

National Transportation Safety Board

Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Strategic Performance Plan



INTEGRITY ♦ TRANSPARENCY ♦ INDEPENDENCE

EXCELLENCE ♦ DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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Acronyms	s and Initialisms	
ASPP	Annual Strategic Performance Plan	
AS	Office of Aviation Safety	
FEVS	Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey	
FY	fiscal year	
HS	Office of Highway Safety	
MD	Office of the Managing Director	
MS	Office of Marine Safety	
MWL	Most Wanted List	
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board	
OCFO	Office of the Chief Financial Officer	
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer	
RPH	Office of Railroad, Pipeline, and Hazardous Materials Investig	gations
SRC	Office of Safety Recommendations and Communications	

The NTSB at a Glance

About the NTSB

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation—railroad, highway, marine and pipeline. The NTSB determines the probable cause of the accidents and issues safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. In addition, the NTSB carries out special studies concerning transportation safety and coordinates the resources of the federal government and other organizations to assistance victims and their family members impacted by transportation disasters. We also conduct safety studies focused on broader safety questions and topic areas. Additionally, we serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Our Mission

Making transportation safer by conducting independent accident investigations, advocating safety improvements, and deciding pilots' and mariners' certification appeals

Our Legislative Mandate

Maintaining our congressionally mandated independence and objectivity
 Conducting objective accident investigations and safety studies
 Performing fair and objective pilot and mariner certification appeals
 Advocating for safety recommendations
 Assisting victims of transportation accidents and their families

Our Core Values

Integrity
Transparency
Independence
Excellence
Diversity and Inclusion

About this Plan

The National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB's) Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Annual Strategic Performance Plan (ASPP) outlines our strategies to achieve agency priorities, promote organizational change, and improve agency performance. The FY 2021 ASPP provides stakeholders—the traveling public, the transportation industry, government agencies, and Congress—with a comprehensive view of our goals and objectives for the fiscal year. In addition, the ASPP draws a clear line from our mission through performance metrics and targets to our goals, objectives, and key performance indicators. The ASPP is guided by our FY 2020–2024 Strategic Plan and complies with the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 and the Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-11, Part 6.

This plan includes three new strategic goals: improving processes, improving products, and improving employee engagement, diversity, and inclusion. These goals are designed to improve the agency's operations, from investigative to support offices.

Figure 1 below shows our strategic goals and objectives:

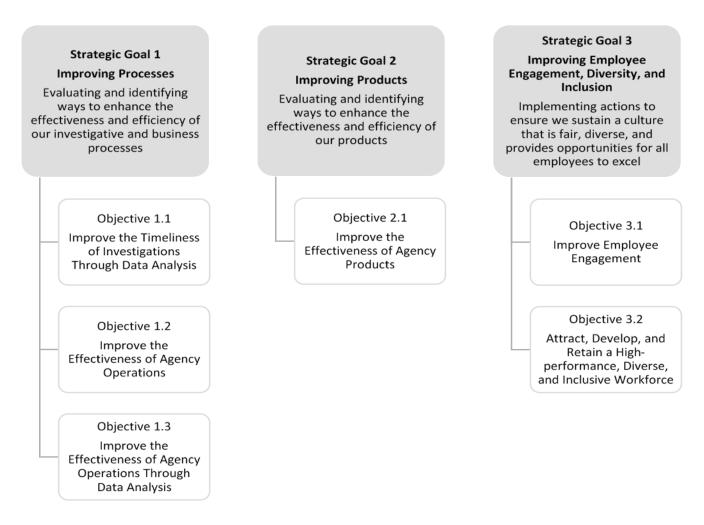


Figure 1: NTSB Strategic Goals and Objectives

The FY 2021 ASPP outlines our strategies to achieve agency priorities, improve efficiency and performance, and maintain relevancy with critical stakeholders.

Strategic Performance Management

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 and <u>Circular A-11, Part 6</u>, our strategic management process and performance framework starts with our FY 2020–2024 Strategic Plan. The yearly ASPP serves as the foundation for establishing long-term priorities and developing performance goals, objectives, and metrics that gauge our success.

We are optimistic that our results-oriented culture will continue to evolve and promote better governance in the future, leading to further improvements in transportation safety. The figure below depicts our cyclical process map of how we measure success.

