

# U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission STRATEGIC PLAN

## Fiscal Years 2022–2026

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the agency) is an independent agency established by the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, which began operations in 1975 as a successor to the Atomic Energy Commission. The NRC’s mission is to license and regulate 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. This strategic plan, covering Fiscal Years 2022–2026, provides the blueprint for the agency to plan, implement, and monitor the work needed to achieve its three strategic goals:

- (1) ensure the safe and secure use of radioactive materials,
- (2) continue to foster a healthy organization, and
- (3) inspire stakeholder confidence in the NRC.

The strategic plan also provides an overview of the NRC’s responsibilities and lays out how the agency uses data and evidence to inform decisionmaking to accomplish objectives and strategies to achieve the agency’s strategic goals.

The NRC’s overall responsibility is to protect public health and safety in the civilian uses of radioactive materials. It has the following main regulatory functions:

- Establish standards and regulations.
- Issue licenses, certificates, and permits.
- Ensure compliance with established standards and regulations.
- Issue adjudicatory decisions.
- Conduct research and risk and performance assessments to support regulatory decisions.

The NRC carries out these functions to regulate nuclear power plants, fuel cycle facilities, and other civilian uses of radioactive materials, such as nuclear medicine programs at hospitals and academic activities at educational and research institutions. The agency also uses these functions to regulate such industrial applications as gauges, irradiators, and other devices that contain radioactive material. The NRC also licenses the import and export of radioactive materials and works closely with its international counterparts to enhance global nuclear safety and security.

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# U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

## Description:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or agency), created by the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, began operations in 1975. The NRC’s mission is to license and regulate 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.

## Stakeholder(s):

### NRC Commissioners :

*The NRC is headed by five Commissioners appointed by the President of the United States, and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, to serve staggered 5-year terms. The President designates one of the Commissioners to serve as Chairman. The Commission as a whole formulates policies and regulations governing the safety and security of nuclear facilities and radioactive materials, issues orders to licensees, and adjudicates legal matters brought before it.*

### Christopher T. Hanson :

*Chairman*

### NRC Stakeholders :

*with an interest in a given NRC topic or activity*

### Members of the Public

### Public Interest Groups

#### Federal Agencies

#### State Agencies

#### Tribal Agencies

#### Local Agencies

#### Non-Governmental Organizations

#### License Applicants

#### Licensees

## Vision

In performing the agency mission, the NRC demonstrates the Principles of Good Regulation through effective, responsive, and timely regulatory actions, consistent with our organizational values and our open, collaborative work environment.

## Mission

The 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.

## Values

**Responsiveness**

**Timeliness**

**Openness**

**Collaboration**

**Effectiveness:** The degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result.

**Efficiency:** The degree to which the resources needed to produce an outcome can be minimized without reducing the outcome's effectiveness.

**Standards:** Technical requirements and recommended practices for any device, apparatus, system, or phenomenon associated with a specific field.

## 1. RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS

### *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 Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 established the NRC for the purpose of licensing and regulating the civilian use of these materials. Thus, 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 agency 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 and transportation 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 agency 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 public health and safety, promotes the common defense and security, and protects the environment.

#### 1.1. LICENSING & OVERSIGHT

##### *PROVIDE QUALITY LICENSING AND OVERSIGHT OF NUCLEAR FACILITIES AND RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS.*

Using information gained from domestic and international operating experience, changes to the threat environment, climate change impacts, research, and lessons learned, the NRC maintains technically sound and rigorous licensing and oversight processes commensurate with the risk of the regulated activity. The NRC monitors the performance of licensees to ensure consistency with its safety and security mission. As part of its regulatory responsibilities, the NRC must protect classified and sensitive unclassified information related to U. S. Government programs for the physical protection and safeguarding of nuclear materials and facilities from unauthorized disclosure.

