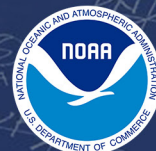




ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH BLUEPRINT 2023-2026

NOAA's
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE





Letter from Peyton Robertson,
Director, Office of Organizational Excellence

At the National Weather Service, we are aligned around a common mission to save lives and property and enhance the national economy. To sustain that strong service motivation and achieve even higher levels of organizational excellence, we have placed PEOPLE at the top of the priority list. By continually improving our organizational health and culture, we will continuously improve our mission performance.

As we transition to a new, post-pandemic normal, we need to be particularly mindful of how we support one another and “re-form” our teams in the context of reintegration. Strengthening our culture and improving our interpersonal interactions will be critical to this success, both internally and externally. We will reinforce the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) to ensure every employee can show up each day with confidence and lack of fear in being their true self.

This Blueprint is your blueprint — it is drawn from the feedback you provided through surveys and employee engagement. It reflects the high value we all place on effective working relationships and creating a rewarding and fulfilling work environment. From listening to you, we have identified four key focus areas to further improve and sustain our long-term organizational health and culture going forward:

- Transparency and Openness
- Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration
- Employee Wellness and Development
- Continuous Improvement and Harnessing Innovation

These focus areas will be a driving force to enable and energize every office within the National Weather Service to achieve high levels of satisfaction and an excellent employee experience.

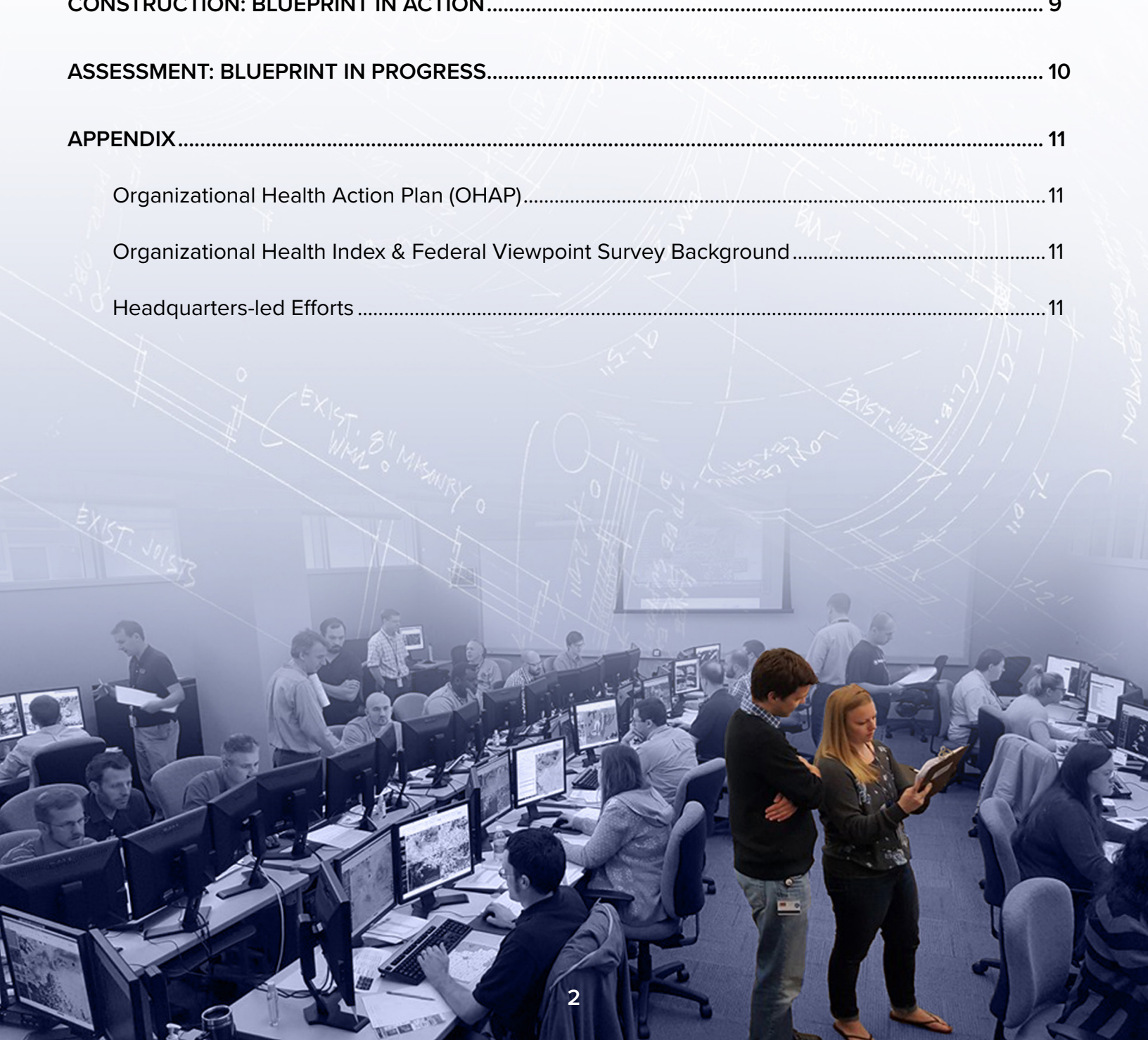
Our team is excited to work across the National Weather Service to build out the vision and framing set by this Blueprint.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peyton Robertson".

