DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Air Quality Program Strategic Plan

2020 - 2025

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Table of Contents

Page

Air Quality Program Strategic Plan i

Message from the Program Manager 2

Introduction 3

About the Air Quality Program 3

Air Quality Program Mission, Vision, and Values 4

Mission 4

Vision 4

Values 4

Air Quality Program Goals 5

Goal 1: Inform smart decisions and raise public awareness and engagement through quality monitoring and analysis of air pollution and its impacts. 6

Objective 1.1 Inform smart decisions: Ecology collects and assesses air quality data to understand and characterize conditions in communities around the state. 7

Objective 1.2 Raise Public Awareness and Engagement: Ecology proactively shares easily accessible information and data so that people understand the benefits of clean air and are empowered to participate in reducing air pollution. 7

Performance Measures 8

Goal 2. Through permitting and compliance limit and reduce emissions to assure healthy air quality. 9

Objective 2.1 Successfully manage air pollution from industrial, commercial, and outdoor burning to ensure permits are upheld. 9

Objective 2.2 Increase communication, collaboration, and cross-training among air quality staff. 10

Objective 2.3 Build, coordinate, and implement information technology tools to assist with management of sources. 11

Performance measures 11

Goal 3: Cultivate partnerships and develop incentives to improve air quality in Washington. 12

Objective 3.1: Prevent non-attainment through partnerships that empower community actions. 13

Objective 3.2: Identify and engage ready and willing partners. 13

Objective 3.3: Support the needs of Washington's communities in improving air quality, with a focus on those that are most vulnerable. 14

Performance measures 14
Goal 4: Reduce Washington state's greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change. .15
Objective 4.1 Identify, collect, and verify robust greenhouse gas emissions data. 16
Objective 4.2 Provide information to policymakers and the public to develop current and future approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. 16
Objective 4.3: Implement a framework of statutes, rules, and programs that reduce greenhouse gas and transportation emissions and promote climate resilience. 17
Performance Measures 17
Goal 5. Enhanced outcomes through well-informed and carefully considered resource allocation and continual process improvement. 18
Objective 5.1 Program management cultivates and maximizes resources to improve air quality, increase program performance, and address emerging threats and opportunities. 18
Objective 5.2 Align program work force and funding with program priorities 18
Objective 5.3 Promote value added program processes that support prompt, high-quality internal and external service delivery. 19
Performance Measures 20
Goal 6. Excellent results through collaborative and engaged teams and leaders. 21
Objective 6.1 Make informed and timely decisions using the extensive expertise available in our program: Inclusive, timely, informed, and collaborative decision making at the appropriate level, which reflects the full impacts on the program, people, the economy, and the environment. 21
Objective 6.2 Collaborative Culture: Everyone in the Air Quality Program shares responsibility for creating and maintaining a collaborative culture. We work together to identify areas of needed growth and development; maintain a respectful work place environment that encourages creative thinking, innovation; fosters professional growth; and rewards effort. 21
Objective 6.3 The Air Quality Program is an employer of choice with a highly engaged and diverse workforce seeking different perspectives to ensure good decision making and embracing diversity as a source of great strength. We foster an inclusive work environment and smart ways to modernize the way we work while supporting a healthy work/life balance. 22
Objective 6.4 Empower staff by providing them with technology and training to excel in their work, leadership seeks to maximize available resources to provide staff with the best available equipment, technology and training. 22
Performance Measures 23

Program Manager's Message

To be added

Introduction

About the Air Quality Program

The Air Quality Program works to limit and reduce air pollution so that everyone living in and around Washington has clean, healthy air to breathe, clear views, and a healthy environment. We develop and implement regulations and permits, provide incentives, and promote education and assistance to reduce harmful emissions from industrial activities, burning, vehicles, and other sources. We also work to address the challenges of climate change by tracking and reducing greenhouse gases that are warming our planet, and preparing for climate change impacts that are unavoidable.

