

FY 2024 Annual Performance Report



Defense Nuclear
Facilities Safety Board

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Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board

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FY 2024 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Overview

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) approved a Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026 that established strategic goals and objectives for the agency. The DNFSB's FY 2024 Annual Performance Plan (APP) was executed in alignment with these goals and objectives. The FY 2024 APP focused on a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures. This FY 2024 Annual Performance Report (APR) presents agency outcomes described in narrative fashion after each strategic objective. Data is included where relevant and appropriate.

This report is issued in accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 1115(b) for agency performance plans and § 1116 for agency reporting and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11. This report is also issued in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 4312 and 5 C.F.R. § 308 for including organizational performance in the Senior Executive Service performance management system.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Board shall be to provide independent analysis, advice, and recommendations to the Secretary of Energy to inform the Secretary, in the role of the Secretary as operator and regulator of the defense nuclear facilities of the Department of Energy, in providing adequate protection of public health and safety at such defense nuclear facilities, including with respect to the health and safety of employees and contractors at such facilities.

Vision Statement

To secure a safe future for the American people through proven technical excellence and transparency that inspires public confidence as the defense nuclear enterprise evolves.

Organizational Structure

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board is an independent establishment within the executive branch of the United States Government. The Board, when fully staffed, is comprised of up to five Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed Board Members.

The Office of the Executive Director of Operations oversees the Agency's administrative and technical operations, provides direct Board support, manages congressional, public, and intergovernmental affairs, and leads the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity program, among other duties. The Office of the Technical Director supports the Board by providing expertise relating to the design, construction, operation, and eventual decommissioning of defense nuclear facilities. The Office of the General Manager supports the Board by providing expertise in the fields of human resources, budget and finance, information technology (including cybersecurity), physical security, contracting, and records management. In FY 2024, the Board approved a reorganization plan that eliminated the Office of the General Manager and created in its place the Office of Administrative Services. This reorganization included elevating the agency's budget and finance and security functions; gaining efficiencies from the

increased use of shared services providers for agency business operations; and the establishment of the Office of Administrative Services to manage the remaining internal business operations. The Office of the General Counsel manages the agency’s compliance with all legal requirements and provides direct legal support to the Board, as well as to the agency’s other offices.

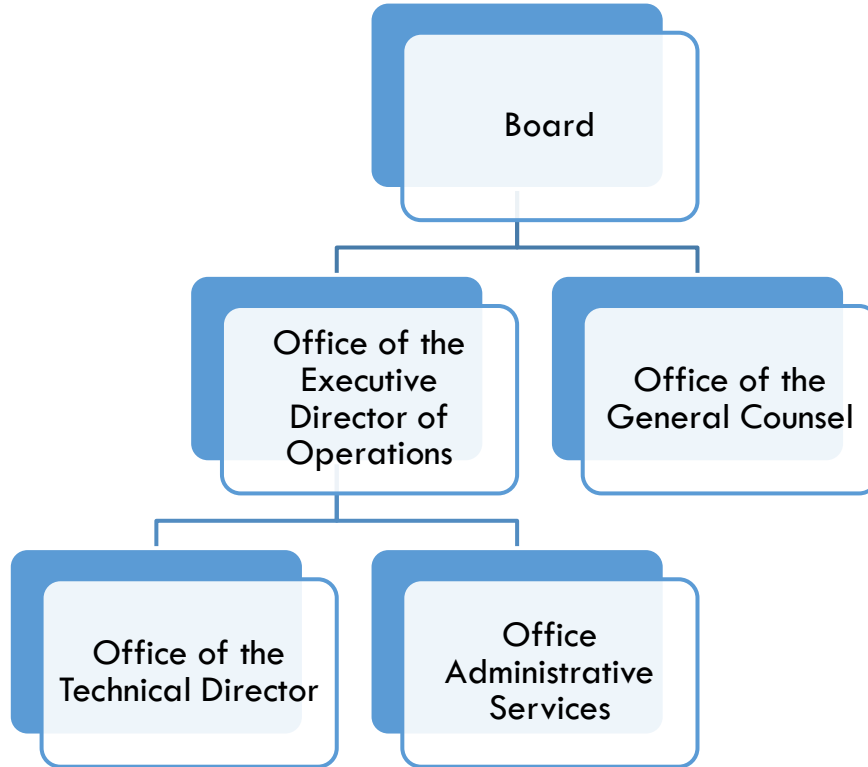


Figure 1. Simplified Organizational Structure - Major Organizational Units

Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Performance Summary (FY 2024 Annual Performance Plan)

The DNFSB’s Strategic Plan for FY 2022–2026 sets forth a broad vision of how the Board will fulfill its statutory mission to “provide independent analysis, advice, and recommendations to the Secretary of Energy to inform the Secretary, in the role of the Secretary as operator and regulator of the defense nuclear facilities of the Department of Energy, in providing adequate protection of public health and safety at such defense nuclear facilities, including with respect to the health and safety of employees and contractors at such facilities.” The FY 2024 APP is aligned with the strategic goals and objectives defined in the DNFSB’s Strategic Plan for FY 2022–2026. The APP performance goals are shown below along with a color-coded summary of the agency performance for each performance goal.

Met	Partially Met	Not Met
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STRATEGIC GOAL 1 Provide proactive and independent safety oversight of the defense nuclear complex.

Strategic Objective 1.1—Complete timely, high-quality safety reviews that identify and analyze safety issues and best practices, and search for similar challenges complex-wide.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
1.1.1	<i>Prioritize and execute reviews to maximize impact on safety</i>	
1.1.2	<i>Conduct cross-cutting as well as site-specific reviews, identifying safety concerns and best practices in work products</i>	

Strategic Objective 1.2—Develop and issue advice and recommendations designed to ensure safety and employ best practices within the defense nuclear complex.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
1.2.1	<i>Provide objective, timely, technically accurate, and compelling information to the Department of Energy</i>	
1.2.2	<i>Ensure the Department of Energy has enhanced awareness of site-specific and complex-wide safety issues</i>	

Strategic Objective 1.3—Provide robust field oversight of facilities and projects across the defense nuclear complex.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
1.3.1	<i>Identify site-specific safety challenges and analyze for commonalities across the complex</i>	
1.3.2	<i>Provide timely information to the Board, acting quickly on emerging issues</i>	

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Enhance transparency of ongoing agency initiatives and the state of safety within the defense nuclear complex.

