

National Transportation Safety Board

DRAFT

Fiscal Years 2026-2030 Strategic Plan



INTEGRITY ♦ TRANSPARENCY ♦ INDEPENDENCE ♦ EXCELLENCE

National Transportation Safety Board

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About the NTSB

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in the other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

Our Mission

Making transportation safer. We carry out our mission by—

- Maintaining our congressionally mandated independence.
- Conducting objective, thorough, and timely investigations and safety studies.
- Deciding, fairly and objectively, appeals of enforcement actions by the FAA and US Coast Guard and certificate denials by the FAA.
- Advocating for implementation of our safety recommendations.
- Assisting victims and survivors of transportation disasters and their families.

Our Core Values

Integrity

Transparency

Independence

Excellence

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The NTSB Board

The NTSB has five Board Members, each nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate to serve 5-year terms. The President designates a Board Member as Chairman and another as Vice Chairman for 3-year terms. The Chairman requires separate Senate confirmation. When there is no designated Chairman, the Vice Chairman serves in an acting capacity.

Please visit the [“Organization”](#) page of our website for specific details on NTSB Board Members and agency offices.

Budget Authority

The NTSB receives an annual salaries and expenses appropriation, as provided by 49 [United States Code \(U.S.C.\) section 1118](#),. For fiscal year (FY) 2026, the enacted appropriation is \$145,000,000, which supports both personnel and nonpersonnel costs. Personnel costs—primarily salaries and employee benefits—account for approximately 72 percent of the budget and directly support the strategic goals and objectives outlined in this plan. We are aligning budgetary costs with our strategic goals and objectives to provide transparency into planning and resource allocation, as well as proactively identify and plan for the long-term investments required to achieve future mission outcomes.

To learn more about the current and past budget requests, please visit our [“Budget and Performance Reports”](#) page on our website.

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Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Annual Performance Goals

Table 1: NTSB Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Annual Performance Goals

Goal	Objectives	Annual Performance Goals (APG)
Goal 1: Improve Transportation Safety Using a Data-Driven Approach (Impact)	Objective 1.1: Modernize Data and Analytic Systems Objective 1.2: Enhance Stakeholder Experience	APG 1.1: By the end of fiscal year (FY) 2029, implement new solutions to improve how safety findings and products are delivered—such as interactive dashboards, application programming interfaces, or automated alerts—making safety information clearer, more accessible, and easier for stakeholders to use. APG 1.2: By the end of FY 2028, reduce the average time to deliver safety findings to stakeholders by improving data systems, automating processes, and standardizing analysis, making the information easier to access and use.
Goal 2: Optimize Agency Resources to Better Serve the Traveling Public (Efficiency)	Objective 2.1: Streamline Investigations for Greater Impact Objective 2.2: Transform Business Processes for Impact	APG 2.1: By the end of FY 2030, develop standardized accident data evaluation methods and analytic workflows across all investigation modes to improve timeliness and quality of investigations. APG 2.2: By the end of FY 2029, redesign high-impact internal business processes to improve efficiency and reduce process time.
Goal 3: Advance Transportation Safety Through a Resilient Workforce (Resilience)	Objective 3.1: Strengthen Our Workforce Pipeline Objective 3.2: Develop Talent, Drive Excellence	APG 3.1: By the end of 2028, establish and implement succession pipelines in identified critical workforce areas to ensure a ready and sustainable talent pool for mission-critical positions. APG 3.2: By the end of 2028, develop and train the workforce on key initiatives that enable mission success.

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Setting the Course for the Next Five Years

We are enhancing our performance management approach to guide long-term success, support data-informed decision-making, and align with federal priorities. In developing this strategic plan, we built on several key efforts—some ongoing, others completed—that have strengthened our ability to track our progress, drive results, and ensure accountability. These efforts reflect a commitment to continuous improvement, cross-agency collaboration, and compliance with federal performance management requirements.

We held two senior executive offsite and follow-up meetings to develop strategic goals and objectives that will guide the agency's direction over the next 5 to 10 years. Staff also contributed valuable input to help shape agency priorities and define what success looks like for this plan through three focus group meetings. These meetings helped us define strategies and ways to measure success.

The table below summarizes key agency planning and management efforts and illustrates their alignment with the President's Management Agenda (PMA) and Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Circular A-11, Part 6 requirements. Collectively, these efforts support implementation of this strategic plan and help ensure the agency's planning, performance, workforce, and operations remain aligned with government-wide priorities.

