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# Creating Institutional Change and Change Agents/Leaders

May 28, 2025

*This event is made possible by the International Confederation of Energy Regulators (ICER) Women in Energy initiative and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). The contents are the responsibility of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of ICER or NARUC.*

# Formal Power vs. Informal Power

## Span of Influence



- **Formal Power** - Typically present due to a formal position/title where the responsibilities includes the ability to influence or make decisions affecting an organization
- **Informal Power** - Power that is not tied to any position, often resulting from personal characteristics, expertise, perspectives, etc.

# Identity and “Power”

## What is your “Power” footprint?

- Based on each of our social roles, we learn:
  - How to think about ourselves and others;
  - How to interact with others;
  - How to understand what is expected of us based on a specific set of social identities we were born into; and
  - What the outcome is if we deviate from what is expected of us.
- The cycle is self-perpetuating, complex, and invisible.



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# Step I: Identification of Issue/Opportunity

	Notes	Answers
<b>Document, Policy, or Procedure</b>	<i>Please provide a brief excerpt or a summary of an issue you would like to improve.</i>	
<b>Rationale</b>	<p><i>Please elaborate on the below considerations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>How does this initiative benefit your organization?</i></li> <li><i>What are potential roadblocks, concerns, or considerations of this initiative?</i></li> <li><i>How does this initiative promote better practices at the Commission?</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Stakeholders and Decision-makers</b>	<p><i>Please identify the following decision-makers, if applicable:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Other staff/colleagues supporting this initiative.</i></li> <li><i>Decision-maker who has to review and verify this initiative.</i></li> <li><i>Decision-maker who has to approve this initiative.</i></li> <li><i>Decision-maker who has to implement this initiative.</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>1) Initiator:</i></p> <p><i>1) Decision-maker to prepare or review:</i></p> <p><i>1) Reviewer:</i></p> <p><i>1) Final approver/decision-maker for adoption:</i></p>
<b>Timing</b>	<i>Please identify a tentative timeline. Is this initiative a priority that can be addressed in the short- or medium-term?</i>	

Source: Prepared for USAID – NARUC  
Advancing Women Leaders in Energy (AWLE)  
Human Resources Working Group



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# Step 2: Goals and Action Plan

<b>Short-term Goals:</b>	1.					
	2.					
<b>Long-term Goal:</b>	1.					
<b>EXAMPLE ACTIONS</b>						
	<b>Action 1</b>	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>End Date</b>	
<b>Example Short Term Goal #1: Prevent unconscious biases in hiring practices</b>	Recruitment: Change job advertisement policy with neutral language in job ads	Write policy	Have HR/Administrative Department Accept Policy	Implement Policy	Step 1: July 28 Step 2: September 29 Step 3: October-January 1	
	<b>Measurement/Indicators</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Required Financial Resources</b>	<b>Required Team Resources</b> [Fill in specific names/job titles]		
	Number of job advertisements with gender neutral language	Senior Leadership lack of understanding around need for policy change; HR/legal review; time and resources	Legal review of policy Staff time	HR Lead Chair of Commission Staff members who participated in Training		
	<b>Action 2</b>	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>	<b>End Date</b>	
	Hiring: Update hiring policy to include gender-balanced interview panel	Write policy	Collect staff gender information across departments and analyze	Develop sample interview panel operational guide and train staff	Step 1: August 31 Step 2: August 31 Step 3: October 23	
	<b>Measurement/Indicators</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Required Financial Resources</b>	<b>Required Team Resources</b> [Fill in specific names/job titles]		
	Number of gender-balanced interview panels within 1 year	Insufficient gender-balanced senior leadership; HR/legal review; Lack of team understanding of need	Legal review of policy Staff time	HR Lead Chair of Commission Staff members who participated in Unconscious Bias Training		



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# ICER's Women In Energy Program

- **Join ICER's WIE!** All women and men who are employees of National Regulatory Authorities or Regional Regulatory Associations are eligible. Connect with WIE on **LinkedIn**: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/5117692/>
- **Peer Coaching**
  - Launched in 2022 and ongoing.
- **Thematic Circles of Excellence**
  - Periodic engagements that allow members of the peer coaching program to connect with other members across continents. Past topics focused on the value of networking and the circle of confidence and workforce re-entry after parental leave.
- **Gender data surveys (annual)**
- **Webinars**



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# Abigail Anthony, Commissioner

Abigail Anthony was appointed by Governor Gina Raimondo to the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission in 2017. Commissioner Anthony is currently the Chair of the Commission on Energy Resources and the Environment of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and the President of the Board of the New England Utility Cybersecurity Integration Collaborative. Previously, Commissioner Anthony was the director of Acadia Center’s Grid Modernization and Utility Reform Initiative, and the organization’s Rhode Island director. During her time as director of Acadia Center, she was appointed by Governors Carcieri and Chafee to the Rhode Island Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council, where she served from 2010 to 2017 overseeing the implementation of the state’s energy efficiency programs and policies.

Commissioner Anthony holds a PhD in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics from the University of Rhode Island. She received her MA and BA in economics from the University of Montana.