Overview of the 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan

The strategic plan provides a framework for the Air Quality Program's work over the next five years and will guide our progress toward reaching the program's vision. The strategic plan reflects and aligns with priorities from the Governor, Ecology's strategic plan, applicable state and federal laws, the program's mission and vision, budget, and other planning efforts.

The strategic plan provides broad direction for new and existing program priorities over a five-year period. Goals and strategies identified in the plan will be further defined, prioritized, and implemented in the program plan.

Relation to the Program Plan

The program plan supports the strategic plan by describing the activities over a two-year period that will be completed in support of the goals and strategies in the strategic plan. The program plan is adjusted to reflect near term priorities and changes based on direction from the Governor and the Legislature, changes in Ecology or program priorities and funding, and progress on activities and performance goals.

Air Quality Program Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

To protect and improve air quality in Washington State.

Vision

Clean healthy air and climate for all of Washington.

Values

- **People:** Our most valuable resource is people and their teamwork. We fully embrace and strive to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion. We support, develop, empower, and rely on people to the fullest extent. We respect diverse opinions, expertise, talents, and natures to build strong, well-functioning teams that reach goals.
- **Service Ethic:** We conduct business in a respectful, professional, and timely manner. We promote fair and equitable treatment and meaningful involvement of all Washingtonians.
- **Ongoing Innovation and Improvement:** We encourage and embrace creativity, new ideas, and continuous improvement.
- **Accountability:** We take responsibility for our decisions, performance, and behaviors.
- **Partnerships:** We foster open and honest collaboration that relies on the expertise of our staff, partners, and stakeholders.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** We share a responsibility to protect the environment for current and future generations for all Washingtonians.
- **Environmental Justice:** We conduct meaningful and inclusive engagement and prioritize highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations for the purpose of addressing inequities.

Air Quality Program Goals

The Air Quality Program has identified six goals in this strategic plan that further our mission and vision. The goals are not listed in a priority order. The goals include the following:

1. Inform smart decisions and raise public awareness and engagement through quality monitoring and analysis of air pollution and its impacts.
2. Assure healthy air quality by using compliance permit programs to limit and reduce air emissions.
3. Cultivate partnerships and develop incentives to reduce emissions.
4. Reduce Washington's greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change.
5. Enhance outcomes through well-informed and carefully considered resource allocation and continual process improvement.
6. Produce excellent results through collaborative and engaged teams and leaders.

Goal 1: Inform smart decisions and raise public awareness and engagement through quality monitoring and analysis of air pollution and its impacts.

To make sound air quality management decisions, Ecology needs reliable information on the amount and sources of pollution and how it moves in the air. Ecology tracks and evaluates air quality conditions across the state and provides information to decision-makers and the public to support actions to prevent unhealthy air and reduce risk and exposure. Below is a summary of the Air Quality Program's core work in this area. We:

- Work with local air agency partners to monitor ambient air pollution levels throughout Washington using rigorous protocols and quality assurance procedures to ensure high quality and accurate data.
- Ensure the accuracy and reliability of the air monitoring network and calibrate and repair air monitoring equipment.
- Develop emissions inventories to quantify pollution released by air pollution sources, and collect and maintain emissions data, evaluate trends, and assess the effectiveness of control strategies.
- Conduct meteorological and dispersion modeling to forecast the movement and concentration of air pollutants, carrying capacity of airsheds, interactions of pollutants, point of maximum impact of pollution, and to meet regulatory and permitting needs.
- Engage with partners, such as local air agencies, EPA, NW-Airquest, WRAP, WESTAR, and NACAA to share information and tools to advance our air quality understanding.
- Build our understanding and increase public awareness of air pollution public health threats, and provide information to the public on air pollution levels, trends, health effects, and options to reduce air pollution and reduce exposure.
- Publish information on air quality conditions and alert the public of unhealthy air so that people can take action to reduce their risk and exposure to unhealthy air.

The program has identified the following priority objectives, outcomes, and strategies for 2020 – 2025.