Table 2: Agency Key Efforts Aligned with Federal Priorities

Key Effort	PMA/OMB A-11 Part 6 Alignment
Align planning, performance, and workforce priorities • Advance skills- and merit-based hiring. • Use data, analytics, and artificial intelligence to improve productivity and strengthen workforce capability. • Streamline plans and reports to improve clarity, transparency, and efficiency. • Better connect performance goals to budget decisions.	PMA: Foster Merit-Based Federal Workforce • Hire the best based on skills and merit. • Implement all employee performance and accountability Presidential directives. PMA: Leverage Technology to Deliver Faster, More Secure Services • Consolidate and standardize systems, while eliminating duplicative ones. • Ensure secure, digital-first services that are built for real people, not bureaucracy. • Reduce wasteful processes through artificial intelligence. Part 6, Section 230: Strategic Planning Part 6 Section 280: Customer Experience
Engage external stakeholders • Publish a <i>Federal Register</i> notice to gather congressional and public input.	Part 6 Section 230: Strategic Planning Part 6 Section 280: Customer Experience

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Key Effort	PMA/OMB A-11 Part 6 Alignment
Coordinate with transportation safety partners and other stakeholders.	
Expand use of data and analytics - Use dashboards to monitor investigations, workloads, and performance. - Strengthen analytics to support staffing, hiring, budgeting, and operations.	PMA: Leverage Technology to Deliver Faster, More Secure Services - Consolidate and standardize systems, while eliminating duplicative ones. - Ensure secure, digital-first services that are built for real people, not bureaucracy. - Eliminate data silos and duplicative data collection. - Reduce wasteful processes through artificial intelligence. Part 6, Section 260: Data-Driven Performance
Strengthen performance measures - Focus on mission-centered performance measures that clearly show progress on strategic goals and objectives. - Align activities with the August 2023 Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit, NTSB Additional Actions Needed to Improve Management and Operations. - Continue addressing and reporting progress on GAO recommendations. - Of the five GAO recommendations, three have been addressed, (see Appendix A).	Part 6, Section 230: Strategic Planning Part 6, Section 240: Annual Performance Planning GAO Recommendation Follow-up
Apply enterprise risk management and program evaluation - Continue program evaluation efforts despite resource constraints. - Integrate risk management across agency activities. - Use evaluation and risk information to strengthen evidence, measure success, and address challenges early. - See Appendix A for additional information.	Part 6, Section 230: Strategic Planning Part 6, Section 270: Program and Project Management Part 6, Section 290: Evaluation and Evidence

Strategic Goal 1: Improve Transportation Safety Using a Data-Driven Approach (Impact)

To increase the life-saving impact of NTSB investigations, we will strengthen how we use data and how we share what we learn. By improving our data systems and analytical tools, we can spot new risks faster, identify safety trends, and support actions that prevent accidents. Using advanced analytics, including artificial intelligence, will help us evaluate information more quickly and accurately, leading to better and more timely safety decisions. Just as important, we will communicate our findings clearly and consistently, so safety messages reach the right people and lead to real change. This approach focuses on our key mission products, such as safety recommendations, safety actions, and public feedback, while aligning with governmentwide customer experience priorities. Together, these efforts will ensure our findings are easy to understand, useful, and actionable, helping make transportation safer nationwide.

Key Strategies

- Upgrade data systems to better collect and analyze safety information.
- Use data analytic capabilities and tools to detect trends, identify risk, and support data-driven decision-making.
- Share findings more quickly in ways that are practical and easy to understand.
- Use customer input and performance data to continuously improve safety information delivery and usefulness.

Objective 1 Modernize Data and Analytic Systems: Optimize how we gather, organize, and use mission data to increase its relevance and applicability. Enhanced data and analysis systems will help us quickly identify insights across systems, improve data quality, and enable more informed safety decisions.

APG 1.1 Modernizing Safety Information Delivery: By the end of FY 2029 implement new solutions to improve how safety findings and products are delivered, such as interactive dashboards, application programming interfaces (APIs), and automating processes, making safety information clearer, more accessible, and easier for stakeholders to use.

Objective 2 Enhance Stakeholder Experience: Implement innovative solutions to ensure our products are easier to understand, faster to access, and more actionable for stakeholders. This will drive meaningful improvements in transportation safety.

APG 1.2 Improving Safety Findings Delivery: By the end of FY 2028, reduce the average time to deliver safety findings to stakeholders by

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improving data systems, automated alerts, and standardizing analysis, making the information easier to access and use.

Strategic Goal 2: Optimize Agency Resources to Better Serve the Traveling Public (Efficiency)

To better serve the traveling public and the transportation community, we will better align our people, tools, technology, and processes so that we can work more efficiently and effectively. By improving how investigations are conducted across all transportation modes and simplifying internal business operations, we can reduce delays, increase consistency, and focus our resources where they matter most. Using shared best practices and modern technology will help staff work more productively and complete investigations on time. Together, these efforts will lead to faster results, better use of shared tools, and improved service for the public.

Key Strategies

- Standardize investigative processes using agencywide best practices while recognizing the distinct needs of each mode.
- Align technology investments to improve consistency, speed, and productivity.
- Streamline and better align core internal business operations—acquisitions budgeting, hiring, and information technology to improve efficiency and coordination.
- Develop new performance dashboards and data-driven metrics to track efficiency and outcomes.

Objective 1 Streamline Investigations for Greater Impact: Align investigation processes and safety data evaluation methods across all transportation modes to improve agency productivity.

APG 2.1 Strengthening Investigation Analytics: By the end of FY 2030, develop standardized accident data evaluation methods and analytic workflows across all investigation modes to improve the timeliness and consistency of investigations.

Objective 2 Transform Business Processes for Impact: Modernize agencywide business processes to strengthen operational excellence to better execute our mission.