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# Ann Rendahl, Commissioner

Ann Rendahl was first appointed to serve as a commissioner of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission by Gov. Inslee in December 2014 for a six-year term that ended Jan. 1, 2021. Ann has been reappointed and confirmed to a second six-year term ending Jan. 1, 2027.

Ann serves as the First Vice President of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, or NARUC, and serves as a member of the Committees on Water and Critical Infrastructure, prior chair of the Committee on Electricity, a member of the Executive Committee, and serves on the Board of Directors.

Ann serves as a member of the Southwest Power Pool's Markets+ States Committee and has served on the Body of State Regulators for the California ISO's Energy Imbalance Market. Ann also serves as a member of the Electric Power Research Institute's Advisory Council, and as a member of the Advisory Councils of the Center for Public Utilities at New Mexico State University and the University of Missouri's Financial Research Institute.

Prior to being appointed as a commissioner, Ann served as the Director of Policy and Legislation for the UTC. Prior to leading the UTC's Policy and Legislative Affairs Section, she served as the Director of the Administrative Law Division, as an administrative law judge for the UTC, and as an assistant attorney general representing the UTC.

Ann is a graduate of Wellesley College. She received a master's degree in public policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, and her law degree from UC Law San Francisco.





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# **Leadership Skills: Assertion, Goal Identification, Credibility, and Value Recognition**

**Abigail Anthony, Commissioner  
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission**

May 28, 2025



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## Communication Style Choices

**Opaque**

**Transparent**

**Informed**

**Cunning**

**Assertive**

**Ignorant**

**Unreliable**

**Sincere**



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# Requirements for being Assertive

- **Know your goal**
- **Have decision-making process that relies on knowledge**
- **Establish credibility through transparency**



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# When to be Assertive

## **Use Assertiveness when:**

- You need to be understood
- You don't want to be ignored
- You have good information

## **Use other styles when:**

- You want to explore ideas
- You're building connection
- You're operating with low information



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**Opaque**

**Transparent**

**Informed**

**Cunning**



**Assertive**

**= Mutual Growth**

**Ignorant**

**Unreliable**

**Sincere**



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**Opaque**

**Transparent**

**Informed**

**Cunning**

**Assertive**



**Ignorant**

**Unreliable**

**Sincere**



**= Teaching & Building  
Trust**



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**Opaque**

**Transparent**

**Informed**



**Cunning**

**= Power Struggle**



**Assertive**



**Ignorant**

**Unreliable**

**Sincere**



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**Opaque**

**Transparent**

**Informed**

**Cunning**

**Assertive**



**Ignorant**



**Unreliable**

**Sincere**

**= Breakdown & Chaos**





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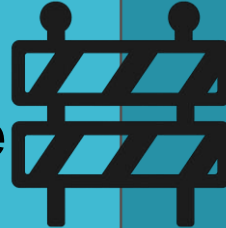
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**Opaque**

**Transparent**



**Bias  
Motivated Resistance**



**Assertive**

**Informed**



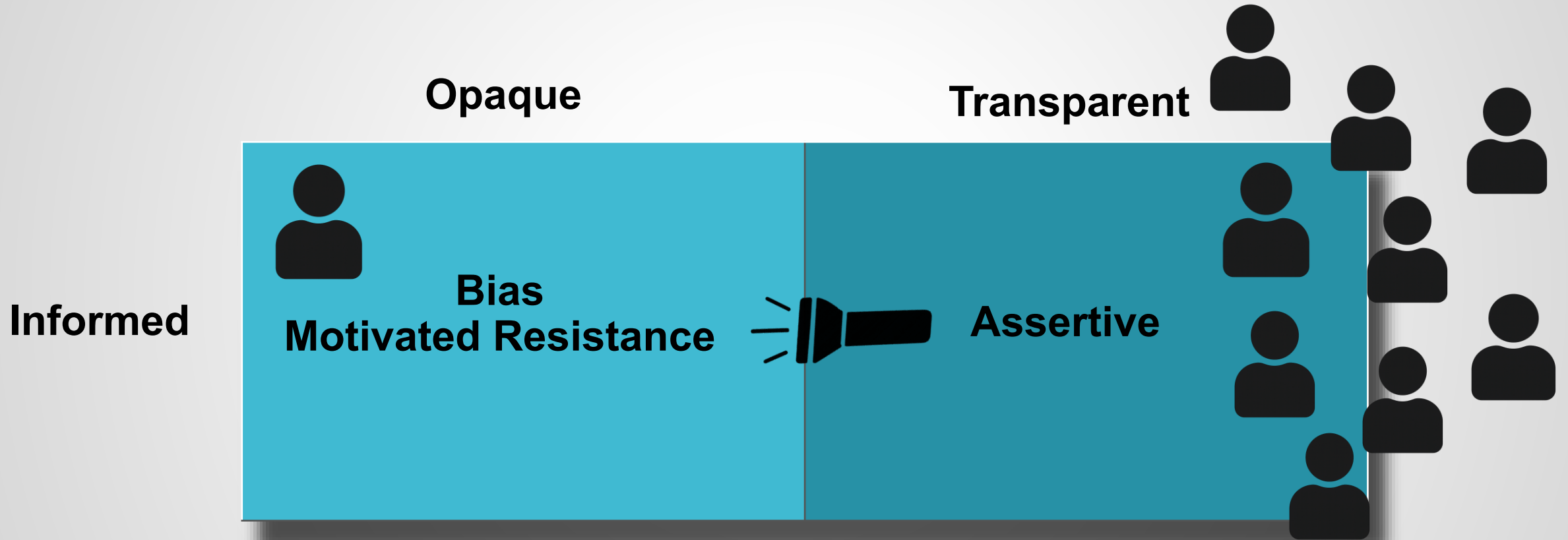
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# Creating Influence and Institutional Change

