a communications plan that supports coordinated effort.
  - Goal #2: Systems are in place to support and challenge women to reach their full potential and enhance Iowa's future.
    - Strategy #1: Women have greater opportunity for economic stability and career growth.
      - Ideas for potential actions (for discussion):
        - Flexibility in the workplace
        - Access to childcare and family supports
        - Continued STEM support
        - Pay equity/comparable worth
        - Minimum wage
        - Women-owned businesses



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- Strategy #2: Increased safety and well-being of women.
  - Ideas for potential actions (for discussion):
    - Protective services for victims of assault and abuse
    - Mental health care
  - Goal #3 (Internal goal): The Office on the Status of Women and the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women are structured to enhance and support the commission and the Iowa Department of Human Rights' goals and priorities.
    - Strategy #1: Access to resources & responsibilities to ensure staff and commissioners support the goals
    - Strategy #2: Develop suggestions and processes to address resource gaps
    - Strategy #3: Increased value for commission members

Axne said she would typically spend time doing a SWOT analysis and go into more depth about actions, person(s) responsible for actions and due dates, but traditionally she does this in two days. Because of time limitations, Axne and the commission only focused on its revised mission statement, motto, vision, goals, discussed some actions, and came up with a list of potential opportunities and threats. Axne also stated that the goals the commission settles on will stay the same throughout the life of the strategic plan, but that strategies can change as needed.

Axne suggested updating the commissioners who were absent for the July 29 session before the next meeting to explain the rationale and process, and to seek input on other potential actions.

Commissioner Gudenkauf asked if Corey could send the draft minutes and draft strategic plan template to the commissioners. Corey stated that she would send out to commissioners as soon as she could before the meeting on August 22<sup>nd</sup> so that commissioners had time to review.

Chair Peters asked if the commission would like to discuss the plan before the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Commissioner Coonan suggested that the commission discuss the tentative plan on August 22 with the rest of the commissioners. The other commissioners present agreed.



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## Adjournment

Coonan made a motion to adjourn. Carnahan seconded the motion.

Ayes: all

Nay: none

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

  
Phyllis Peters, Chair

  
Kristen Corey, Program Planner