Strategic Objective 2.1—Proactively sustain sound working relationships with relevant government and non-governmental entities.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
2.1.1	<i>Maintain effective communications with the Department of Energy at all organizational levels</i>	
2.1.2	<i>Maintain effective communications with Congress</i>	
2.1.3	<i>Maintain effective communications with relevant state, local, and Tribal governments</i>	
2.1.4	<i>Maintain effective communication with the public, including relevant advocacy groups and organizations</i>	

Strategic Objective 2.2—Improve timely dissemination of information about the Board’s priorities and conclusions regarding the state of safety at defense nuclear facilities.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
2.2.1	<i>Improve transparency through timely posting of the agency’s communications and public engagement</i>	
2.2.2	<i>Ensure that the Board’s work products are made available to Congress through proactive outreach</i>	

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Develop and maintain an outstanding workforce to achieve the agency’s mission.

Strategic Objective 3.1—Cultivate an agile workforce with the skills necessary to meet the mission.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
3.1.1	<i>Establish a multi-year, forward-looking staffing plan to inform budget requests</i>	
3.1.2	<i>Hire well-qualified, motivated individuals to fill vacant positions and to enable effective succession planning</i>	
3.1.3	<i>Ensure resilience in key functions in order to reduce mission vulnerabilities due to projected staff attrition</i>	

Strategic Objective 3.2—Use professional development and training to accomplish the mission efficiently and effectively.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
3.2.1	<i>Establish career path options and encourage professional development tailored to employee goals</i>	
3.2.2	<i>Provide new employees at all levels with resources needed to have an impact as soon as practicable upon entering the workforce</i>	
3.2.3	<i>Administer career management policies and practices consistently so that all employees have an equal opportunity for career advancement</i>	

Strategic Objective 3.3—Ensure the agency recruits from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure and maintain a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of U.S. society.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
3.3.1	<i>Establish, broaden, and/or strengthen relationships with organizations to be able to provide recruitment opportunities for women and other underrepresented minorities</i>	
3.3.2	<i>Improve outreach and recruitment activities to enhance outreach to diverse audiences</i>	

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Maximize the agency's performance by pursuing excellence in our culture and operations.

Strategic Objective 4.1—Pursue efficiency through continuous improvement of internal policies and procedures through testing and evaluation.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
4.1.1	<i>Establish policy statements that lead to mission outcomes consistent with strategic goals and objectives</i>	
4.1.2	<i>Ensure that the Board's procedures are consistent with strategic goals and objectives</i>	
4.1.3	<i>Ensure that internal procedures and processes reflect policy statements</i>	

Strategic Objective 4.2—Establish and maintain a culture that encourages teamwork and innovation across the agency in accordance with core values.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
4.2.1	<i>Institutionalize core values in all phases of employee experience</i>	
4.2.2	<i>Foster open discussions across the agency on important technical and non-technical topics</i>	
4.2.3	<i>Maintain a culture respectful of diverse points of view</i>	

Strategic Objective 4.3—Strengthen operational performance by modernizing agency’s processes and associated infrastructure.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
4.3.1	<i>Improve efficiency through increased information accessibility and common platforms, where possible</i>	
4.3.2	<i>Be responsive to user needs and/or support requests across all agency functions</i>	

Strategic Objective 4.4—Conduct ongoing communications to reinforce the commitment of all employees to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

<i>Performance Goals</i>		
4.4.1	<i>Communicate the Board’s commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and equal employment opportunity</i>	
4.4.2	<i>Implement training for employees to ensure a consistent understanding of the agency’s commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility</i>	

FY 2024 Annual Performance Report—Performance Detail

Performance Goal 1.1.1: Prioritize and execute reviews to maximize impact on safety.

Performance Measure 1.1.1: Align staff activities with strategic annual planning guidance.

Performance Target 1.1.1: Include and initiate three reviews in the DNFSB Work Plan that align with the strategic topic areas identified in the annual planning guidance.

Discussion: Performance Goal 1.1.1 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

During the annual work planning process, the DNFSB identified strategic topic areas that the technical staff should consider when proposing new reviews for FY 2024. These strategic topic areas included the following: aging infrastructure; implementation of contractor and federal readiness activities; National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) pit production design, construction, and operations; criticality safety; emergency preparedness and response; and federal oversight (including staffing that impacts nuclear safety). As a result of the work planning process, the DNFSB identified and proposed 11 new reviews that aligned with a strategic topic area. Of these new reviews, the DNFSB initiated 8 in FY 2024, which are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Safety Reviews Included in the DNFSB Work Plan that Align with Strategic Topic Areas and Started in FY 2024

Review Topic	Strategic Topic Area
Emergency Exercise Observations	Emergency Preparedness and Response
DOE Order 425.1, <i>Verification of Readiness to Startup or Restart Nuclear Facilities</i>	Implementation of Contractor and Federal Readiness Activities
Hanford Tank Farms 242-A Evaporator Restart	Implementation of Contractor and Federal Readiness Activities
DOE Order 151.1, <i>Comprehensive Emergency Management System</i>	Emergency Preparedness and Response
Electrorefining Readiness Activities	Implementation of Contractor and Federal Readiness Activities
Contractor Issues Management, Causal Analysis, and Corrective Actions	Federal Oversight
DOE Facility Representative – Safety Oversight	Federal Oversight
Savannah River Site Tritium Emergency Management	Emergency Preparedness and Response

Performance Goal 1.1.2: Conduct cross-cutting as well as site specific reviews, identifying safety concerns and best practices in work products.

Performance Measure 1.1.2: Complete high priority reviews and demonstrate flexibility to address emerging issues.