##### **Stakeholder(s):**

##### **CONTRIBUTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES :**

*Inspection Programs, Enforcement Program, Allegation Program, Integrated Materials Performance Evaluation Program, National Materials Program, Operating Experience Program, Research Program,*

*Operator Licensing Program, Decommissioning Program, Nuclear Material Cask/Package Certification, Event Assessment, Accident Sequence Precursor Program, Reactor Oversight Process, and Construction Reactor Oversight Process*

##### 1.1.1. Decisionmaking

*Promote risk-informed decisionmaking to result in effective and efficient oversight, rulemaking, and licensing and certification activities.*

##### 1.1.2. Material Safety

*Maintain material safety and security through the National Materials Program in partnership with Agreement States.*

### 1.1.3. Standards & Proficiency

*Uphold high quality standards and technical proficiency.*

### 1.1.4. Sensitive Information

*Ensure that programs for the handling and control of classified and sensitive unclassified information are effectively implemented at the NRC and at licensed facilities.*

### 1.1.5. Climate Change

*Ensure that licensees have measures to address the potential for increased risk due to climate change.*

## 1.2. RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS

*ENSURE THAT REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS ADEQUATELY SUPPORT THE SAFE AND SECURE USE OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS.*

The NRC continues to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its safety and security regulatory framework through application of lessons learned, historical and contemporary data, and institutional knowledge. The NRC's regulatory framework will be strengthened as it incorporates risk-informed performance-based approaches and revises regulatory requirements based on insights gained from the use of risk-analysis tools while fulfilling its mission. The agency will develop the regulatory framework to review novel applications and advanced technologies required by NEIMA.

#### **Stakeholder(s):**

#### **CONTRIBUTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES :**

*Rulemaking Process, Generic Communications, Operating Experience Program, Inspection Programs, and National Materials Program*

### 1.2.1. Regulatory Framework

*Maintain and further risk-inform the current regulatory framework using information gained from operating experience, lessons learned, external and internal assessments, technology advances, research activities, and changes in the threat environment.*

### 1.2.2. Threats, Vulnerabilities & Risks

*Proactively identify, assess, and address safety issues, threats, vulnerabilities, and security risks.*

### 1.2.3. Institutional Knowledge

*Leverage institutional knowledge, including that of Agreement States, to identify key areas of regulatory improvement.*

### 1.3. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

#### *MAINTAIN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE CAPABILITIES FOR NRC AND NRC-LICENSED FACILITIES.*

Readiness to respond to an incident or emergency and reduce the consequences if one occurs is a key element in 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 agency's primary mission of adequately 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 considers 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 NRC 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 NRC must ensure that all licensees have effective preparedness and response programs in place to address an emergency. The NRC must also ensure that effective programs are in place for the NRC itself to respond to incidents or events at nuclear facilities.

#### **Stakeholder(s):**

#### **CONTRIBUTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES :**

*Force-on-Force Program, Incident Response Program, Emergency Preparedness Programs, Inspec-*

*tion Programs, Operating Experience Program, and Reactor Oversight Process*

#### 1.3.1. Readiness

*Ensure that 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.*

#### 1.3.2. Programs & Plans

*Ensure that 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.*

#### **Stakeholder(s):**

**Licensees**

## 2. ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

### *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. As a modern, risk-informed regulator, the NRC will achieve mission excellence in a diverse, inclusive and innovative environment with a highly skilled, adaptable, and engaged workforce.

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 the NRC's 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.

#### 2.1. CULTURE

*FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN WHICH THE WORKFORCE IS ENGAGED, ADAPTABLE, AND RECEPTIVE TO CHANGE AND MAKES DATA-DRIVEN AND EVIDENCE-BASED DECISIONS.*

As the NRC adapts to new technologies, changes in the industry, workspace changes, and agency innovation, 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.

##### **Stakeholder(s):**

##### **CONTRIBUTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES :**

*Staff Surveys (e.g., Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, Office of the Inspector General Safety Culture and Climate Survey, Pulse Survey), All-Employee and*

*Town Hall Meetings, Employee Suggestion Programs, Innovate NRC, Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network, Embrace NRC, Affirmative Employment and Diversity Management Program, Culture Initiative, and Work Life Programs*

##### 2.1.1. Workforce

*Maintain a high-performing, diverse, engaged, and agile workforce supported by a healthy organizational culture with a focus on safety, security, and continuous improvement to meet mission needs.*

##### 2.1.2. Excellence

*Continue to achieve mission excellence as a modern, risk-informed regulator that keeps pace with technological innovations.*

##### 2.1.3. Ideation & Innovation

*Promote innovation and development of new ideas by the NRC workforce.*

### 2.1.4. Diversity & Inclusion

*Promote an organizational culture that embraces inclusion by recognizing the importance of a diverse workforce.*

### 2.1.5. Perspectives

*Recognize and act 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.*

## 2.2. TECHNOLOGY & KNOWLEDGE

***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 the agency's 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 tools and systems, improving business processes, enhancing access to data for more risk-informed decisionmaking, modernizing the agency's network, and improving stakeholder experience.