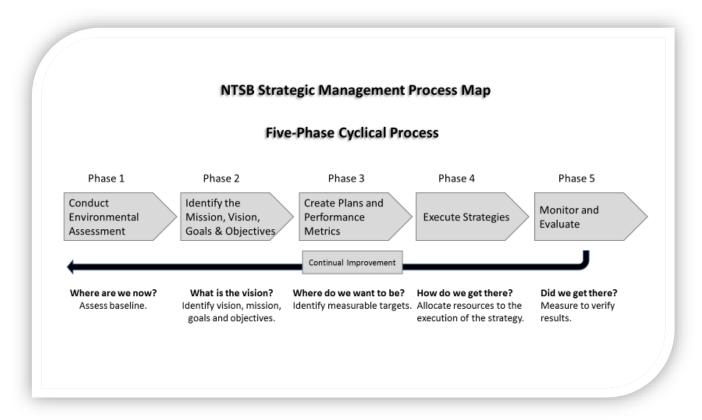


Figure 2: NTSB Strategic Management Process Map

Management Review

We use a quarterly, data-driven, strategic review process. The Office of the Managing Director (MD) coordinates these quarterly reviews, analyzes the data, and reports to senior leadership at various intervals throughout the year.

Data Management

Data management is key to determining performance outcomes. Currently, the data are reviewed and verified by the Office of Strategic Initiatives and are finalized with the Managing Director.

Measuring our Success

The FY 2021 ASPP serves as the foundation for establishing long-term and outcomerelated priorities and for developing performance goals, objectives, and metrics by which we can gauge our success. We have developed a performance-based culture on which agency management and staff have focused for the past several years.

We define our performance goals annually and evaluate our progress toward achieving them through performance metrics. We regularly collect and analyze performance metric data to inform decisions through quarterly reviews with senior leadership and staff. This focus promotes active management and staff engagement across the agency

As we continually improve this process, we will be able to demonstrate more outcome-related performance results and make the best use of the resources entrusted to the agency. We believe that our results-oriented culture will continue to evolve and promote better governance in the future, leading to further improvements in transportation safety.

Key Challenges Affecting Achievement of Strategic Goals

Our ability to achieve our strategic goals may be influenced by the changing balance of the transportation industry; by the activities of other federal, state, and local government; by shifts in national priorities; and by the availability of resources. Budgetary constraints, including fluctuations in appropriations, present a major challenge. Additional challenges include the Coronavirus pandemic, recruiting, retaining, and developing highly skilled and diverse staff, particularly when competing against the private sector.

Addressing Our Challenges

We address the challenges described above through effective long-range planning, open communication, and improved employee engagement. Long-range planning in human capital management and core operations ensures that we are ready to deal with future investigative needs. Effective communication at all levels of the organization improves planning and process. We

devote time and resources to thinking strategically, promoting employee engagement, and encouraging staff development. With the creation of our new internal agency website, InsideNTSB, we've established a broader communication tool for employees to stay informed and provide feedback to the agency.

To achieve our long-term vision, we must effectively plan and communicate while maintaining our primary commitment to improving transportation safety.

Performance Management and Reporting

Our strategic objectives support and complement our strategic goals. Each strategic objective has performance goals and measurable metrics and targets. Performance metrics use available data to determine whether our goals and objectives are met in the proposed timeframe. Targets keep us on track toward achievement. We review performance metrics and targets to assess program effectiveness and to consider how risks and opportunities may impact achieving our goals and objectives. This assessment allows the agency to adjust and improve performance throughout the year, as well as to re-evaluate the objectives and metrics, if necessary.

Table 1. FY 2021 Performance Metrics at a Glance

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective	Performance Metric
Goal 1: Improving Processes	1.1 Improve the Timeliness of	1.1.1 Study and Implement an
	Investigations Through Data	Improved Investigation
	Analysis	Timeliness Process
Goal 1: Improving Processes	1.2 Improve the Effectiveness of	1.2.1 Study the Effectiveness of
	Agency Operations	the Hiring Process; Identify and
		Implement Improvements
Goal 1: Improving Processes	1.3 Improve the Effectiveness of	1.3.1 Study the Collection and
	Agency Operations Through Data	Use of Labor Hour Data as a
	Analysis	Tool in Managing
		Investigations; Identify and
		Implement Improvements
Goal 2: Improving Products	2.1 Improve the Effectiveness of	2.1.1 Update Board Meeting
	Agency Products	Format
Goal 2: Improving Products	2.1 Improve the Effectiveness of	2.1.2 Complete Phase 2 of the
	Agency Products	External Website Update
Goal 2: Improving Products	2.1 Improve the Effectiveness of	2.1.3 Implement New Most
	Agency Products	Wanted List Methodology and
		Study Its Effectiveness
Goal 3: Improving Employee	3.1 Improve the Engagement of	3.1.1 Improve Employee
Engagement, Diversity, and	Agency Staff	Engagement as Measured by
Inclusion		Employee Surveys
Goal 3: Improving Employee	3.2 Attract, Develop, and Retain a	3.2.1 Complete Phase 2 of the
Engagement, Diversity, and	High-performing, Diverse, and	Strategic Human Capital Plan
Inclusion	Inclusive Workforce	
Goal 3: Improving Employee	3.2 Attract, Develop, and Retain a	3.2.2 Improve Agency New IQ
Engagement, Diversity, and	High-performing, Diverse, and	Index and Selected Diversity
Inclusion	Inclusive Workforce	and Inclusion Survey Question
		Scores

