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State Networking Conference

Progress was in Evidence

On November 8th at the Hotel Fort Des Moines a record crowd of 300 persons attended the State Networking Conference entitled, "Stepping Stones, Where Does the Path Lead?"

This networking conference fostered the sharing of best practices, including an exhibit fair featuring the work of empowerment areas from across the state. Other sessions promoted local board development, fiscal compliance, collaboration, planning, public awareness, funding options, and a dialogue with legislators that the attendees will not soon forget.

The conference reflects a huge effort, an effort that was appreciated by the many people who gathered valuable information. Participants made a point of commenting on how important these opportunities are to them and to their local empowerment areas.

Thanks again to everyone who contributed to this conference!

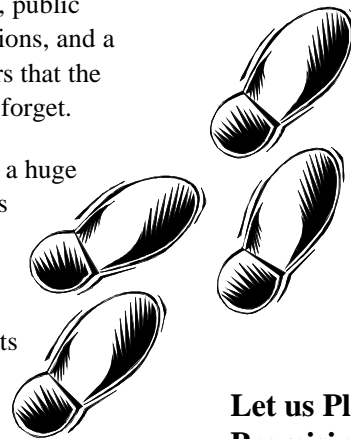
Well Done!

Legislative Exhibit Fair

On **February 1, 2001** from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Capitol, 1st Floor Rotunda the Community Empowerment Areas will have an opportunity to showcase their activities and accomplishments.

Contact Shanell Wagler in the Empowerment Office if you'd like to reserve an exhibit table. e-mail address: shanell.wagler@idom.state.ia.us or phone her at (515) 281-4321. This will be discussed in more detail at the

December 14th Contacts Meeting.



Promising Practices

Let us Place Your Promising Practice Here!!

Each newsletter will feature a promising practice submitted by Community Empowerment Areas. Please submit your short success stories to the Empowerment Office so we can share what you've learned with other areas.

Nominations Sought For Iowa Empowerment Board

The state Empowerment Board currently has two vacancies. The two vacancies are citizen members and the Governor must make appointments from recommendations from local empowerment boards. If you know of potential candidates, please send a letter of nomination to Cathy Jury, Appointments Coordinator, in the Governor's Office. Please contact the Empowerment Office if you need more information.

CEA Annual Report Reviews

The Empowerment team has reviewed annual reports submitted by CEA's for the fiscal year 2000. Conference calls will be scheduled and held with all areas to discuss the annual report structure, process and content.

Links to Empowerment web sites

- State: www.empowerment.state.ia.us
- Woodbury: www.siouxlandship.org
- HAWC: www.HAWC-Iowa.com
- Polk: www.humanservicesplanningalliance.org
- Buchanan Delaware Fayette: www.bdfempowerment.org
- Scott: www.scottcountyempowerment.org/

Send us your web site address and we'll include it in the next newsletter.

Empowerment Tools

Each Empowerment newsletter will publish a useful tool for Community Empowerment Areas. This edition contains two new tools that are summaries of the Open Meetings and Open Records Laws. Please let us know other types of information that may be useful.

How The Open Meetings Law May Apply To Community Empowerment Areas.

Community empowerment areas with concerns about the Open Meetings Law are encouraged to seek legal advice within their communities. This could include legal representation from collaborative partners, the county attorney, city attorney, fiscal agents, or others. The following is intended for information purposes only.

All meetings of community empowerment area boards are subject to the Open Meetings Law. Iowa Code § 28.6(5) states in part as follows: *"All meetings of a community empowerment area board or any committee or other body established by a community board at which public business is discussed or formal action taken shall comply with the requirements of chapter 21 [Open Meetings Law]. A community board shall maintain its records in accordance with chapter 22 [Open Records]."*

What Is A Meeting?

- Any gathering in person or by electronic means, formal or informal, of a majority of

the members of a governmental body – if there is deliberation or action upon any matter within the scope of the governmental body's policy making duty.

- Does not include a gathering for purely social or ministerial purposes when there is no discussion of policy and no intent to avoid the purpose of the open meetings law.

Public Notice

- Public notice must be provided at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, absent an emergency.
- Notice must be reasonably calculated to advise the public of the date, time, place and tentative agenda.
- Notice must be provided to news media who have filed a request for notice, and posted on a bulletin board or other prominent place easily accessible by the public at the principle office of the body holding the meeting.

Conducting An Open Session

- An open session is a meeting to which all members of the public have access.
- The public may use cameras or recording devices at any open session.
- Reasonable rules of conduct may restrict interference or interruption by spectators.

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Upcoming Events

Empowerment Board Meeting Schedule for 2001

January 12
April 6
July 13
October 1

Empowerment Advisory Council Meetings (tentative)

Thursday, March 22, 2001
Thursday, June 21, 2001
Wednesday, September 19th, 2001
Thursday, November 15, 2001
(if no state conference this month and there are issues that need to be addressed.)