Performance Target 1.1.2:

- Complete nine safety reviews focused on DOE Environmental Management defense nuclear facilities.
- Complete nine safety reviews focused on National Nuclear Security Administration defense nuclear facilities.
- Complete three safety reviews that have broad applicability across the DOE defense nuclear complex, or at minimum affect more than one defense nuclear site.
- Complete three reviews focused on DOE directives and standards.
- Complete five safety reviews focused on defense nuclear complex infrastructure and projects, including new facilities and major modifications.
- Document all emerging issues that require the addition of a staff review resulting in a workplan adjustment.
- Ensure 90% of work products that represent completion of a review are provided to the Board within specified timeliness metrics.

Discussion: Performance Goal 1.1.2 is **partially met** for FY 2024.

During FY 2024, the DNFSB completed 9 safety reviews focused on DOE Environmental Management (DOE-EM) defense nuclear facilities, 10 safety reviews focused on NNSA defense nuclear facilities, 6 safety reviews that have broad applicability across the DOE defense nuclear complex, 9 safety reviews focused on DOE directives and standards, and 6 safety reviews focused on defense nuclear projects. The full list of these safety reviews is provided in Tables 2 through 6 below; the reviews are documented in internal and external staff reports, Board correspondence, and group weekly reports. Separately, all emerging issues that require the addition of a staff review resulting in a work plan adjustment were documented in the periodic Work Plan briefings to the Board and were generally included in group weekly reports. Finally, 83 percent of products (e.g., Recommendations, staff reports, Board letters) that represent completion of a review were completed within specified timeliness metrics. In summary, the DNFSB fully met 6 of the 7 performance targets associated with Performance Measure 1.1.2.

Table 2 - Safety Reviews of DOE-EM Defense Nuclear Facilities

Review Topic	Site
Oversight of the National Transuranic Waste Program	WIPP
105-KW Post-Sludge Basis Clean-Up Activities (Conduct of Operations)	Hanford
Oversight of the Tank and Pipeline Integrity (TAPI) Program	Hanford
INL Fire Protection Program Follow-up	INL
DOE Savannah River Operations Facility Representative Oversight	SRS
Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant Safety Management Programs	Hanford
Low Activity Waste Facility Readiness – Conduct of Maintenance	Hanford
Hanford Tank Farms 242-A Evaporator Restart	Hanford
INL Implementation of DOE Standard 5506-2021	INL

Table 3 – Safety Reviews of NNSA Defense Nuclear Facilities

Review Topic	Site
Device Assembly Facility Safety Basis	NNSS
Software Quality Assurance of Continuous Air Monitor System for Recovery Glovebox Line Startup	LLNL
Pantex Fire Protection Program	Pantex
LANL Glovebox Integrity Program	LANL
Pantex Final Probabilistic Seismic Hazards Analysis	Pantex
12-44 False Ceiling Replacement	Pantex
U1a Complex Fault Analyses	NNSS
Device Assembly Facility Lithium-ion Batteries and Uninterruptible Power Supply Systems	NNSS
DOE Standard 1212, <i>Explosives Safety</i>	Pantex
Approved Equipment Program Volume One – Nuclear Explosive Safety Master Study	Pantex

Table 4 – Safety Reviews with Broad Applicability Across the DOE Defense Nuclear Complex

Review Topic
Maintenance of Underground Cabling
Surplus Plutonium Disposition Fire Protection Strategy/3013 Container Fire Testing
Emergency Exercise Observations
Implementation of Aging Management Programs for Safety Systems and Supporting Infrastructure
Implementation of DOE Standard 3009-2014
Maintenance of Safety Related Batteries in the Defense Nuclear Complex

Table 5 – Safety Reviews of DOE Directives and Standards

Review Topic
DOE Order 425.1, <i>Verification of Readiness to Startup or Restart Nuclear Facilities</i>
DOE Order 251.1, <i>Departmental Directives Program</i>
DOE Order 151.1, <i>Comprehensive Emergency Management System</i>

DOE Handbook 1224, <i>Hazard and Accident Analysis Handbook</i>
DOE Order 414.1, <i>Quality Assurance</i>
DOE Order 435.1, <i>Radioactive Waste Management</i>
DOE Standard 1628, <i>Development of Probabilistic Risk Assessments for Nuclear Safety Applications</i>
DOE Order 421.1, <i>Nuclear Safety Requirements</i> , and DOE Order 420.1, <i>Facility Safety</i>
DOE Standard 3013, <i>Stabilization, Packaging, and Storage of Plutonium-Bearing Material</i>

Table 6 - Safety Reviews of Defense Nuclear Complex Projects

Review Topic	Site
WIPP Safety Significant Confinement Ventilation System Continuous Air Monitors Final Design Review	WIPP
Enhanced Capabilities for Subcritical Experiments Preliminary Documented Safety Analysis	NNSS
Requirements and Guidance for Construction Inspections, Tests and Acceptance Criteria	Y-12 and WIPP
Limited Procurement and Construction Activities Process	LANL, NNSS, and SRS
Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant High-Level Waste Facility Resumption of Concrete Placements	Hanford
Criticality Safety Evaluations for Design and Construction Projects for the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility	SRS

Performance Goal 1.2.1: Provide objective, timely, technically accurate, and compelling information to the Department of Energy.

Performance Measure 1.2.1: Identify and include both site-specific and complex-wide safety concerns in products developed through routine oversight and reviews.

Performance Target 1.2.1:

- Provide at least 20 pieces of written correspondence or safety information to be conveyed by other means to the Board for consideration for delivery to the Department of Energy.
- Ensure at least three of the reports contain safety issues that have broad applicability across the DOE defense nuclear complex, or at minimum affect more than one defense nuclear site.

Discussion: Performance Goal 1.2.1 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

During FY 2024, the technical staff provided a total of 20 letters with staff reports or technical content to the Board, each of which provided a detailed basis for identified safety issues. These reports are listed in Table 7. Of the reports provided to the Board, 11 contained safety issues that have broad applicability across the DOE defense nuclear complex, as noted in the table below. Lastly, in addition to these reports, the Board developed an [online repository](https://www.dnfsb.gov/aimi) of information for aging management, which included three technical staff generated articles. (<https://www.dnfsb.gov/aimi>).