#### **Stakeholder(s):**

#### **CONTRIBUTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES :**

*Information Technology and Information Management Strategic Roadmap, Knowledge Management Program, Continual Service Improvement Plan,*

*Competency Modeling Project, InnovateNRC, Data Strategy, and Information Technology and Information Management Portfolio Executive Council Forum*

### 2.2.1. IT

*Recognize and act on current and future information technology needs to effectively carry out the NRC's mission.*

### 2.2.2. Data

*Ensure that the NRC's data strategy is effective in enhancing access and using internal and external data for decisionmaking.*

### 2.2.3. Innovation

*Introduce new technologies to enhance decisionmaking, improve knowledge management, and accelerate innovation in the agency's regulatory activities.*

## 2.3. WORKFORCE

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

### Stakeholder(s):

#### CONTRIBUTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES :

*Human Capital Operating Plan, Strategic Workforce Planning Process, Agency Annual Recruiting Plan, University Champions Program, Civil Rights Program, Affirmative Employment and Diversity Management Program, Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan, student and recent graduate pro-*

*grams (e.g., Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network, Honor Law Graduate Program), Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan, Leaders at All Levels Certificate Program, Aspiring Leaders Certificate Program, Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program, work life programs, Career Mentor Program, Supervisor Development Program, and Employee Journey Initiative*

### 2.3.1. Workplace

*Ensure that the agency is an employer of choice that offers a work culture and workplace environment that attracts and retains highly motivated employees, who are engaged, adaptable, high performing, and receptive to change.*

### 2.3.2. Skillsets

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

### 2.3.3. Incentives

*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.*

### 2.3.4. Knowledge Management

*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.*

### **2.3.5. Training & Accountability**

*Improve performance and productivity by investing in technical, professional, and management training and accountability and encouraging leadership development.*

### 3. STAKEHOLDER CONFIDENCE

#### 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 with stakeholders are 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 giving them a meaningful role in, the agency’s regulatory processes.

#### 3.1. ENGAGEMENT & TRANSPARENCY

##### 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.

**Stakeholder(s):**

**CONTRIBUTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES :**

*Public Reactor Oversight Program Annual Assessment Meetings, Customer Feedback Process, Customer Service Plan, Initial Web Improvement Plan,*

*Open Government Plan, Facilitator Corps, Freedom of Information Act Program, Agreement States Program, Federal and State Liaison Program, and Tribal Liaison Program*

##### 3.1.1. Interactions

*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.*

**Stakeholder(s):**

**States**

**Regulated Industry**

**Tribes**

**International Regulatory Community**

**Governmental Organizations**

**Members of the Public**

**Nongovernmental Organizations**

##### 3.1.2. Public Involvement

*Provide a fair and timely process to allow public involvement in NRC decisionmaking.*

## 3.2. DECISIONMAKING

*UPHOLD AN NRC DECISIONMAKING PROCESS THAT IS DATA DRIVEN AND EVIDENCE BASED WHILE ENSURING INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS.*

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

### **Stakeholder(s):**

### **CONTRIBUTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES :**

*Generic Communications Program, Open Government High-Value Dataset Identification and Submission Process, and Common Baseline Plan*

### 3.2.1. Awareness & Understanding

*Engage stakeholders to ensure awareness and understanding of the NRC's regulatory requirements and decisions.*

### 3.2.2. Communication

*Develop effective communication strategies to explain how risk and uncertainty are addressed and considered in the decisionmaking process.*

### 3.2.3. Information

*Make information about the NRC's regulatory activities available and accessible to interested stakeholders.*

### 3.2.4. Public Engagement

*Ensure that stakeholders, particularly members of the public who may be disproportionately impacted by the agency's decision, are aware of opportunities for public engagement in the NRC's decisionmaking processes.*

### 3.2.5. Information & Databases

*Ensure that the NRC maintains and publishes accessible and comprehensive information by transforming agency information and siloed databases.*

### 3.2.6. Feedback

*Leverage feedback received from a broad range of stakeholders in the agency's decisionmaking processes.*

### 3.2.7. Quality & Clarity

*Maintain a high standard of quality and clarity in NRC documents to promote confidence in the agency's work.*

#### **Administrative Information**

**Start Date:**

**End Date:**

**Publication Date:** 2022-07-01

**Source:** <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2206/ML22067A170.pdf>

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