APG 2.2 Streamlining Core Business Processes: By the end of FY 2029, redesign high-impact internal business processes to improve efficiency and reduce process time.

Strategic Goal 3: Advance Transportation Safety Through a Resilient Workforce (Resilience)

To maintain strong transportation safety outcomes, we will build a workforce that is skilled, adaptable, and ready to meet both current and future needs. By updating how we recruit and hire, we can attract top talent more quickly and reduce staffing gaps. We will also make sure employees have the right tools and up-to-date skills by investing in training, professional development, and career growth. These efforts will help employees succeed, stay engaged, and remain with the agency. Together, this approach ensures we have the people, skills, and capacity needed to carry out our safety mission.

Key Strategies

- Modernize recruitment and hiring practices to reduce time-to-hire, improve candidate quality and fill capability gaps.
- Strengthen strategic recruitment partnerships to expand talent pipelines.
- Expand training, mentorship, and professional development using the latest tools and techniques to build and sustain critical skills.
- Offer flexible career paths and growth opportunities to support employee and leadership involvement and retention.
- Use workforce data and feedback to guide workforce planning and developmental efforts.

Objective 1 Strengthen Our Workforce Pipeline: Recruit and retain individuals who bring adaptability, resilience, and a collaborative mindset, building a workforce that thrives in change, tackles challenges, and supports long-term mission success.

APG 3.1 Strengthening Recruitment and Retention: By the end of FY 2028, establish and implement succession pipelines in identified critical workforce areas to ensure a ready and sustainable talent pool for mission-critical positions.

Objective 2 Develop Talent, Drive Excellence: Promote continuous learning and targeted development to ensure workforce readiness and mission success. Sustain and grow core capabilities, build emerging skills, and train employees on mission-critical knowledge.

APG 3.2 Connecting Talent to Mission: By the end of FY 2028, develop and train the workforce on mission-critical knowledge and skills needed to strengthen performance, support operations, and enable mission success.

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Appendix A: Update on Government Accountability Office Audit Recommendations

Table 3: Update to the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

GAO Content Requirement	Extent to which NTSB met Requirement in FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan	NTSB Requirements Updated in the FY 2026-2030 Strategic Plan	Explanation of Evaluation	NTSB Update
Strategic goals and objectives	◐	●	The strategic plan lists strategic goals, but these goals are not outcome-oriented and do not provide the NTSB with the information needed to measure the effect its major program function (accident investigations) has on the agency's mission.	The strategic goals and objectives in this plan are outcome-driven and data-informed, with a clear focus on our mission, our workforce, and our impact on transportation safety and the traveling public.
Description of the strategies and resources required to achieve the agency's goals and objectives	◐	◑	The strategic plan describes strategies but does not describe the financial, technological, or human resources (such as additional staff or budget amounts) needed to achieve the agency's goals and objectives.	This plan defines strategies for each strategic goal that may be implemented over the next five years. These strategies are reviewed annually to assess their continued viability and alignment with agency priorities and available resources for each fiscal year. Resource requirements are addressed through the agency's annual performance plans and performance reports, which demonstrate the linkages between program resources, strategic objectives, annual performance goals, and the agency's most recent budget request. Any updates to strategies or resource alignment are reflected in these annual planning and reporting documents.

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GAO Content Requirement	Extent to which NTSB met Requirement in FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan	NTSB Requirements Updated in the FY 2026-2030 Strategic Plan	Explanation of Evaluation	NTSB Update
Description of how the agency's goals and objectives incorporate input from congressional consultations	○	●	The strategic plan does not describe how the agency consulted with Congress in developing its goals and objectives.	Although the draft plan was submitted to OMB and published in the Federal Register for public comment, the agency did not directly engage congressional stakeholders. For the current strategic planning cycle, the agency has strengthened its approach by consulting with Congress and OMB, engaging transportation safety partners, and continuing to solicit public input through the Federal Register.
Description of how the agency's performance goals relate to the strategic goals and objectives	○	●	The strategic plan does not include performance goals.	The agency has historically used annual performance goals to track progress toward each strategic objective and presented them in our annual performance plan and annual performance report. This strategic plan now includes high-level annual performance goals that describe how the agency will measure success over the next 2 to 5 years.

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GAO Content Requirement	Extent to which NTSB met Requirement in FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan	NTSB Requirements Updated in the FY 2026-2030 Strategic Plan	Explanation of Evaluation	NTSB Update
Program evaluations used to establish or review the agency's strategic goals and objectives, and a schedule of future program evaluations			The strategic plan does not include a schedule or plan to review strategic goals or conduct program evaluations.	The agency assesses goals and objectives during quarterly strategic reviews with senior leadership. Although we do not yet have a formal program evaluation framework in place, the agency recognizes its importance and, in the last fiscal year, reviewed evaluation practices across federal agencies to develop an NTSB framework. Given resource constraints, the agency conducts targeted program reviews as capacity allows us to meet the intent of formal evaluations. For example, a recent cross-office review of the new hire onboarding process applied core evaluation principles, reduced duplication, and improved efficiency and employee experience. These reviews support continuous improvement and help lay the foundation for more consistent evaluation practices.