Table 7 – Written Correspondence Relevant to Safety Provided to the Board in FY 2024

Review/Topic	Product	Broad Applicability
Analysis of Aging Infrastructure Benchmarking Report	Advice Letter with Enclosure	Yes
Facility Worker Protection for the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility Project	Letter with reporting requirement	No
Review of the 90 Percent Complete Documented Safety Analysis for the Device Assembly Facility at NNSS	Letter with reporting requirement and Staff Report	No
DOE Order 425.1, <i>Verification of Readiness to Startup or Restart Nuclear Facilities</i>	Letter with reporting requirement	Yes
FY 2024 Review of DOE Standards	Advice Letter	Yes
Software Quality Assurance of Continuous Air Monitors for the LLNL Recovery Glovebox Line	Advice Letter with Staff Report	No
Onsite Transportation Safety	Recommendation	Yes
Chemical Compatibility Program at LANL	Advice Letter with Staff Report	Yes
Review of the Pantex Fire Protection Program	Advice Letter with Staff Report	No
Draft DOE Order 251.1E, <i>Departmental Directives Program</i>	Letter with reporting requirement and Enclosure	Yes
LANL Glovebox Integrity Program	Letter with reporting requirement and Staff Report	Yes
12-44 False Ceiling Replacement	Advice Letter with Staff Report	Yes
Final Design of the Continuous Air Monitor System for the Safety Significant Confinement Ventilation System at WIPP	Letter with reporting requirement and Staff Report	No
Maintenance of Electrical Power Cabling in the Defense Nuclear Complex	Advice Letter with Staff Report	Yes
Pantex Recommendation 2019-1 Status Update 2024	Letter with reporting requirement	No
DOE Facility Representative Assessments at SRS	Letter with reporting requirement and Staff Report	No
Plutonium Storage Container Fire Testing	Advice Letter with Staff Report	Yes
Safety Posture of the Principal Underground Laboratory for Subcritical Experimentation and Associated Major Modification Projects	Letter with reporting requirement and Staff Report	No

Use of Lithium-Ion Batteries for Uninterruptible Power Supplies in the Device Assembly Facility at NNSS	Letter with reporting requirement and Staff Report	Yes
Hanford Site Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP) Low Activity Waste (LAW) Facility Maintenance Management Program Review	Advice Letter with Staff Report	No

Performance Goal 1.2.2: Ensure the Department of Energy has enhanced awareness of site-specific and complex-wide safety issues.

Performance Measure 1.2.2: Share best practices with the Department of Energy.

Performance Target 1.2.2: Provide to the Board three written staff reports that contain safety best practices for consideration for delivery to the Department of Energy.

Discussion: Performance Goal 1.2.2 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

During FY 2024, the technical staff provided 4 staff reports and letters with technical content that contain best practices that the Board communicated to DOE. These best practices are noted in Table 8. Also, as mentioned above, the technical staff developed three articles regarding aging management. These three articles contain best practices that were observed at various DOE sites.

Table 8 - Written Correspondence which contain Best Practices

Review Topic	Product	Summary of Best Practice
Maintenance of Underground Cabling	Advice Letter with Staff Report	Several best practices related to electrical cable maintenance.
LANL Glovebox Integrity Program	Letter with reporting requirement and Staff Report	LANL plans to incorporate best practices from the American Glovebox Society and other DOE sites to develop training and operator aids for glovebox operators.
Pantex Fire Protection Program	Advice Letter with Staff Report	Several best practices related to fire damper evaluation and documentation, fire suppression system maintenance procedure updates, fire hazards analysis preparation guide updates, suppression system freeze protection, high pressure fire loop monitoring, and fire department staff involvement.
Chemical Compatibility Program for TRU Waste at NNSA Facilities at LANL	Advice Letter with Staff Report	Triad personnel tape the terminals of all batteries to limit the possibility of caustic leaking during packaging efforts.

Performance Goal 1.3.1: Identify site-specific safety challenges and analyze for commonalities across the complex.

Performance Measure 1.3.1: Sustain oversight presence at an appropriate level.

Performance Target 1.3.1:

- Ensure on average, resident inspector positions are filled 80% of the time, including through permanent, detail, and temporary coverage.
- Resident inspectors will complete 80% of training within 12 months of onboarding.
- Ensure for sites without resident inspectors, cognizant engineers visit the site quarterly, including through permanent, detail, and temporary coverage.

Discussion: Performance Goal 1.3.1 is **partially met** for FY 2024.

During FY 2024, the 14 core resident inspector positions had permanent coverage 80% of the time. This percentage rises to 84% when temporary coverage by visiting staff is included. During FY 2024, one new resident inspector started, two left the agency, and another resident inspector transferred to a headquarters position. Two resident inspector positions are currently vacant. A candidate has accepted the DNFSB's offer for the vacant Los Alamos National Laboratory position and another candidate is currently reviewing the DNFSB's offer for the vacant Savannah River Site position.

Since the Field Operations Group was created, 13 new resident inspectors have been trained. During FY 2024, five new resident inspectors were in various stages of their first-year training. Four resident inspectors hired in late 2022 and 2023 completed their first-year training on time. Management approved a limited number of extensions due to classroom space availability and facility outages. A fifth resident inspector just began their training.

There are five sites without a resident inspector: INL, LLNL, NNSS, SNL, and WIPP. In FY 2024, there was a site visit in every quarter by the cognizant engineer, except for WIPP in the 4th quarter. This is because the WIPP cognizant engineer suddenly departed the agency late in the 4th quarter of FY 2024, and the available backfill could not schedule a site visit until the first week of FY 2025.

Performance Goal 1.3.2: Provide timely information to the Board, acting quickly on emerging issues.

Performance Measure 1.3.2: Share field experience throughout the Board.

Performance Target 1.3.2:

- Analyze at least five site-specific challenges for commonalities across the complex.
- Develop and issue weekly resident inspector and monthly cognizant engineer reports 99% of the time.

Discussion: Performance Goal 1.3.2 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

The resident inspectors conducted seven focus area reviews in FY 2024 looking for commonalities across the complex. Topics included inactive facilities, lightning protection systems, high efficiency particulate air filters, cold weather preparations, on-the-job training, transuranic waste facility controls, and human performance improvement initiatives. The results of these reviews were briefed with the Board, shared across the agency in the Field Operations monthly report, and discussed with DOE – EM and NNSA personnel.