Peyton Robertson, Director, Office of Organizational Excellence

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FOUNDATION: VISION AND IMPORTANCE

Ken's #1 Priority: People



Cultivating a healthy organization results in more efficient, effective, and sustainable execution of its strategic mission and vision.

In the National Weather Service, such success is only achieved through our people. We have a highly motivated workforce, inspired by and dedicated to the mission of saving lives, property, and enhancing the national economy. Our leaders understand this and are making a concerted effort to put people first.

When people feel valued and cared for, they do their best work, with strong intrinsic motivation, a deep sense of meaning, and a high level of engagement¹.

Happier and more satisfied employees produce better products and services, leading to better customer satisfaction. A holistic approach to the employee experience will attract diverse talent and result in higher retention, further supporting a culture that values employee wellness.

Establishing a healthy organization is not about great slogans or a list of aspirational values, it is about action! In support of the People Priority, this Organizational Health Blueprint ("The Blueprint") clearly lays out the actions the NWS will take to improve the agency's health at every organizational level and in every work unit. The Blueprint is closely aligned with the NWS strategic vision, mission, goals, and principles, and fully supports employee growth and well-being.

"Take care of our people, and they will take care of the mission."

-Ken Graham, Director, National Weather Service



NWS Vision: A Weather-Ready Nation: Society is prepared for and responds to weather, water, and climate-dependent events.

NWS Mission: Provide weather, water and climate data, forecasts, warnings, and impact-based decision support services for the protection of life and property and enhancement of the national economy.

NWS Top Priority: People

"People come first. Take care of our people, and they will take care of the mission."
-Ken Graham

NWS Strategic Plan Goal: Ensure employees work in an inclusive, empowering, safe, and flexible environment that enables us to best serve our mission to save lives, protect property, and enhance the national economy.

NWS Core Principle: Our people drive our success; we are dedicated to our science-based service to the Nation.

The Blueprint
is closely aligned with the NWS strategic vision, mission, goals, and principles and fully supports employee growth and well-being.

Blueprint Vision Statement:

Empowering every level of the NWS to further improve and sustain the health of the organization going forward.