**Ann Rendahl, First Vice President, NARUC  
Commissioner, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission**

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# Institutional Culture and Gender Dynamics

- **Gender stereotypes:**
  - **Women:**
    - Conciliatory, collaborative
    - Empathetic, emotional
    - Lacking confidence
    - Value relationships v. difficult decisions
  - **Men:**
    - Assertive, competitive
    - Direct
    - More adept with numbers, policy





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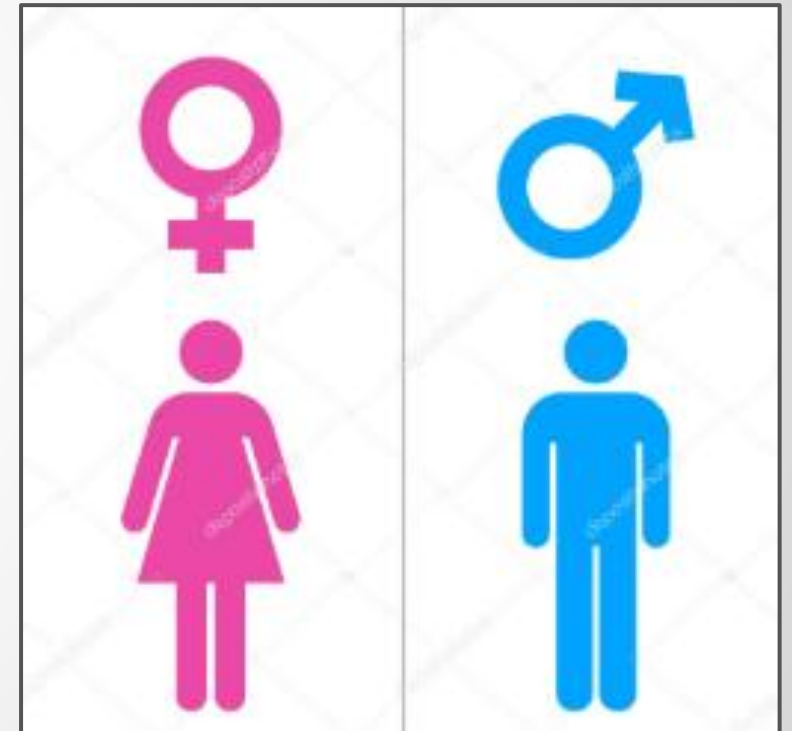


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# Gendered Roles in Organizations

- **Women:**
  - Supportive roles (note takers, recorders)
  - Not at the table
  - Fix mistakes
  - Organizers (scheduling)
- **Men:**
  - Leaders
  - Speakers
  - Actions and decisions





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# Gender Biases May Show Up As Discrimination

- Compensation and pay equity
- Dress codes
- Role expectations
- Interview questions
- Positional and affinity bias





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## **Poll**

- **In what situations you have experienced an organization reinforcing gender roles?**
  - **Recruitment process**
  - **Promotional opportunities**
  - **Salary negotiations**
  - **Team-level interactions**
  - **Executive/leadership meetings**



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## Poll

- Have you experienced a difference in gender dynamics more in private v. public sector organizations?
  - Private
  - Public



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# Influencing Institutional Change

- Institutional change involves process and people
- People perceive change as a risk or a benefit
  - Comfort/security
  - Worry/anxiety
  - Risk/flight
- Leaders can impact how people perceive change.





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## Risk Matrix

**Change  
Capacity:  
Resistant**

**Open**

Medium Risk	High Risk
Low Risk	Medium Risk

**Scale of Change (small to large →)**



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# Change Leadership Elements

- Active and visible
  - Attend meetings and stay accessible
  - Ensure team members are accountable
- Build coalitions
  - Identify and develop sponsors
  - Manage resistance
- Frequent and consistent communication
  - Reasons and benefits of change
  - Consistent messaging





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## **Poll**

- **When working to change institutional culture, do you first:**
  - **Announce your goals and plans with the leadership team**
  - **Evaluate current culture and processes before acting**
  - **Identify your change agents**
  - **Identify the “problem” and why change is necessary**



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# Question & Answer Session

Please post your questions in the Q&A function.



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**Thank you for joining!**

Slides & recording will be disseminated to those who registered in advance.