Resident inspectors developed and issued weekly reports 100% of the time. Additionally, cognizant engineers developed and issued monthly reports 100% of the time.

Performance Goal 2.1.1: Maintain effective communications with the Department of Energy at all organizational levels.

Performance Measure 2.1.1: Board and senior staff engage with relevant senior DOE officials.

Performance Target 2.1.1:

- Hold discussions with the Departmental Representative at least 45 times a year and provide summaries of information to the Board.
- Hold discussions with headquarters DOE, Environmental Management, and National Nuclear Security Administration staff at least 55 times combined and provide summaries of information to the Board.
- Hold at least two discussions with the Board and the Secretary and/or Deputy Secretary of Energy, and three discussions with the Board and each of the NNSA Administrator and Assistant Secretary (or equivalent) for Environmental Management on high priority nuclear safety topics.

Discussion: Performance Goal 2.1.1 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

During FY 2024, DNFSB staff engaged at the senior staff level with the Department of Energy. The Technical Director and Deputy Technical Director met with the Departmental Representative 46 times in FY 2024 and the results of those meetings were briefed to the Board the following week.

Additionally, technical staff leadership held bi-weekly and periodic meetings with senior staff from the Office of Environmental Management, Office of Environment, Health, Safety, and Security, Office of Enterprise Assessments, and the National Nuclear Security Administration. These total more than 76 meetings combined. Technical staff leadership provided summaries to the Board normally within a week.

The Board held one meeting with the Deputy Secretary of Energy on January 11, 2024, and one meeting with the Secretary of Energy on September 10, 2024. Furthermore, the Board had two meetings with the Secretary of Energy's Senior Advisor on Environmental Management and four meetings with

the NNSA Administrator. Aside from formal meetings, the Chair had several conversations with the Administrator and the Senior Advisor over the course of the year. Communications are effective at the staff level and the communication channels work well when the Board needs to reach senior officials on nuclear safety issues.

Performance Goal 2.1.2: Maintain effective communications with Congress.

Performance Measure 2.1.2: Board and senior staff conduct periodic briefings to relevant congressional Members and committees.

Performance Target 2.1.2: Conduct outreach to congressional Members and committees on a quarterly basis on topics of interest relevant to the congressional Members and committees with an offer to provide briefings.

Discussion: Performance Goal 2.1.2 is **fully met** for FY 2024

During FY 2024, DNFSB reached out at least quarterly to offer briefings to key congressional stakeholders. Staff hosted twelve briefings with congressional staff and committees. These briefings were to the staffs of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees as well as the personal staffs of some Members. The Board conducted further outreach to congressional Members emphasizing the importance of having a full complement of Board Members and preserving a quorum on the Board.

Performance Goal 2.1.3: Maintain effective communications with relevant state, local, and Tribal governments.

Performance Measure 2.1.3: Board and senior staff conduct periodic outreach to the public, advocacy groups, and non-federal government entities.

Performance Target 2.1.3:

- Conduct outreach at least annually to relevant state, local, and Tribal governments.
- Promote advocacy group and public stakeholder awareness of nuclear safety oversight by broadcasting information via the agency website and social media channels.
- Make presentations, deliver speeches, and participate in 5 external events.

Discussion: Performance Goal 2.1.3 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB conducted outreach and met with the Navajo Nation, and the mayor of Amarillo to hear about their safety concerns and inform them of Board activities and issues. DNFSB Board members and senior staff made presentations and delivered speeches on nuclear safety oversight issues at over ten external events.

Performance Goal 2.1.4: Maintain effective communication with the public, including relevant advocacy groups and organizations.

Performance Measure 2.1.4: The staff and/or Board Members respond to requests for information regarding on-going or emerging nuclear safety oversight issues.

Performance Target 2.1.4:

- Staff or Board Members meet with at least two nuclear safety advocacy groups or organizations.
- Staff maintain a public contact form on the public website and respond timely to nuclear safety questions received from the public.

Discussion: Performance Goal 2.1.4 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB conducted outreach and met with interest groups during FY 2024. DNFSB conducted interactions with public groups including Board Member and staff discussions with the Los Alamos Study Group and Nuclear Watch New Mexico to hear about their safety concerns and inform them of Board activities and issues. Additionally, DNFSB staff responded to inquiries submitted by the public through the interest form on the DNFSB public website. The Board and staff conducted nuclear safety oversight presentations at several interest group seminars. During FY 2024, the Board conducted a trip to Minot Air Force Base to jointly discuss with a key stakeholder group the importance of the nuclear weapons program and to share information about the Board's role in nuclear safety oversight of the program.

Performance Goal 2.2.1: Improve transparency through timely posting of the agency's communications and public engagement.

Performance Measure 2.2.1: Weekly / monthly / annual reports are timely published.

Performance Target 2.2.1:

- Publish reports to Congress to the Board's public website within one week of transmission to Congress.
- Publish resident inspector weekly reports and cognizant engineer monthly reports to the Board's public website within four weeks of finalization 90% of the time.

Discussion: Performance Goal 2.2.1 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

Reports to Congress were published to the DNFSB's public website within one week 100 percent of the time. Resident inspector weekly reports and cognizant engineer monthly reports were published to the DNFSB's public website within four weeks 100 percent of the time.

Performance Goal 2.2.2: Ensure that the Board's work products are made available to Congress through proactive outreach.

Performance Measure 2.2.2: Timely notification to interested parties of press releases, public hearings, meetings, reports, and recommendations.

Performance Target 2.2.2:

- Provide proactive notification to Congress provided for press releases, public hearings, public meetings, and recommendations.
- Post notification of Board public hearings, public meetings, external briefings, and correspondence to the Board's public website within one week of final clearance.

Discussion: Performance Goal 2.2.2 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB issued eight press releases in FY 2024 and held one public hearing. DNFSB notified Congress prior to internet publication of press releases and in advance of the public hearing. Further, DNFSB posted notification of the public hearing, external briefings, and correspondence to the Board's public website.

Performance Goal 3.1.1: Establish a multi-year, forward-looking staffing plan to inform budget requests.