Strategic Goal 1: Improving Processes

Evaluating and redesigning processes—whether investigative or business-related—promotes efficiency and responsiveness. In accordance with the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 and the Office of Management and Budget's Memorandum M-19-23, we are increasing our use of data to allocate resources and achieve program objectives. Our increased capability in data analytics and access to new sources of data will help us improve our investigative and agency operations. For example, we are already seeing a positive impact on processes with our new multimodal accident database and its robust query tool. In the area of business processes, we continue to make strides in improving efficiency in our processes through the review of labor cost accounting and the hiring process.

Strategic Objective 1.1: Improve the Timeliness of Investigations

We aim to improve the timeliness of our accident investigations by applying data-driven tools and structured techniques that improve the investigative process. We will evaluate current investigation processes to ensure appropriate investigation scope and remove report review bottlenecks. A data-focused review of aviation and marine investigations and the use of our new investigative case management system has allowed us to better understand how to improve the timeliness of those investigations. As we learn from this process, we will apply the lessons learned to the investigative processes in our other modal offices.

Performance Metric 1.1.1: Study and Implement an Improved Investigation Timeliness Process

Table 2. Performance Metric 1.1.1

Offices	FY 2019 Result	FY 2020 Result	FY 2021 Target
HS, RPH	N/A	AS ARTP Implemented	HS & RPH: Study and
		MS D-Ramp Implemented	Implement a Timeliness
			Improvement Process

Strategic Objective 1.2: Improve the Effectiveness of Agency Operations

We will continue to review the effectiveness of key agency operations, focusing this year on the hiring process. We will assess the steps involved in the current hiring process to better understand the flow and interaction between Human Resource specialists and hiring managers. Data is critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and provides information for decision-making. We will collect qualitative data via a series of facilitated discussions. The results of this assessment will be used to develop process improvements and targeted training and/or guidance to improve the effectiveness of the hiring process.

Performance Metric 1.2.1: Study the Effectiveness of the Hiring Process; Identify and Implement Improvements

Table 3. Performance Metric 1.2.1

Offices	FY 2019 Result	FY 2020 Result	FY 2021 Target
Agency	N/A	N/A	Develop Agency-wide Hiring Process
(MD and AD			Recommendations
Lead)			

Strategic Objective 1.3: Improve the Effectiveness of Agency Operations Through Data Analysis

We will continue to review the effectiveness of agency operations by evaluating our many data sources. Data is critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and provides information for decision-making. Using the data maturity model, as prescribed by the <u>Federal Data Action Plan</u>, we will assess agency processes and will use the results of the maturity assessment to improve the usability of our labor hour data. We will review all phases of the current processes for potential improvements.

Performance Metric 1.3.1: Study the Collection and Use of Labor Hour Data as a Tool in Managing Investigations; Identify and Implement Improvements

Table 4. Performance Metric 1.3.1

Offices	FY 2019 Result	FY 2020 Result	FY 2021 Target
Agency (OCFO, MD &	N/A	N/A	Implement Recommendation Plan
RE Leads)			

Strategic Goal 2: Improving Products

The investigative and business products we develop are the keystones of our work. They are critical to ensuring our relevancy and are the primary sources by which the transportation industry, government, and the public understand that work. One improvement we recently made in this area was to standardize our investigative reports, bringing consistency to our investigative products across the modes and improving the reader's experience.

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 $^{^{1}\} https://strategy.data.gov/assets/docs/2020-federal-data-strategy-action-plan.pdf$

Strategic Objective 2.1: Improve the effectiveness of agency products

We will continue to review one of our most important means of delivering NTSB products: our public Board meetings. These meetings, required under the Government in the Sunshine Act, provide an opportunity for the public to see the actual deliberations between the Board and investigative staff regarding a draft accident report or safety study and serve as an important tool for advocating for safety improvements related to the accident being examined. The availability of webcasting and the rapid pace of news are causing us to rethink how we select accidents for Board meetings, as well as how those meetings are conducted. Studying the effectiveness of Board meetings for communicating with the public, industry, and lawmakers; advocating for safety improvements; and reaching those citizens affected by the tragedies we investigate will improve our use of that platform.

To best serve the transportation industry, the public, lawmakers, and those impacted by transportation accidents, we will refresh our external agency website and ensure compliance with the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act. This update will improve users' ability to search for and analyze data. The revised website will include a new query tool that allows users access to the full spectrum of public data related to our investigations. The website will more readily show the breadth of our work on such issues as fatigue, distraction, impairment, and other factors that cross modal lines.