FRAMEWORK: ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH FOCUS AREAS

Given our motivated workforce, who are extremely dedicated to our mission, it is not surprising that the 2020 OHI scores² reflect the highest scores in both the motivation and external orientation categories (i.e. customer focus). However, after more than two years of living through a pandemic, we are at an inflection point, where these strengths could be threatened by other factors, including employee wellness. To best support our passionate workforce while also finding targeted opportunities for improvement, we have identified four focus areas to help further improve and sustain organizational health and culture across the entire agency. These focus areas represent the pillars of the Blueprint:

Transparency & Openness

Goal: All employees are encouraged to engage in open and constructive communication while feeling safe to express their thoughts, questions, and concerns without fear of retaliation, and leaders are diligent in sharing and communicating on progress towards meeting strategic goals.

Employee Wellness & Development

Goal: All employees experience an inclusive work environment with equal opportunities and access that supports their growth and overall well-being.

Knowledge Sharing & Collaboration

Goal: All employees are invited to share knowledge and ideas across the organization and work together to make improvements.

Continuous Improvement & Harnessing Innovation

Goal: All employees are encouraged to pair their expertise with new ideas to optimize organizational performance through diversity of thought in an effort to help improve service delivery, agency priorities, and key mission enhancements.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) are all fundamental to organizational health and culture and are integrated within these focus areas. For information on additional DEIA initiatives, please see the [DEIA Strategic Action Plan^{L14}](#).

PUTTING FOCUS AREAS INTO ACTION

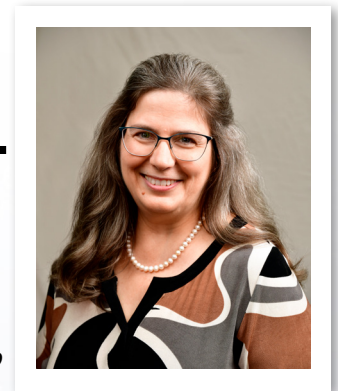
To see meaningful progress within the above focus areas will take all of us (scientists, researchers, developers, forecasters, hydrologists, technicians, administrative assistants, modelers, and support staff) working together. Successful completion of the actions in this Blueprint requires an agency-wide approach.

Headquarters-led Actions³:

There are many ongoing and future organizational health initiatives at the NWS Headquarters level that align with the Organizational Health Focus Areas⁴. To communicate some of these actions, track progress, and illustrate their impact on the entire agency, a new dynamic Organizational Health Dashboard has been developed.

Regions, Centers, Portfolios, and Local Office Level Action:

The Blueprint aims to support all offices in improving their organizational health and culture. This will allow all offices and employees across the agency to play a more active role in shaping their work environments.



“This Blueprint is the guide for all of us to create and sustain a healthy NWS Culture.”

-Mary Erickson, Deputy Director, National Weather Service

DESIGN: ABOUT THE BLUEPRINT

The first Organizational Health Action Plan (OHAP)⁵, developed in 2020, was a plan to help improve employee satisfaction and engagement. This is the second iteration of OHAP, re-titled the Organizational Health Blueprint. This Blueprint will energize, empower, and enable every level of the NWS to sustain and further improve the health of the agency and their individual offices. The Blueprint puts employee feedback⁶ into action by addressing four organizational health focus areas and providing a set of tools to help support all NWS offices in improving their local health and culture.



DESIGN: ABOUT THE BLUEPRINT (cont.)

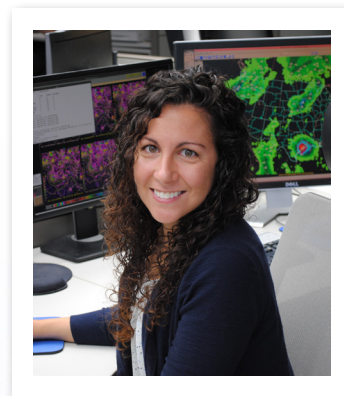
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This Blueprint is a community approach to improving organizational health and culture by supporting top-down, bottom-up, and lateral efforts. While the Office of Organizational Excellence (OOE) is responsible for ensuring the Blueprint and its deliverables are achieved, it is our NWS Leadership that plays the vital and unique role of ensuring its success.