Performance Measure 3.1.1: Human Capital Plan that includes succession planning, workforce development, and career pathing, and values diverse talents.

Performance Target 3.1.1: Finalize agency Human Capital Plan (HCP) with Board Member approval and commence implementation according to HCP milestones.

Discussion: Performance Goal 3.1.1 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB developed a detailed Agency Human Capital Plan (HCP) incorporating cross-agency input. The HCP includes strategies on succession planning, workforce development, career pathing, and valuing diverse talents applicable to each office.

Performance Goal 3.1.2: Hire well-qualified, motivated individuals to fill vacant positions and to enable effective succession planning.

Performance Measure 3.1.2: Workforce planning and hiring that supports the Human Capital Plan, budget development, and Board direction.

Performance Target 3.1.2:

- Maintain staffing for FY 2024 at least at 90% (111 FTE (full time equivalent staff)) of the staffing level approved by the Board in the staffing plan (123 FTE).
- Establish an internal staffing plan for FY 2025 with projections through FY 2028 that is aligned to planned budgets and the Human Capital Plan.

Discussion: Performance Goal 3.1.2 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB successfully reached 112 FTEs in FY 2024 which was 91 percent of the staffing level approved by the Board. A draft staffing plan with projections through 2025 was presented to and adopted by the Board for FY 2024. This staffing plan aligned to the agency strategic goals and the priorities of the Board.

Performance Goal 3.1.3: Ensure resilience in key functions in order to reduce mission vulnerabilities due to projected staff attrition.

Performance Measure 3.1.3: Plan for mitigating risk from staff attrition in key functions through double-encumber, prioritizing backfill, cross-training, and other management tools.

Performance Target 3.1.3:

- Mitigate the effects of attrition in senior leadership positions.
- Prioritize hiring in critical positions.
- Utilize details or rotational assignments to temporarily fill critical vacancies.

Discussion: Performance Goal 3.1.3 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB used detail opportunities to fill SES leadership positions temporarily during vacancies in the Technical Director, General Counsel, and Executive Director of Operations positions. DNFSB secured additional resources in HR capabilities by contracting new HR staffing experts to help reduce time to hire and expedite increased staffing in FY 2024 and beyond. In addition, DNFSB invested in enterprise shared service support for position classification, employee relations services and advisory support to enhance hiring manager capabilities to improve work environments and capacity to fill new job opportunities in advance of full migration to additional HR operations shared support services.

Performance Goal 3.2.1: Establish career path options and encourage professional development tailored to employee goals.

Performance Measure 3.2.1: Training and development identified and development plans established for employees.

Performance Target 3.2.1: Ensure at least 90% of DNFSB employees have established or updated their individual development plan by July 31, 2024.

Discussion: Performance Goal 3.2.1 is **partially met** for FY 2024.

In FY 2024, individual development plans were mandatory for all DNFSB staff, including new hires. 83 percent of staff had development plans in place by the deadline. DNFSB secured authorization to hire a Chief Learning Officer (CLO) in FY 2024 and anticipates the CLO entering on duty by end of FY 2024. The agency's employee career path development initiative will be assigned to the new CLO to develop and implement FY 2025.

Performance Goal 3.2.2: Provide new employees at all levels with resources needed to have an impact as soon as practicable upon entering the workforce.

Performance Measure 3.2.2: Developmental opportunities for senior executives, supervisors, and staff.

Performance Target 3.2.2:

- Advertise at least two opportunities for staff development (e.g., long-term details or training opportunities).
- Capture equal employment opportunity data related to employees selected to long-term detail opportunities or training opportunities.

Discussion: Performance Goal 3.2.2 is **partially met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB efforts for training and development for career pathing continues to progress. The HR Division proposed an approved reorganization to include establishing and hiring a new agency CLO position dedicated to designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating agency-wide leadership, and technical employee career pathing, learning management and overall employee development matters. The selected CLO onboarded at the close of FY 2024 Q4, and will be immediately assigned to develop, refine, and implement enhanced senior executive, supervisor, and staff training programs for FY 2025.

The agency shares SES rotation opportunities published by the Office of Personnel Management. These advertisements include detail opportunities as well as vacancies across government. This list facilitates interagency executive mobility that helps DNFSB implement its Talent Management and Succession Management Programs to improve talent development, mission delivery, and collaboration. The agency has used detail opportunities such as rotations in vacant Associate Technical Director SES positions to provide leadership development for its technical staff. This development enabled staff to acquire key leadership experience through internal opportunities. In addition, the agency leverages use of no-cost and low-cost trainings in AgLearn Learning Management System on a variety of leadership and technical training subjects to benefit interested supervisors and staff. The agency has secured mandatory supervisor training scheduled for FY 2025 for all DNFSB leadership to complete, and staff routinely receive multiple notifications of various technical trainings to consider during the year from HR and hiring managers/supervisors.

No methodology has been established to capture EEO data for detail opportunities. DNFSB shall explore best practices and methods to capture this data in the future as new leadership in the agency Civil Rights Office and the new CLO projected to onboard later in FY 2024 gain this as a key assignment for future accomplishment.

Performance Goal 3.2.3: Administer career management policies and practices consistently so that all employees have an equal opportunity for career advancement.

Performance Measure 3.2.3: Develop an operating procedure or handbook to guide employees seeking career advancement opportunities.

Performance Target 3.2.3: Provide equal opportunity for career advancement through the announcement of all vacancies and create guidance for the staff.

Discussion: Performance Goal 3.2.3 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

The agency has issued a notice and professional development program handbook for future implementation. The agency has administered its career management consistently so that employees had equal opportunities within their job series. For example, all vacancy announcements for positions were shared internally so that staff could apply to open positions. Additionally, several management positions were temporarily filled through acting roles, allowing staff to compete for valuable developmental experiences.

Performance Goal 3.3.1: Establish, broaden, and/or strengthen relationships with organizations to be able to provide recruitment opportunities for women and other underrepresented minorities.

Performance Measure 3.3.1: Diversity recruitment efforts enhanced through community organizations, institutions, or other groups.