Objective 1.1 Inform smart decisions: Ecology collects and assesses air quality data to understand and characterize conditions in communities around the state.

Outcome – Sound Decision Making: The program and the public have the high quality information needed to make sound decisions that will lead to clean air and good health in Washington State.

Example strategies

1. Use advanced technology to improve our collection and analysis of air quality data.
2. Proactively maintain and build resilience in Washington's ambient air quality monitoring network.
3. Expand our ability to adopt and quickly deploy temporary air monitors and sensors to provide the public information on air pollution levels during wildfires and prescribed fire events.
4. Continue to improve our forecasting capability and adopt advanced technological tools for analysis.
5. Improve our ability to detect, quantify emissions, and evaluate risks to public health and the environment from emerging air pollution concerns and environmental justice issues, including from pollutants and sources that are currently not regulated or monitored.
6. Install an air monitor in Pend Oreille County to improve our ability to make better burn ban calls.
7. Improve our understanding of how pollutants move between the air, water, and soil with an emphasis on phase transfer of persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals with the greatest health threats to people, wildlife, and the environment.

Objective 1.2 Raise Public Awareness and Engagement: Ecology proactively shares easily accessible information and data so that people understand the benefits of clean air and are empowered to participate in reducing air pollution.

Outcome – An informed and engaged public: The people of Washington understand the adverse health, economic, and

environmental consequences of poor air quality and make behavioral choices that lead better air quality.

Example Strategies

8. Engage in multi-agency efforts to manage and reduce smoke and increase public understanding.
9. Publish smoke conditions and forecasts to reduce health and environmental threats from smoke and inform communities of potential hazards during smoke and wildfire events.
10. Maintain and improve air quality applications and improve data access (including access to air quality monitoring data on mobile platforms) and public education.

Performance Measures

- Percent of monitoring data that is valid.

Goal 2. Assure healthy air quality by using compliance permit programs to limit and reduce air emissions.

The Air Quality Program works to limit air pollution from commercial and industrial sources and to reduce health and environmental threats from smoke. Below is a summary of the Air Quality Program's core work in this area. We:

- Issue permits, conduct inspections, and promote compliance with state and federal air quality requirements for new and existing industrial and commercial facilities.
- Provide permit application assistance, technical assistance, rule interpretation, and permit review.
- Manage the Air Quality Registration Program to register sources of air pollution, provide tools to track and report their emissions, and conduct inspections for over 500 facilities and businesses located in Ecology's jurisdiction in central and eastern Washington.
- Work collaboratively with permittees for increased compliance.
- Issue permits to limit the impacts from outdoor burning.
- Develop IT applications to improve our ability to collect and analyze information and track compliance and manage regulatory requirements.
- Implement and enforce regulations and promote education and outreach activities to reduce health and environmental threats from smoke from outdoor burning and solid fuel burning devices.
- Make daily burn decisions and call air quality burn bans when needed to prevent unhealthy air.

The program has identified the following priority objectives, outcomes, and strategies for 2020 – 2025.

Objective 2.1 Successfully manage air pollution from industrial, commercial, and outdoor burning to ensure permits are upheld.

Outcome: Compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards, limit and reduce health problems caused by toxic air pollution, and greater consistency and coordination across the program.

Example Strategies

11. Develop procedures and guidelines for building consistency in working with commercial and industrial sources and issuing air quality permits through implementation of minor new source review guidelines.

12. Ensure that 90 percent of permits are completed within regulatory timeframes.
13. Seek and incorporate advances in science, understanding, and technology such as Best Available Control Technology reviews and emission factor updates in permitting.
14. Update and maintain the new source review regulations, complete an evaluation of our New Source Review fee structure, and begin efforts (rule-making, etc) to carry-out recommendations or outcomes of the evaluation.
15. Increase field presence and outreach and education efforts to reduce illegal burning with emphasis on technical assistance.
16. Increase our emphasis on critical core work and prioritize efforts to inspect sources, provide technical assistance, and work collaboratively with facilities to ensure compliance.

Objective 2.2 Increase communication, collaboration, and cross-training among air quality staff.

Outcome: Retain institutional knowledge, promote consistency among regions, and provide clear and increased communication among staff to improve customer service and promote better business practices.

Example Strategies

17. To build a strong inspection and compliance team:
    a. Develop stronger connection between Climate Policy Section and Eastern Regional Office and Central Regional Office inspectors to foster better relationships with permittees and improve compliance.
    b. Create a venue (workgroup, SharePoint site, etc) for inspection and compliance staff to promote collaboration and coordination
    c. Develop and meet inspection targets.
18. Create a plan and build capacity to meet air quality protection needs in San Juan County.
19. Develop and promote a peer review process among regions and headquarters for technically and legally defensible permits.
20. Support staff development of technical skills through training, job shadowing internally and with other local air agencies, and collaboration and communication with partner agencies.
21. Expand source test expertise and build program resources (checklist, trainings, etc.) to provide to source testers.

22. Provide information and resources on Air Operating Permit requirements and processes, and continue to engage and communicate with Ecology staff and partners.

Objective 2.3 Build, coordinate, and implement information technology tools to assist with management of sources.

Outcome: Reliable and effective systems are in place that allow us to manage our sources electronically that ensures accuracy and efficiency.

Example Strategies

23. Complete development of all Source Management System (SMS) phases (Registration, Permitting, and Compliance). Commit resources to populate and manage the system. Make improvements to user interfaces as needed.
24. Develop a modern burn permit database.
25. Engage with partners and evaluate developing or hosting a single website or source for information on burn bans across the state.
26. Improve and modernize permit application, tracking/databases, and electronic payment options to inform smart decision, provide more efficient services to our customers, and make information more accessible to our customers and the public on our website.

Performance measures

- Average number of days it takes to process Notice of Construction permit applications.
- Number of times fine particle pollution is measured above a "healthy" level.
- Number of residents exposed to air quality that does not meet healthy levels for fine particles.

Goal 3: Cultivate partnerships and develop incentives to improve air quality in Washington.

The Air Quality Program works to prevent unhealthy air and violations of health-based air quality standards, improve visibility, reduce health and environmental threats from smoke, and reduce health and environmental threats from motor vehicle emissions. Below is a summary of the Air Quality Program's core work in this area. We:

- Work with EPA, local air agencies, communities and tribes in designing strategies for preventing nonattainment and ensuring compliance with the NAAQS.
- Identify areas at risk of violating the NAAQS and conduct communications and outreach to each geographic area of concern.
- Partner with local air agencies, communities, and EPA to clean up areas that violate standards as quickly as possible.
- Work with EPA and local air agencies to update and maintain Washington's State Implementation Plan.
- Improve visibility in Washington's scenic areas and reduce regional haze.
- Coordinate with EPA and local air agencies and identify and respond to exceptional events.
- Protect public health and the environment from motor vehicle pollution, implement Washington's Clean Car standards, promote transportation alternatives and cleaner motor vehicles and fuels through voluntary, regulatory, and incentive programs, and replace or retrofit school buses and other diesel engines to reduce exposure to toxic diesel emissions.
- Reduce health and environmental threats from residential wood heating by implementing Washington's emission limits for new woodstoves, coordinating and communicating burn bans, promoting education and outreach on clean burning and alternatives, and providing grants and incentives for wood stove change-out and recycling programs.
- Develop and update Washington's air quality and climate rules and ensure alignment with state law and federal laws and rules.

The program has identified the following priority objectives, outcomes, and strategies for 2020 – 2025.

Objective 3.1: Prevent non-attainment through partnerships that empower community actions.

Outcome: All of Washington meets National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and communities have resources to improve air quality.

Example Strategies

27. Leverage the success of the High Wind Dust Mitigation Workgroup and support farm smart practices, direct seed, outreach and education, in partnership with the water quality program.
28. Identify possible partnerships within the Air Quality Program and other Ecology programs to pursue potential "co-benefits" (for example, the intersection between dust mitigation and water quality).
29. Attend Ecology Grant and Loan Group meetings and gain a better understanding of Ecology funding activities and opportunities.
30. Maintain leadership and working group check-ins with EPA region 10.
31. Assist local entities with technical needs and in identifying grant opportunities.
32. Develop a program-wide approach to promoting alternatives to burning.

Objective 3.2: Identify and engage ready and willing partners.

Outcome: Partners who are able to execute projects when funding becomes available.

Example Strategies

33. Build on existing relationships and invest in new relationships so that we are better able to develop new partners and grow existing partnerships.
34. Hold an annual conference with partners from local air agencies.
35. Build our understanding of local cultures and priorities, attend and participate in local events to understand local needs, and listen to and understand specific community needs and empower the communities toward their own solutions.
36. Recognize and value when partners are doing the best they can at being good corporate citizens, and build our understanding on what motivates our partners.

Objective 3.3: Support the needs of Washington's communities in improving air quality, with a focus on those that are most vulnerable.

Outcome: Washingtonians value healthy air and engage in air quality efforts and vulnerable communities have the resources and support they need to address air quality concerns.

Example Strategies

37. Offer incentives that bring prospective partners to the table.
38. Offer science, data, and analysis (and where possible funding) to help build the public's understanding of local sources of pollution and engage with communities to support effective and locally supported reduction strategies.
39. Understand and recognize where Ecology has control and/or influence (for example, permit authority, potential to assist).

Performance measures

- Number of areas measuring air quality levels that are not in compliance with federal standards.
- Percentage of population living where air quality meets federal standards.
- Tons of motor vehicle emissions produced statewide.
- Tons of diesel particulate emissions produced statewide.
- Number of diesel engines replaced or retrofitted with pollution control equipment.
- Number of woodstoves replaced with cleaner burning technologies.

Goal 4: Reduce Washington state's greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change.

State law sets limits on greenhouse gas emissions and establishes a portfolio of policies to track and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It also sets requirements to prepare for and respond to climate changes that are already underway and unavoidable. Below is a summary of the Air Quality Program's core work in this area. We:

- Develop a biennial statewide greenhouse gas emissions inventory to better understand the volume and sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the state.
- Manage the state's mandatory greenhouse gas reporting program for large sources of greenhouse gas emissions and collect and verify greenhouse gas emissions data.
- Provide technical and analytical support to state decision makers to help the state achieve its greenhouse gas targets.
- Evaluate greenhouse gas emissions trends, conduct forecasts, and evaluate the impact of reduction approaches in meeting statewide greenhouse gas limits.
- Design and implement mechanisms to track and understand greenhouse gas emissions.
- Design and implement emission reduction strategies, and monitor and influence federal initiatives that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Provide tools and assistance to state agencies and higher education institutions to identify and report their greenhouse gas emissions and develop strategies to reduce those emissions.
- Provide information about the climate to decision makers in the public and private sectors, as well as the public.
- Reduce motor vehicle emissions and prioritize reductions in disproportionately impacted communities.
- Replace or retrofit school buses and other diesel engines, upgrade exhaust controls, and implement idle reduction strategies to reduce exposure to toxic diesel particulate emissions.
- Invest in projects and engage with partners to implement Washington's Volkswagen mitigation plan and transform Washington's transportation system to advanced zero-emission vehicles.
- Promote regulatory, voluntary, and incentive programs and build strong partnerships to reduce transportation emissions and promote clean vehicles, clean fuels, and transportation alternatives.

The program has identified the following priority objectives, outcomes, and strategies for 2020 – 2025.

Objective 4.1 Identify, collect, and verify robust greenhouse gas emissions data.

Outcome: The program provides high quality reliable data on greenhouse gas emissions and identifies trends.

Example Strategies

40. Develop mechanisms to integrate the consideration of carbon sequestration capacity and track the state's progress towards meeting the stricter statewide greenhouse gas limits adopted in 2020.
41. Develop mechanisms and provide assistance to verify greenhouse gas emissions data to support information based decision making.
42. Track and increase compliance with greenhouse gas emissions reporting requirements.
43. Update the state agency greenhouse gas calculation tool and provide training and assistance to help state agencies and higher education institutions meet the new requirements adopted in 2020.

Objective 4.2 Provide information to policymakers and the public to develop current and future approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Outcome: The program and the public have the high quality information needed to make sound decisions that lead to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Example Strategies

44. Analyze, identify trends in, and share greenhouse gas emissions data to support information-based decision making.
45. Communicate and educate the public about results of our analysis, trends in greenhouse gas emissions, and actions the public can take to support greenhouse gas emissions reductions and prepare for climate change impacts.

Objective 4.3: Implement a framework of statutes, rules, and programs that reduce greenhouse gas and transportation emissions and promote climate resilience.

Outcome: All of Washington benefits from programs that reduce emissions and reduce risks of future climate impacts.

Example Strategies

46. Continue to engage with the Governor's Office and the Legislature to pursue a comprehensive program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
47. Implement Washington's HFC law and adopt a rule to transition away from the use of these potent GHGs in new products and equipment starting January 1, 2020.
48. Work with partners to develop a rule and implement Ecology's responsibilities under the Clean Energy Transformation Act.
49. Implement Washington's Clean Car standards and Zero Emission Vehicle program.
50. Invest in projects and engage with partners to transform Washington's transportation system to advanced zero-emission vehicles.
51. Promote regulatory, voluntary, and incentive programs and build strong partnerships to reduce transportation emissions and promote clean vehicles, clean fuels, and transportation alternatives.
52. Implement the Governor's Directive 19-18 and provide consistent and comprehensive direction on analysis and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions for environmental assessments of industrial and fossil fuel projects.
53. Incorporate climate science into air quality planning efforts and advance efforts to increase resilience to climate change effects on air quality.

Performance Measures

- Tons of greenhouse gas emissions produced statewide.

Goal 5. Enhanced outcomes through well-informed and carefully considered resource allocation and continual process improvement.

Add a description of our core work in this area.
The program has identified the following priority objectives, outcomes, and strategies for 2020 – 2025.

Objective 5.1 Program management cultivates and maximizes resources to improve air quality, increase program performance, and address emerging threats and opportunities.

Outcome: Having sufficient and flexible resources where staff can successfully undertake existing work while addressing new work in a timely manner.

Example Strategies

54. Pursue available grant funding sources to improve air quality.
55. Incorporate retention and succession planning practices for each section in the program to promote staff growth and development, retain and share institutional knowledge, and ensure smooth transitions as the work force changes overtime.
56. Seek funding to hire a statewide coordinator for Prevent Nonattainment Grants.
57. Continue to build sustainable funding for the program and evaluate fee recovery levels and mechanisms.
58. Proactively prepare for changes in technology such as cloud computing.

Objective 5.2 Align program work force and funding with program priorities.

Outcome: Selection of projects, existing work, align to our work force and workloads, as well as identified strategic priorities.

Example Strategies

59. Pursue participatory management processes and practices.
60. Align budget planning with strategic planning.

61. Proactively realign resources to meet needs, and identify opportunities and new processes to balance resources and evaluate the need for new resources.
62. Align program activities with revenue sources, laws, agency priorities, new initiatives, and program strategic plan.
63. Build a strategy to effectively manage, store, and make program data accessible.
64. Promote efficient oversight of financial and staff resources using proactive and responsible management
65. Actively manage fee revenue and seek equity in who's paying for fee eligible work (polluters vs taxpayers).

Objective 5.3 Promote value added program processes that support prompt, high-quality internal and external service delivery.

Outcome: Have processes that give clarity, consistency and efficiency to our work.

Example Strategies

66. Create a record of decision process, expectation, and a method of communication. Maintain an element of adaptive management that enables the Leadership Team to modify previous decisions when additional or new information is presented.
67. Promote improved methods of communication on decisions made by managers, by AQPLT, and meetings happening at director or program management level with partners, EPA, and stakeholders.
68. Evaluate our program's core work and incorporate principles, outreach strategies, and analytical tools to promote equity and environmental justice.
69. Pursue opportunities to improve how we share information on activities and projects across the program, and promote additional collaboration and communication among staff across sections, such as an ambassador program.
70. Embrace innovative technology, planning tools, and effective management and decision philosophies.
71. Develop a more consistent framework and approach to providing grant funding and explore opportunities for process improvements or coordination around issuance of grants across the program, including preventing nonattainment, woodstove, clean diesel, and Volkswagen grants.
72. Develop standard operating procedures.

Performance Measures

- To be added.

Goal 6. Excellent results through collaborative and engaged teams and leaders.

Add a description of our core work in this area.
The program has identified the following priority objectives, outcomes, and strategies for 2020 – 2025.

Objective 6.1 Make informed and timely decisions using the extensive expertise available in our program: Inclusive, timely, informed, and collaborative decision making at the appropriate level, which reflects the full impacts on the program, people, the economy, and the environment.

Outcome - Decisions within the program are transparent, understood, broadly supported and lead to intended, beneficial, and predictable results that stand the test of time.

Example Strategies

73. Assess program performance and adapt as necessary.
74. Develop advanced supervisors/managers skills that promote calm, deliberative, and inclusive decision making, to treat staff as subject matter experts, develop trust, and broadly empower staff.
75. Make timely decisions intentionally and with broad input from program staff.

Objective 6.2 Collaborative Culture: Everyone in the Air Quality Program shares responsibility for creating and maintaining a collaborative culture. We work together to identify areas of needed growth and development; maintain a respectful work place environment that encourages creative thinking, innovation; fosters professional growth; and rewards effort.

Outcome - The program recognizes, engages, and enhances people's expertise, creating a place where people want to work together to achieve great results.

Example Strategies

76. Anticipate program capacity challenges and reprioritize work.

77. Communicate with other agencies and foster informed relationships.
78. Develop and create a program work plan that describes specific areas of work within the program and list planned work in priority.
79. Actively build a culture of collaborative support with positive morale and improved interpersonal communications.
80. Promote a work environment where transparency is valued and staff are actively and routinely engaged in program level decision making.
81. Program wide use and training on teambuilding and collaboration such as "5 Behaviors of a Cohesive Team" and "Speed of Trust".
82. Promote technologies to advance staff collaboration and to facilitate communication and provide additional training opportunities on WebEx, Skype, SharePoint, and accessibility. Consider developing a AQP SharePoint user group.

Objective 6.3 The Air Quality Program is an employer of choice with a highly engaged and diverse workforce seeking different perspectives to ensure good decision making and embracing diversity as a source of great strength. We foster an inclusive work environment and smart ways to modernize the way we work while supporting a healthy work/life balance.

Outcome – People want to work in the Air Quality Program because they feel valued, included and respected for their diversity, expertise, ideas, creativity, humanity, and environmental stewardship.

Example Strategies

83. Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
84. Promote more flexible workplace policies, such as innovative schedules and telework opportunities.

Objective 6.4 Empower staff by providing them with technology and training to excel in their work, leadership

seeks to maximize available resources to provide staff with the best available equipment, technology and training.

Outcome – A well trained, well equipped, highly productive, and efficient workforce.

Example Strategies:

85. Continue to identify and implement improvements to the onboarding process.
86. Provide opportunities for job shadowing and provide additional opportunities for mentoring and cross-training of staff.
87. Expand opportunities for online training, include Ecology core training courses, DES, and other specialized classes.

Performance Measures

- To be added.