NWS Leadership will (1) model desired culture behaviors and practices intended to be mirrored across the organization, (2) champion a healthy organization by articulating and supporting priorities from the OHI survey and this Blueprint, and (3) ensure continued effort on improving organizational health through OOE, the NWS Employee Experience Team (EET), Diversity Management Council (DMC), and other relevant work groups.

“The Blueprint is a framework to help guide every office toward a better workplace environment while also enhancing the employee experience.”

-Lara Pagano, Organizational Health and Culture Lead, Office of Organizational Excellence



DEVELOPERS

The Organizational Health Blueprint was developed by OOE in partnership with a cross-agency planning team. This planning team consisted of approximately 40 employees from across the NWS, representing all levels and a wide variety of positions within the organization. Through this planning team, we have ensured employee engagement and feedback, which served as the foundation for the Blueprint.

The Planning Team Acknowledgement

Doug Alston
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Jessica Lee
Todd Lericos
Rachael Lesslie
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Katie Pojorie
Peyton Robertson
Edward Shimon
Jennifer Stark
Jennifer Stroozas
Andrew Taylor
Scott Tessmer
Brian Warren
Renee Wise
Jeryllyn Billings Wright

TOOLS: BLUEPRINT RESOURCES

Constructing a robust framework to support a healthy organization and culture across the entire agency takes a carefully curated set of resources. The Blueprint aims to provide a consistent and clear set of these organizational health tools that can be used to help improve the employee experience and workplace culture at any office based on its needs.



THE TOOLKIT

A one-stop-shop provides resources on a variety of topics

that impact organizational/office health and culture. Content within this toolkit will provide an opportunity to better exchange knowledge, share best practices, and connect with subject matter experts from across the agency. The goal is to supply a set of tools to support a more progressive and inclusive workplace culture that brings out the best in people.



THE DASHBOARD

This dynamic set of dashboards will allow

anyone from anywhere at any time to see the progress the NWS is making in terms of improving our health and culture. This resource will enable the NWS to provide a higher degree of transparency by pulling back the curtain on the People Priority work happening across the agency.



THE BRIEFING PACKAGE

A customized presentation that helps offices develop clear

goals and outcomes to improve their local health through their OHI assessment, Organizational Health Focus Area selections, and implementation of practices.



THE NETWORK⁷

In an effort to drive positive action across the NWS, a network of passionate individuals will champion and support culture efforts, from top levels of leadership to grassroots initiatives and everywhere in between. This group will work together to improve the employee experience and ensure we remain aligned around our strategic vision of a Weather-Ready Nation.

The NWS Organizational Health Network consists of:

Organizational Health and Culture Lead

- positioned under the Office of Organizational Excellence (OOE) and an advisor on the Employee Experience Team (EET). This lead will engage, coach, and leverage the Network to help improve the organizational health of the agency.

Culture Leads - six Regional Culture Leads, a National Center Culture Lead, and four Portfolio Leads. Culture Leads will work directly with their respective offices to help assess, guide, and facilitate implementation of activities to positively impact organizational health.

While not directly affiliated with the Organizational Health Network, the NWS has already established a group of culture ambassadors who continue to advocate and promote best practices, ideas, and solutions for fostering a healthier organization. OOE will leverage this group of passionate individuals while working with the Organizational Health Network.



CONSTRUCTION: BLUEPRINT IN ACTION

So far, we have provided insight into agency-wide efforts to improve our organizational health and culture, including resources available to aid individual offices in building a healthy workforce and workplace. It is now time to put these tools to work over the next few years — the construction phase of the Blueprint.

Step 1:

By utilizing the Organizational Health Network as a support function, each office in the NWS will be provided a Region, Center, or Portfolio Culture Lead that will help guide them toward improving the health of their work environment and culture.

Step 2:

The Culture Lead or another representative will provide an Organizational Health Briefing Package to each of their respective offices which are customized based on either OHI survey data or other culture assessments.

Step 3:

Based on this package, each office will choose two Organizational Health Focus Areas and identify and commit to a set of practices for the following year's annual plan that align with their focus areas.