Performance Target 3.3.1: Maintain recruiting relationships (e.g., attend associated career fairs, share position openings) with at least three organizations that serve women and underrepresented minorities.

Discussion: Performance Goal 3.3.1 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

In FY 2024, DNFSB's Human Resources Division in coordination with the agency EEO Manager trained Office of the Technical Director hiring subject matter experts on recruitment and outreach best practices to multiple colleges/universities including Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU), Hispanic Serving College and Universities (HSCU), and an Accessible University. This initiative included at least 4 HBCUs and Accessible University sources for recruitment. The agency continued to leverage advertising job opportunities in traditional and electronic professional journals and outreach methods such as LinkedIn, Handshake, and Diversity In Awareness Magazine to reach broad audiences including underrepresented populations to market student and career opportunities at DNFSB.

Performance Goal 3.3.2: Improve outreach and recruitment activities to enhance outreach to diverse audiences.

Performance Measure 3.3.2: Enhance efforts to increase representation of persons with disabilities or targeted disabilities.

Performance Target 3.3.2: Establish and publish on agency website, instructions for persons with targeted disabilities to submit application materials for employment consideration with DNFSB through excepted service hiring authority.

Discussion: Performance Goal 3.3.2 is **partially met** for FY 2024.

The agency developed a Special Emphasis Hiring Authority Directive and Schedule A Operating Procedures to enhance outreach to underrepresented groups, women, and those with disabilities for future DNFSB employment consideration. This competitive and non-competitive placement program will be implemented fully in FY 2025 in coordination with the agency Civil Rights Office. Currently, on its Policies and Practices Hiring webpage, the DNFSB encourages individuals with disabilities to apply for employment with the agency. The DNFSB also reports on the percentage of its workforce identified with disabilities.

Performance Goal 4.1.1: Establish policy statements that lead to mission outcomes consistent with strategic goals and objectives.

Performance Measure 4.1.1: Policy statements and procedures revised to reflect the agency's strategic plan and policy statements for selected management practices developed.

Performance Target 4.1.1:

- Develop and issue two new policy statements.
- Initiate an update of front office and Board Procedures.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.1.1 is **partially met** for FY 2024.

Due to lack of quorum, the Board was unable to issue policy statements or Board procedures. The Board has revised several policy statements as well as an update to the Board Procedures and will be voting on them in the near future. The agency has issued updated EEO policy statements in FY 2024.

Performance Goal 4.1.2: Ensure that the Board's procedures are consistent with strategic goals and objectives.

Performance Measure 4.1.2: Revise the Board Procedures to focus on the Board's statutory responsibilities in accomplishing the agency mission.

Performance Target 4.1.2: Address Board operations in light of the loss of a quorum, and if restored, commence updating the Board procedures.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.1.2 is **partially met** for FY 2024.

The Board suspended the use of its Board Procedures upon the loss of a quorum of Board Members. Now that a quorum has been restored, the Board has revised procedures and will be voting in the near future.

Performance Goal 4.1.3: Ensure that internal procedures and processes reflect policy statements.

Performance Measure 4.1.3: Directives and procedures aligned to Board policy statements and other higher-level guidance.

Performance Target 4.1.3: Update at least 10 directives or operating procedures.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.1.3 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB staff issued three Directives, ten Operating Procedures, five Notices, nine Work Practices, and two Instructions during FY 2024. These updates align internal procedures with current laws, regulations, and Board policies.

Performance Goal 4.2.1: Institutionalize core values in all phases of employee experience.

Performance Measure 4.2.1: Core values are promoted in onboarding, training, and performance processes.

Performance Target 4.2.1:

- Ensure all new employees are trained on agency's core values during onboarding.
- Incorporate the agency's core values into all annual training materials by linking the training content to the values.
- Emphasize agency core values at 2 or more all-staff gatherings (e.g., All Hands or EDO Update) to advance awareness and implementation of the agency's core values.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.2.1 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB's core values are integrated into the two-day new employee orientation. For current employees, the core values are reiterated during scheduled All Hands and further emphasized in emails from agency leadership. The performance process integrates DNFSB's strategic goals and core values (integrity, respect, excellence, and independence) into all employee performance plans. All employee and executive performance plans have a mandatory mission-critical element that links to one or more strategic goals. Therefore, all Agency performance ratings, and ultimately the distribution of performance awards, reflect the employee's individual contributions toward DNFSB's overall performance and compliance with the Agency's core values.

Performance Goal 4.2.2: Foster open discussions across the agency on important technical and non-technical topics.

Performance Measure 4.2.2: Periodic open forums to discuss agency and related issues that may impact mission or staff.

Performance Target 4.2.2: Hold at least two-way all staff gatherings where at a majority of Board Members and one Office Director are present to solicit input from agency staff on important Board matters.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.2.2 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB held five all hands discussions led by Board Members and/or Office Directors. Additionally, Office Directors host weekly or biweekly open forums with their respective components to discuss office operations and related issues that may impact mission or staff.

Performance Goal 4.2.3: Maintain a culture respectful of diverse points of view.

Performance Measure 4.2.3: Utilize a culture welcoming of diversity.

Performance Target 4.2.3: Hold at least six special emphasis events highlighting the diversity of the DNFSB staff and supporting dialogue with diverse viewpoints.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.2.3 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB held at least six special emphasis events bringing the staff together to grow awareness of diverse points of view. Additionally, leadership reiterated the agency's dedication to a culture of respect emphasizing the core values.

Performance Goal 4.3.1: Improve efficiency through increased information accessibility and common platforms, where possible.

Performance Measure 4.3.1: Up-to-date platforms, systems, and software with interoperability, where possible.

Performance Target 4.3.1:

- Ensure agency compliance with Presidential memorandum M-2209, *Moving the U.S. Government Toward Zero Trust Cybersecurity Principles*, by executing required tasks outlined in Appendix B of the memorandum by established deadlines.
- Continue implementation of the selected enterprise resource planning system and integrate with existing DNFSB business activities by established deadlines.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.3.1 is **fully met** for FY 2024

During the performance period, the DNFSB continued to make significant progress with improving the security of the DNFSB's IT Infrastructure and systems. The agency is on schedule to meet the requirements of the Executive Order. DNFSB identified and selected an enterprise resource planning system as well as an automated human resource system that will manage the day-to-day DNFSB business activities and streamline human resources functions. The agency is on-target for its transition schedule for the enterprise resource planning.