In addition, we will review and evaluate our Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements (MWL) methodology and the procedures we use for developing this list and will provide an updated MWL and procedures. The MWL, developed in 1990 to call a greater attention to and encourage implementation of NTSB safety recommendations, identifies the top transportation safety improvements that we believe are needed to prevent accidents, minimize injuries, improve survivability, and save lives in all modes of transportation. The MWL serves as our primary advocacy tool for adoption of our safety recommendations since we cannot require their implementation.

Performance Metric 2.1.1: Update Board Meeting Format

Table 5. Performance Metric 2.1.1

Offices	FY 2019 Result	FY 2020 Result	FY 2021 Target
Agency	N/A	Board Meeting Criteria	Pilot a Board Meeting Utilizing Format
(MD Lead)		Developed	Improvements

² The 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act was signed into law in December 2018. The Act aims to improve the digital experience for government customers and reinforces existing requirements for federal public websites. <u>Digital.Gov</u>

Performance Metric 2.1.2: Complete Phase 2 of the External Website Update

Table 6. Performance Metric 2.1.2

Offices	FY 2019 Result	FY 2020 Result	FY 2021 Target
OCIO & SRC	N/A	Phase I: Search Capabilities	Draft Plan Completed
		Implemented	_

Performance Metric 2.1.3: Implement New MWL Methodology and Study Its Effectiveness

Table 7. Performance Metric 2.1.3

Offices	FY 2019 Result	FY 2020 Result	FY 2021 Target
Agency	N/A	N/A	Board Order & Operations
(SRC Leads)			Bulletin Completed

Strategic Goal 3: Improving Employee Engagement, Diversity, and Inclusion

Our highly skilled workforce is most effective when its members are motivated, engaged, and trained. Our work is better when we support a culture of diversity, awareness, inclusion, and mutual respect. Strengthening our human capital management program will attract and retain talent, especially in high-demand, high-skill areas. Within our workforce, we will seek to develop future leaders, foster high levels of employee engagement, and provide continuous learning and development. We will focus on recruiting, retaining, and training staff with the right mix of skills and expertise. Embracing diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect on all organizational levels allows every staff member an equal opportunity to contribute and succeed.

Strategic Objective 3.1: Improve the Engagement of Agency Staff

Employee engagement is key to our meeting our goal of becoming the number one best small agency at which to work in the federal government.³ We will gauge our success using the results from various employee surveys (administered via our intranet site) and the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). The FEVS includes questions that measure employee engagement and the relationship an employee has with his or her organization. The Partnership for Public Service recently conducted focus group discussions with NTSB staff to assess employee engagement, and we are implementing a number of actions as a result.

³ The <u>Best Places to Work in Federal Government</u> is administered by the Partnership for Public Service. Currently, we are listed as number 8 in the best places to work <u>small agency rankings</u>.

Performance Metric 3.1.1: Improve Employee Engagement as Measured by Employee Surveys

Table 8. Performance Metric 3.1.1

Offices	FY 2019 Result	FY 2020 Result	FY 2021 Target
Agency	N/A	Employee engagement	Baseline percent change in
(MD Lead)		questions selected and offices	selected employee
		began evaluation	engagement score
		-	

Strategic Objective 3.2: Attract, Develop, and Retain a High-performing, Diverse, and Inclusive Workforce

Our main asset is our workforce, and we will focus on managing talent as well as promoting diversity, awareness, inclusion, and mutual respect.

Revising our strategic human capital plan will allow us to build and maintain the effective, highly skilled workforce that is critical to the agency's future. This revision will focus largely on improving talent management: recruiting, retaining, and training employees with the right mix of skills and expertise to successfully execute our mission. The revised plan will describe the agency's leadership and workforce needs for the future and current strategies to meet those needs.

A diverse and inclusive workforce is critical to maintaining our high level of technical and business operations. We want every staff member to have an equal opportunity to contribute and succeed. Employee surveys—including the FEVS, which determines a diversity and inclusion index score—will allow us to better understand staff perspectives on diversity and inclusion.

Performance Metric 3.2.1: Complete Phase 2 of the Strategic Human Capital Plan

Table 9. Performance Metric 3.2.1

Offices	FY 2019 Result	FY 2020 Result	FY 2021 Target
Agency	N/A	Phase I: Workforce &	Draft Plan Completed
(MD Lead)		Business Plans Completed	_

Performance Metric 3.2.2: Improve Diversity and Inclusion as Measured by Employee Participation and Survey Feedback

Table 10. Performance Metric 3.2.2

Offices	FY 2019 Result	FY 2020 Result	FY 2021 Target
Agency	N/A	Diversity and Inclusion	Baseline Change in Agency
(EEODI Lead)		questions selected and offices	New IQ Index and Selected
		began evaluation	Diversity and Inclusion
		-	Survey Question Scores