- Offices will also be provided additional resources, including the Organizational Health Toolkit, to help guide them on ways they can focus their efforts through suggested best practices and other important points of contact.

- Offices will assess their current culture needs, select which two focus areas to address in the years ahead, determine and commit to a set of practices they want to incorporate into their annual plan, and reassess their progress through future culture surveys.

ASSESSMENT: BLUEPRINT PROGRESS

Improving NWS organizational health and culture is a continuous effort to foster the best employee experience and ensure our agency is effective in delivering on our vision for a Weather-Ready Nation. OOE will strive to utilize McKinsey & Co. OHI surveys on a periodic schedule (generally, once every 3 years) to track progress of the Blueprint⁸, assess the health of our agency down to the local office level, and find growth and course correction opportunities to ensure we continue to improve and sustain our health and culture. We will supplement the culture assessment with the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and other NOAA/NWS sponsored surveys that relate to organizational health and culture to enhance our evaluation.

BLUEPRINT METRICS

OOE will continue to track and monitor the progress of the headquarters-led actions, as well as ensure the mid- and local-level actions meet the below metrics:

100%

of NWS Offices will hold at least one discussion on the Blueprint with their team in FY23

100%

of NWS Offices have selected their two Organizational Health Focus Areas by Q2 FY24

100%

of NWS Offices have identified and committed to a set of practices that align with their selected Organizational Health Focus Areas by Q4 FY24, to influence FY25 planning

In addition, OOE will communicate the progress of the Blueprint to all employees on a routine basis while continuously evaluating the usefulness of the Organizational Health Dashboard, Network, Toolkit, and Briefing Packages through employee feedback mechanisms with modifications implemented to align with the Blueprint vision statement.

APPENDIX

Organizational Health Action Plan (OHAP)

The first version of the [Organizational Health Action Plan](#)^{L1} (OHAPv1) was released in May 2020 and was based mostly on feedback from the 2018 and 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Surveys (FEVS). The plan focused on improvement in two Development Areas: (1) Leaders Lead, which looks to improve health of the workforce, motivation, leadership quality, and performance managers; and (2) Professional Growth and Development, which includes future career opportunities and training.

GOAL

The ultimate goal for the OHAPv1 was to improve employee satisfaction and engagement within the workforce with the desired outcome to ensure the NWS was the best place to work in the federal government. Below is a list of activities and accomplishments from OHAPv1.

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It is clear that over the past few years and through a global pandemic, OHAPv1 has been incredibly successful. For a list of the various activities conducted under each Development Area with their status, please refer to the [OHAPv1 Activities Scorecard](#)^{L2}.

Organizational Health Index & Federal Viewpoint Survey Background

The NWS currently utilizes two survey methods to gauge overall organizational health across the agency. Responses from these surveys shape future plans and initiatives to sustain and improve NWS organizational health and culture.

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH INDEX (OHI)

The OHI is administered by McKinsey, providing insight into not only how regions, centers, portfolios, and local offices are doing in comparison to the NWS as a whole, but allows us to benchmark against other public sector organizations; roughly 1,900 surveys are administered with 5+ million responses. The survey is conducted every 2-3 years to ensure maximum time for organizational health changes to take place, given that they take time. [Here are the 2020 NWS OHI results](#)^{L3}.

FEDERAL VIEWPOINT SURVEY (FEVS)

The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), run by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), captures employee satisfaction across governmental agencies and offices. The FEVS is released annually and results are reported through OPM's Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF).

The survey "measures employee's perceptions of whether and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in agencies." Agency-specific FEVS results show percentages of respondents' negative, positive, or neutral perceptions of NWS practices. Reporting is generally at the Region, Center, Portfolio Office, Assistant Administrator for Weather Services, Office of Planning & Programming for Service Delivery, and the Office of Chief Operating Officer levels. [Here are the 2022 FEVS results](#)^{L4}.

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH FOCUS AREAS ALIGNED WITH OHI/FEVS

A [crosswalk analysis](#)^{L5} was conducted between the Organizational Health Focus Areas and the OHI and FEVS data to ensure we are able to adequately measure progress in each arena based on future survey results.

Headquarters-led Efforts

The NWS is a part of the Department of Commerce (DOC) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an agency with a diverse mission to understand and anticipate changes in the climate, weather, oceans, and coasts, to share that knowledge and information with others, and to conserve and manage marine resources. The NWS contributes to NOAA's mission with expertise in weather, water, and climate prediction. In an effort for the NWS to execute its mission to the greatest extent, the NWS Leadership has taken an aggressive approach to support its employees, ensuring the agency is the best place to work within the federal government. Improving the organizational health and culture of the NWS is a top priority as illustrated by the ongoing and future initiatives.

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH INITIATIVES INVENTORY

The NOAA and NWS have various strategic and action plans that aim to improve the organizational health and culture:

[NOAA Strategic Plan](#)^{L6}

Objective 2.1: NOAA is firmly committed to increasing the diversity of its workforce and creating a more inclusive work environment where everyone feels valued, is treated fairly and experiences a true sense of belonging. A key outcome of this plan is to fully integrate diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) into NOAA's business practices and organizational culture by pursuing the following strategies to strengthen NOAA's ability to recruit, hire, develop, promote and retain diverse talent and remove barriers to equal opportunities.

[NOAA Diversity and Inclusion \(D&I\) Strategic Plan](#)^{L7}

Goal 1: Workforce Diversity - Recruit and attract a diverse, highly-capable workforce.

Goal 2: Workplace Inclusion - Build a Work Environment That Promotes Inclusion.

Goal 3: Sustainability - Build Sustained and Adaptive Leadership Commitment to a Diverse and Inclusive NOAA Through Accountability, Data and Education.

[NWS Strategic Plan](#)^{L8}

Goal 1: People as Top Priority Always!

[NWS DEIA Strategic Action Plan](#)^{L4}

Aligns with the NOAA D&I Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Recruitment - NWS successfully recruits and hires a diverse and representative workforce, reflecting the full spectrum of demographics across the United States.

Goal 2: Retention - NWS increases retention of underrepresented groups across all regions and offices, based upon workforce diversity profiles.

Goal 3: Compliance - NWS ensures compliance with civil rights laws and policies, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) directives, and presidential Executive Orders to protect individuals from employment discrimination.

Goal 4: Training, Outreach and Engagement - NWS provides appropriate DEIA training and equips Hiring Officials with information to facilitate recruitment, mentoring, training, and retention of diverse candidates.

Goal 5: Service Equity - NWS provides more equitable service delivery to meet its mission, as measured by consistent outreach activities to vulnerable, marginalized, and underserved populations.

[Diversity Management Council](#)^{L9}

Goal 1: To provide advice, guidance, and recommendations to the Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the DEIA activities and policies supporting the NWS Strategic Plan. Recommendations and updates to be provided to the DAA on a quarterly basis. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Program will be responsible for ensuring those updates are provided, working through the chain of command.

Goal 2: To educate the workforce and encourage training of employees on the principles of effective diversity management in the workplace.

Goal 3: To serve as catalysts for the development and implementation of DEIA activities and policies across NWS offices.

[A set of recommendations](#)^{L10} from each of these Tiger Teams were received and considered by the Executive Council (EC). The EC further committed to apply the recommendations to future actions intended to address improving culture, retention, BIPOC, and BIDE efforts inside the NWS. It should also be noted that many of the Tiger Team Recommendations were already being worked through the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Program under OOE and articulated in the NWS DEIA Strategic Action Plan. While other Tiger Teams existed prior to 2020, it was determined after careful analysis that most of their themes aligned closely with the EC approved recommendations. The need for future Tiger Teams will continuously be assessed based on other employee feedback as listed below.

Listening Sessions: Approximately thirty “Can We Talk” listening sessions were held between 2020-2021, with [themes and recommendations](#)^{L11} also aligning with the EC approved Tiger Team recommendations. The sessions were designed to assist employees as they dealt with complex emotions, stressors, and conditions. The NWS felt these sessions were important as employees were living through a period of political and social unrest and a global pandemic.

Surveys: The NOAA and NWS continuously utilize two agency-wide survey methods to better understand and measure the overall health of the organization and the attitudes and behaviors of its employees: the annual Federal Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and the Organizational Health Index (OHI) survey, which is conducted every 2 to 3 years.

A Tiger Team Task Force was developed to help implement the remaining Tiger Team Recommendations. To track the progress of these recommendations, please visit the Organizational Health Dashboard.

HEADQUARTERS-LED ACTIONS: CURRENT AND ONGOING

The NWS has many [People Priority initiatives either currently underway or planned](#)^{L12} to help improve the entire organization, with many passionate employees behind these efforts. To see the progress of these initiatives, please visit the [Organizational Health Dashboard](#)^{L13}.

NWS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employee engagement within the NWS is vital to ensuring employee feedback is not only heard but used to shape future strategic and action plans. The NWS has made strides over the last several years to actively engage with employees in an effort to measure the health of the organization and find methods of improving cultural deficiencies:

Tiger Teams: In 2020, under the Employee Experience Team (EET), three Tiger Teams were formed to find solutions to address retention, office culture issues that impact women, as well as fostering belonging and inclusion among the entire workforce:

- Building Courage and Culture Tiger Team
- Career Retention Tiger Team
- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (BIDE) Tiger Team

FOOTNOTES

¹McKinsey & Company

²Appendix: 2020 Organizational Health Index (OHI) Data

³Appendix: Headquarters-led Efforts

⁴Headquarters-led Org. Health Activities

⁵Appendix: Organizational Health Action Plan

⁶Appendix: OHI & FEVS Background

⁷Based on the Organizational Health Network charter

⁸Organizational Health Focus Areas aligned to OHI/FEVS

LINKS

L1 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yhXM_sA118kdhN8EdJPp9aJ_yn1EoFPK/view

L2 <https://app.smartsheetgov.com/b/publish?EQBCT=fb2495c25726440eb409b1f2a224b1f5>

L3 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UkdHTGX-DOFFCU_RGDzI8cYNWhqp13cC/view

L4 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M-R1JEKSNJugvu6dhe05dOPM44vdPl0M/view>

L5 <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xeASXIJl2qbOmrNZ5clqTiyObJjwWQTaf2omrEH4V4/edit?usp=sharing>

L6 https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/NOAA_FY2226_Strategic_Plan.pdf

L7 https://drive.google.com/file/d/16Ql4KRZ9E_KwpzETbSGs0aoLFDI3aC1L/view

L8 <https://www.weather.gov/media/wrn/NWS-2023-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

L9 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FUNRqtC86F9uj7cUR1Fjove4G01vaSpM/view?ths=true>

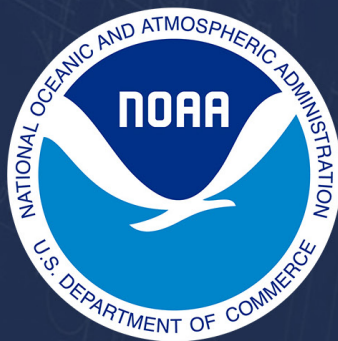
L10 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RubrZaieHI_ru6Qajkt5a6NqOp00Bf39/view

L11 <https://docs.google.com/document/d/13RtUq9XUmxJbSFw8Mn-SPvS0Miefx0afGRkRU092bHU/edit>

L12 <https://sites.google.com/noaa.gov/our-nws/home>

L13 <https://app.smartsheetgov.com/b/publish?EQBCT=0f83997021c94afc8c843caef9b135d>

L14 <https://www.weather.gov/media/wrn/DEIA-Strategic-Action-Plan-2022-2026.pdf>



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service