Performance Goal 4.3.2: Be responsive to user needs and/or support requests across all agency functions.

Performance Measure 4.3.2: Knowledge transfer programs and information management that support archiving and retrieving information essential to mission and mission support.

Performance Target 4.3.2:

- Implement a new agency electronic records management capability by preparing and transitioning paper agency records to an electronic format.
- Implement accessibility standards for website content by ensuring that all new content posted is Section 508 compliant and make primary pages and core content accessible.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.3.2 is **partially met** for FY 2024.

DNFSB staff identified and initiated the procurement of a centralized agency records management system that will be compliant with NARA and FOIA requirements. The agency leveraged the expertise of NARA to examine its record holdings and prepare for transition to an all-electronic system. However, the agency deferred implementation of its planned transition to FY 2026. The agency is on track to upgrade its web content to a higher version supporting automatic accessibility tools.

The agency reviewed all documents for Section 508 compliance prior to posting on the public website in FY 2024. The DNFSB reviewed and ensured its primary web pages and core content meet accessibility standards.

Performance Goal 4.4.1: Communicate the Board's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and equal employment opportunity.

Performance Measure 4.4.1: All agency employees are informed of the Board's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and equal employment opportunity.

Performance Target 4.4.1: Hold at least six special emphasis events and provide information through newsletters, intranet, and email.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.4.1 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

The DNFSB informs all agency employees of its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, and equal employment opportunity through its internal website EEO information pages. The internal website was updated in FY 2024 with current information. The DNFSB posted on its internal website update policy statements for Diversity, Anti-Harassment, Equal Employment Opportunity, and the No FEAR Act.

DNFSB held nine special emphasis events demonstrating the agency's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in FY 2024. These events are widely attended and appreciated by participants as shown through active participation and engaging dialogue. The events are also recorded for agency employees to view if they missed an event.

Performance Goal 4.4.2: Implement training for employees to ensure a consistent understanding of the agency's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Performance Measure 4.4.2: Develop and implement practices that demonstrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) commitment from managers and senior leaders.

Performance Target 4.4.2: Develop and implement training on new Equal Employment Opportunity Directive and Operating Procedure for all managers and supervisors.

Discussion: Performance Goal 4.4.2 is **fully met** for FY 2024.

The DNFSB posted on its internal website update policy statements for Diversity, Anti-Harassment, Equal Employment Opportunity, and the No FEAR Act. All supervisors, managers, and senior leaders have performance elements requiring supporting the agency's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan consistent with governmentwide EEO requirements. Managers and supervisors completed mandatory EEO related training in FY 2024. Additionally, the newly established DNFSB Civil Rights Director position will lead a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Council (DEI-AC) with representation from all agency components to plan and promote future leadership engagement on DEI issues.

Other Information

Major Management Priorities and Challenges

For FY 2024, the Office of the Inspector General identified the most serious management and performance challenges facing the DNFSB:

1. Leading a healthy and sustainable organizational culture and climate;
2. Ensuring the effective acquisition and management of mission-specific infrastructure, including cyber, physical, and personnel security, and data;
3. Continuing a systematic safety focus in the DNFSB's technical safety oversight and reviews;
4. Recruiting, retaining, and developing executive and technical staff; and,
5. Elevating the DNFSB's public visibility and credibility and maintaining constructive relationships with the DOE and external stakeholders.

In FY 2024, the Board continued to ensure that it was staffed appropriately within its budgetary constraints to focus on its nuclear safety oversight mission considering changes at Defense Nuclear Facilities and changes within the Department of Energy's approach to nuclear safety. The Board held a public hearing to determine best practices for managing aging infrastructure to assist DOE with this challenge going forward. The Board has finalized a comprehensive human capital strategy to establish a workforce of the future that is inclusive, agile, and engaged, with the right skills to enable excellence in mission delivery. The DNFSB continues to increase its pipeline of highly specialized technical experts and promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

In 2024, the Board executed a reorganization of its operational support structure and outsourced substantial portions of its support operations to shared service providers to gain efficiencies in its

operations and leverage the expertise of those service providers. The agency continues a multi-year effort to achieve a best in government information technology and cybersecurity infrastructure that meets government-wide standards and defeats evolving cybersecurity threats. The multi-faceted approach will accomplish compliance with new requirements from the President and Congress, be compatible with a modern decentralized workforce, and provide flexibility and resilience in mission delivery.

The agency will continue efforts initiated in FY 2024 to mitigate risks from these challenges. The agency expects efficiencies gained from its modernization, automation, and leveraging shared services providers to support a continued focus on achieving its nuclear safety oversight mission.

External Assessments

The DNFSB participates in the Office of Personnel Management annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). The FEVS survey provides multi-year comparison of key indicators for measuring the health and culture of the agency in general. The DNFSB has improved in the FEVS results for 2023 (results are a lagging indicator due to the timing of the survey and the release of the results). The DNFSB had an overall Engagement Index Score of 83% with 83 items identified as strengths and zero items identified as challenges. Based upon the FEVS results, the DNFSB also moved up in the ranking of Best Places to Work in the Federal Government for Small Agencies to eighth place with a 2023 and index score of 78.2 compared to 69.7 the previous year.

To better understand and measure strengths and challenges to the agency operational culture, the DNFSB engaged with a contractor to assess its culture. This work continues as the contractor finishes small group interactions across the organization.

Data Validation and Verification

The DNFSB's leadership team reviews and validates the data and qualitative assessment information used to support the performance conclusions in this Annual Performance Report to ensure that the performance data included in this report are complete and reliable, as required by the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010. Progress toward measures and targets for each performance goal is monitored throughout the year. The progress toward each performance goal is reported to the Board and reviewed through quarterly work plan briefings. Data is collected or tracked within individual offices and divisions subject to the supervision of senior leadership. The Office of the Inspector General audits some operational programs, and data used to measure performance goals related to those operational programs are consistent with the relevant audit findings.