Empowerment Contacts Meeting Via ICN –

See E-mail from Kris for locations
December 14th,
10:00 a.m. to Noon

Iowa Empowerment Board Meeting

United Way, Human Service Campus
January 12th, 2001,
10:00 – 2:00 pm

Early Childhood Care & Education Congress

February 27 and 28th, 2001
Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines, IA

Pre-Congress Day on the Hill

February 26, 2001

Fiscal Accountability Workgroup

The Empowerment Fiscal Accountability Workgroup met on November 15, 2000. Several issues were discussed and clarified:

- It was confirmed that interest earned on both state (school ready) and federal (early childhood/TANF) funds must be used for programs and services only and not for administrative expenses.
- Costs for fiscal agents and liability are considered administrative expenses.
- Empowerment team will draft fiscal guidelines (similar to open meetings summary) and will plan an ICN session specifically related to fiscal issues.
- Each CEA must have a fiscal agent agreement and a copy should be submitted to the Empowerment Office
- CEAs are required to have an audit if they expend more than \$300,000 in federal funds in a year.
- It is recommended that CEAs not exceed the federal IRS mileage rate reimbursement.

For more information, you can find the minutes of this meeting on the Empowerment web site.

Empowerment Team's Activity Report

Site Visits/Technical Assistance/ Meetings with Empowerment Areas (October/November)

- Woodbury County (SHIP) Empowerment Board meeting and press conference, October 4
- Conference call with Adams County, October 13

- Linn County Empowerment Futures Committee meeting, October 20
- Lee Van Buren Child Care Task Force meeting, October 25
- Buena Vista Crawford Sac Empowerment Board meeting, October 27
- Cedar County Empowerment Board meeting, November 1

Outreach/Linkages (October/November)

- Children's Mental Health Meeting, October 12, 13 and November 20, 21
- Child Care Advisory Council, October 12
- Statewide Planning Committee for Early Childhood (AEA), October 12, 13
- Boost 4 Kids Conference Calls, October 12, 26
- Hamilton County child welfare evaluation meeting, October 17
- Youth Development Collaborative meeting, October 19
- Calhoun Co. partnership meeting regarding medical homes for kids, October 16, 26, 31
- Meeting with Juvenile Justice and Decat, October 23
- Child and Family Policy Center, October 23
- Governor's Youth Conference, October 23
- Fatherhood interagency group meeting, October 31
- Meeting with Child Care Resource and Referral Lead Agency Directors, November 9
- National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) conference on results, November 14, 15
- DHS conference on results, November 16
- FaDDS meeting, November 16
- Meeting with Juvenile Justice and Decat, November 20
- Fatherhood directors and interagency team meeting, November 22

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- Early Childhood conference planning meeting (DE, DHS, IDPH, DHR), November 27
- Education Budget Hearing, November 27
- Regents Center for Early Development Education, November 28
- Youth Development Collaborative meeting, November 30

Keep your Eyes Open! This will be Future Spot to highlight our State Empowerment Board and its members.

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Open Session Minutes

Minutes of an open session shall reflect:

- Date, time and place of meeting.
- Members present.
- Action taken – with sufficient information to reflect each member’s vote.
- Final action on any matter discussed in closed session.
- The reason for holding a closed session by reference to a specific exemption, and the vote of each member on the question of holding a closed session.
- If the meeting is held on less than 24 hours notice, or at a place or a time not reasonably accessible to the public, the good cause justifying the departure from normal requirements.

Mechanics Of Holding A Closed Session

- ***Do not hold a closed session unless it is expressly permitted by Iowa Code § 21.5.***
- Close only upon the affirmative vote of 2/3 members of the body or of all members present at the meeting.
- Publicly announce and enter in the minutes each member’s vote and the reason for holding a closed session.
- Only discuss matters in closed session which

are directly related to the stated reason for closing the session.

- Take final action in open session.
- Keep detailed minutes of all discussion, persons present and action occurring in closed session.
- Tape record entire closed session.
- Seal and keep minutes and tape recording at least one year – shield from public inspection.

Suggestions (not requirements) To Facilitate Open Meetings:

- Empowerment boards should specifically designate for the record (in by-laws or minutes) where they will post their notices.
- Meeting notices should be provided to all media and to anyone else requesting notice of the meetings.
- Establish a specific mailing list for sending out notices.
- Utilize technology to reduce paper/ mailing costs, i.e. website or e-mail.
- Schedule meetings in advance by setting dates for a specific time frame, six months to a year.

Include notation of the date and place for future meetings on agendas and announce the next meeting at the conclusion of each meeting.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED