

High-level Draft for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Fiscal Years 2022–2026 Strategic Plan

Mission

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licenses and regulates the Nation's civilian use of radioactive materials to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety, to promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment.

Vision

Demonstrate the Principles of Good Regulation (independence, openness, efficiency, clarity, and reliability) in performing our mission.

Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1: Ensure the safe and secure use of radioactive materials

The Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, is the fundamental U.S. law establishing the development, use, and control of nuclear materials for both civilian and military purposes. The NRC was established by the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 for the purpose of licensing and regulating the civilian use of these materials. As such, the NRC is tasked with providing reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety, promoting the common defense and security, and protecting the environment. The NRC accomplishes this through day-to-day activities such as reviewing, issuing, and renewing power reactor licenses and amendments; overseeing the safety and security of power reactor facilities, including the storage of spent fuel; and licensing and regulating non-power uses of radioactive materials, such as industrial and medical applications of radionuclides. Although licensees and certificate holders have the primary responsibility for the safe and secure use of licensed radioactive material that they possess, the NRC establishes regulatory requirements, develops guidance, maintains continuing regulatory oversight, and, when necessary, enforces compliance with NRC requirements throughout the license term. For this goal, a successful outcome is one in which the civilian use of radioactive materials within the United States is carried out in a manner that protects the health and safety of the public and the environment, and promotes common defense and security.

Safety and Security Objective 1: Provide quality licensing and oversight of nuclear facilities and radioactive materials

The agency maintains technically sound and rigorous licensing and oversight processes commensurate with the risk of the regulated activity using information gained from domestic and international operating experience, changes to the threat environment, research, and lessons learned. The NRC monitors the performance of licensees to ensure consistency with our safety and security mission.

Strategies:

- Promote risk-informed decision-making to result in effective and efficient oversight, rulemaking, and licensing and certification activities.
- Maintain material safety and security through the National Materials Program in partnership with Agreement States.
- Uphold high quality standards and technical proficiency.

Safety and Security Objective 2: *Ensure regulatory requirements adequately support the safe and secure use of radioactive materials*

The agency continues to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its safety and security regulatory framework by promoting transformation through application of lessons learned, historical and contemporary data, and institutional knowledge. The agency's regulatory framework will be strengthened as the agency incorporates risk-informed performance-based approaches and revises regulatory requirements to account for insights gained from the use of risk-analysis tools while providing reasonable assurance of adequate protection of public health and safety and promoting the common defense and security and protecting the environment. The agency will develop the necessary regulatory framework to review novel applications and advanced technologies.

Strategies:

- Maintain and further risk-inform the current regulatory framework using information gained from operating experience, lessons learned, external and internal assessments, technology advances, and changes in the threat environment.
- Proactively identify, assess, and address safety issues, threats, vulnerabilities, and security risks.
- Leverage institutional knowledge, including that of Agreement States, to identify key areas of regulatory improvement.

Safety and Security Objective 3: *Maintain emergency preparedness and response capabilities for NRC and NRC-licensed facilities*

Readiness to respond to an incident or emergency and reduce the consequences (should one occur) are key elements for achieving the NRC's goal of safe and secure use of radioactive materials. The NRC emphasizes the integration of safety, security, and emergency preparedness as the basis for the NRC's primary mission of protecting public health and safety. The NRC uses risk-informed and performance-based approaches to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the regulatory framework that appropriately consider defense-in-depth and risk insights. These approaches ensure that multiple layers of defense protect against accidents and their effects to ensure that the risk to the public is acceptably low. In this approach, the agency does not rely solely on preventing emergencies, but also recognizes that provisions in approved emergency plans are included to mitigate the effects of emergencies, should they occur. Therefore, the agency must ensure that all licensees have effective preparedness and response programs in place to address an emergency. The agency must also ensure that

effective programs are in place for the NRC itself to respond to incidents or events at nuclear facilities.

Strategies:

- Ensure the NRC maintains its readiness to respond to incidents and emergencies involving NRC-licensed facilities and radioactive materials, other events of domestic and international interest, and public health emergencies or other emergencies involving NRC's facilities and workforce.
- Ensure licensees have programs and plans in place to enable an NRC finding of reasonable assurance that adequate protective measures can and will be taken in the event of a radiological emergency.

Goal 2: *Continue to foster a healthy organization*

A focus on organizational health is necessary to foster the agency's ability to carry out its mission. A healthy organization provides the capacity and capability to enhance the agency's culture, organizational learning, business practices, and strategic management to prepare for an evolving future. Continual improvement in these areas enables the NRC to enhance stewardship of resources, technology, and the workforce to improve performance in achieving its mission. In addition, this will continue to facilitate the NRC's transformation vision to be a more, modern risk-informed regulator.

A successful outcome of this goal results in an organization and infrastructure that facilitates continuous learning and innovation, knowledge management, diversity and inclusion, technology adoption, and strategic planning, which in turn inspires our workforce. Positive results include a culture that creates a sense of belonging, promotes and sustains a strong safety culture, fosters creativity and innovation, connects vision with action, and continuously adapts and strives to be a healthy organization.

Organizational Dynamics Objective 1: Foster an organizational culture in which the workforce is engaged, adaptable, receptive to change, and makes high quality and timely decisions

As the NRC adapts to new technologies, changes in the industry, workspace changes, and agency transformation and innovation efforts, the agency continues to invest in its staff with a focus on inclusion and excellence. The NRC strives for an environment in which everyone is engaged and accountable for creating a healthy and inclusive culture that embraces diversity and enables everyone to excel. The NRC encourages staff to look for opportunities to implement transformative and innovative ideas and remain agile in its work.

Strategies:

- Maintain a high-performing, diverse, engaged, and agile workforce supported by a healthy organizational culture with focus on safety, security, and continuous improvement to meet mission needs.
- Continue to transform into a more modern, risk-informed regulator that keeps pace with technological innovations.

- Promote innovation and development of new ideas by the NRC workforce.
- Promote an organizational culture that embraces inclusion by recognizing the importance of a diverse workforce.
- Recognize and act on the obligation to inform the agency's decisions by weighing diverse and competing staff perspectives, having respect for self and for others, being open-minded and inquisitive, and using all available processes to address differences of opinion.

Organizational Dynamics Objective 2: *Enable the workforce to carry out the agency's mission by leveraging modern technology, innovation, and knowledge management to support data-driven decisions in an evolving regulatory landscape.*

Modernizing our technology and increasing staff access to information is central to maximizing the capability of the workforce, expanding the agency's ability to attract the best talent, and facilitating timely and high-quality regulatory decisions. Technologies will enhance the NRC's ability to capture critical insights and more effectively transfer important regulatory knowledge.

The NRC's approach focuses on modernizing information technology (IT) tools and systems, improving business processes, enhancing access to data for more risk-informed decision making, modernizing the NRC's network, and improving stakeholder experience.

Strategies:

- Recognize and act on current and future IT needs to effectively carry out the NRC's mission.
- Ensure the NRC's data strategy is effective to enhance access and use of internal and external data for decision-making.
- Introduce new technologies to enhance decision-making, improve knowledge management, and accelerate innovation in our regulatory activities.

Organizational Dynamics Objective 3: *Attract, develop, and maintain a high-performing, diverse, engaged, and flexible workforce with the skills needed to carry out the NRC's mission now and in the future.*

The agency realizes that to attract, develop, and maintain highly skilled and educated professionals, the agency must provide access to the tools to perform their jobs and a workplace that promotes strong employee engagement. The NRC's approach for this objective focuses on ensuring that the NRC has a highly trained workforce that is knowledgeable of regulatory processes that govern agency actions and the regulatory principles inherent in making the agency a strong and independent regulator.

Strategies:

- Ensure the agency has the right people with the right skillsets to achieve the agency's goals now and for the future by integrating results of strategic workforce planning into our hiring activities, enhancing recruiting efforts, and streamlining hiring practices.

- Maintain a high-performing, inclusive, and engaged workforce by rewarding high performers, enhancing career paths, promoting diversity, and creating a continual learning culture with cross-training opportunities for career advancement.
- Improve knowledge management by identifying and capturing critical information and leveraging the agency's investment in modern information management and technology to enhance information accessibility and searchability.
- Improve performance and productivity by investing in management training and accountability, and encouraging leadership development.

Goal 3: Inspire stakeholder confidence in the NRC

To be successful, the NRC must not only excel in carrying out its mission but must do so in a manner that inspires confidence. The NRC strives to promote transparency in its regulatory activities, provide opportunities for candid and meaningful public participation, and demonstrate that the agency is a capable, independent, trustworthy, and objective regulator. Confidence in the NRC and engagement from stakeholders is enhanced when the agency consistently carries out its mission in an effective, timely, disciplined, and open manner.

To achieve this goal, the NRC must be viewed as an independent, open, and reliable regulator. This will be accomplished by providing stakeholders with clear and accurate information about, and a meaningful role in, its regulatory processes.

Stakeholder Confidence Objective 1: Engage stakeholders in NRC activities in an effective and transparent manner.

It is key to public confidence that the NRC engage with diverse stakeholders with a wide range of views and expertise, learn from them, and communicate in clear and accessible ways. The NRC's mission is carried out on behalf of the American people, which makes nuclear regulation the public's business. As such, it should be transacted openly and candidly to maintain the public's confidence.

Strategies:

- Foster proactive and meaningful interactions with States, Tribes, other governmental and nongovernmental organizations, the regulated industry, the international regulatory community, and other members of the public.
- Provide a fair and timely process to allow public involvement in NRC decision-making.

Stakeholder Confidence Objective 2: Use high quality data and information in the NRC-decision making process and ensure the information is available and accessible to interested stakeholders.

The agency strives to increase transparency in decision-making processes and decisions by increasing the quality, availability, and sharing of information.

Strategies:

- Engage stakeholders to ensure awareness and understanding of the NRC's regulatory requirements and decisions.
- Develop effective communication strategies to explain how risk and uncertainty are addressed and considered in the decision-making process
- Make information relevant to the NRC's regulatory activities available and accessible to interested stakeholders.
- Ensure that stakeholders, particularly members of the public that may be disproportionately impacted by the agency's decision, are aware of opportunities for public engagement in the NRC's decision-making processes.
- Ensure that the NRC maintains and publishes accessible and comprehensive information by transforming agency information and siloed databases.
- Leverage feedback received from a broad range of stakeholders in the agency's decision-making processes.
- Maintain a high standard of quality and clarity in NRC documents to promote confidence in the agency's work.