

2025 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) PLAN



NC DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES (DNCR)

www.DNCR.NC.gov

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



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Equal Employment Opportunity Plan Certification Statement

This certifies that the attached Equal Employment Opportunity Plan represents the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources' commitment to providing equal employment opportunities to all applicants and employees. I attest that the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources follows the North Carolina Equal Employment Opportunity Policy along with all applicable federal and state laws, including current Executive Orders governing equal employment opportunities.

Pamela B. Cashwell

Secretary, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

2/27/2025

Date

Pamela B. Cashwell

Printed Name

Shanita Washington-Ray

EEO Officer Signature

2/28/2025

Date

Shanita Washington-Ray

Printed Name

The State of North Carolina EEO Policy

The State of North Carolina provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on race, religion, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age (40 or older), political affiliation, National Guard or veteran status, genetic information, or disability. The State also recognizes that an effective and efficient government requires the talents, skills and abilities of all qualified and available individuals at all occupational levels of State government.

The State is committed to ensuring the administration and implementation of all human resources policies, practices and programs is fair and equitable. State agencies, departments and universities shall be accountable for administering all aspects of employment, including hiring, dismissal, compensation, job assignment, classification, promotion, reduction-in-force, training, benefits and any other terms and conditions of employment in accordance with federal and State EEO laws and policies.

Employees shall not engage in harassing conduct, and if harassing conduct does occur, it should be reported. Managers and supervisors maintain a critical role and responsibility in preventing and eliminating harassing conduct in our workplace. See the [Unlawful Workplace Harassment](#) policy of the State Human Resources Manual for provisions related to unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment.

Acts of retaliation against an employee who engages in protected activity, or the exercise of an appeal or grievance right provided by law will not be tolerated in our workplace.

DNCR adheres to the state's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, which is located in the State Human Resources Manual.

Coverage

Individuals protected by provisions of this policy are:

1. current employees;
2. former employees; and
3. job applicants

Veterans

Job discrimination against veterans shall be prohibited and preference in employment shall be given to eligible veterans in accordance with Article 13 of G.S. 126 and G.S. 128-15.

See the Veterans & National Guard Preference Policy in the State Human Resources Manual for provisions related to veteran preference including the employment and advancement of protected veterans.

Office of State Human Resources Responsibilities

The Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) shall:

1. establish the EEO Plan Requirements and Program Guidelines in accordance with federal and state laws to be followed by all agencies, departments and universities, to ensure commitment to and accountability for equal employment opportunity throughout State government;
2. review, approve, and monitor all EEO plans and updates;
3. provide services of EEO technical assistance, training, oversight, monitoring, evaluation, support programs, and reporting;
4. develop and promote EEO programs and best practices to encourage consistent and fair treatment of all State employees; and
5. meet with agency heads, department heads, university chancellors, Human Resources Directors, and EEO Directors/Officers annually to discuss the progress made toward reaching program goals.

Agency, Department, and University Responsibilities

Each Agency Head, Department Head and University Chancellor shall:

1. adhere to the policies and programs that have been adopted by the State Human Resources Commission and approved by the Governor;
2. ensure the agency, department or university's commitment to EEO is clearly communicated to all employees;
3. ensure that Human Resources policies and employment practices are implemented consistently and fairly;
4. designate an EEO Officer/Director who has access to the agency head, department head or university chancellor to be responsible for the operation and implementation of the EEO Plan;
5. provide the necessary resources to ensure the successful implementation of the EEO Program;
6. ensure each manager and supervisor has, as a part of his or her performance plan, the responsibility to comply with EEO laws and policies, and assist in achieving EEO goals established by the agency, department or university;
7. ensure the EEO Plan is designed in accordance with the EEO Plan Requirements and Program Guidelines as specified by the Office of State Human Resources;
8. ensure the EEO Plan is submitted by March 1st of each year to the Office of State Human Resources for review and approval as required by G.S. 126-19;
9. ensure all employees are made aware of the EEO policy including the Unlawful Workplace Harassment Policy found in the State Human Resources Manual;
10. develop strategies to prevent unlawful workplace harassment and retaliation in the workplace;
11. ensure required employee notices describing Federal laws prohibiting job discrimination are posted in work locations where notices to applicants and employees are customarily posted and easily accessible to applicants and employees with disabilities;
12. maintain records of all complaints and grievances alleging discriminatory practices; and

13. ensure all newly hired, promoted, or appointed supervisors and managers complete required EEO training in accordance with G.S. 126-16.1.

Complaint Process

An individual covered by this policy who is alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment or retaliation may file a complaint following the process outlined in the Employee Grievance Policy located in the State Human Resources Manual. For the purpose of this policy, political affiliation is not a protected classification under federal EEO law but may be grieved pursuant to G.S. 126-34.02 as a contested case after completion of the agency grievance procedure and the Office of State Human Resources review.

NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Overview

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) manages, promotes, and enhances the things that people love in North Carolina – preserving, enhancing, and celebrating the state’s rich history, diverse arts and culture, and spectacular natural areas.

The department oversees the state’s resources for the arts, history, libraries, and nature and is home to 28 historic sites, eight history museums, two art museums, five science museums, three aquariums and Jennette's Pier, 42 state parks and recreation areas, the N.C. Zoo, the State Library, the State Archives, the N.C. Arts Council, the African American Heritage Commission, American Indian Heritage Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, Office of State Archaeology, the Highway Historical Markers program, the N.C Land and Water Fund and the Natural Heritage Program. DNCR manages the treasures of the state. These things unite North Carolinians, create a shared identity, and provide common ground.

Mission

To improve the quality of life in North Carolina by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries, and nature by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

Vision

To be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational, and economic future of North Carolina. Every day, DNCR’s places, programs, and ideas strengthen education, improve public health, enhance quality of life, and support robust economic growth across North Carolina.

DNCR EEO Achievements and Best Practices

The North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources is committed to recruiting and retaining a workforce that supports and reflects all North Carolinians.

DNCR's Program Outreach and Engagement office works to support employee recruitment and the department's internship programs. DNCR ensures that all terms and conditions of employment are fair and accessible and that employment decisions are made without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age (40 or older), political affiliation, National Guard or veteran status, genetic information, or disability.

Along with department-wide efforts, our divisions expanded their efforts in 2024 to include:

Parks and Recreation

- Waypoint Adventure – The Division signed a contract with Waypoint Adventure to offer accessible programs to visitors with disabilities at select state parks. The partnership kicked off with training for state parks employees, which included instruction on a range of adaptive equipment and services. Trained guides, interpreters, volunteers, and park staff have joined participants on kayaking programs at Lake James and Lake Norman state parks this summer. The program will continue this fall with more paddling and adaptive hiking programs.
- Free Annual Passes for Veterans with Disabilities – In July 2024, veterans with service-connected disabilities became eligible for free participation in the Division's Annual Pass Program. The Division has developed a request form and procedure to confirm eligibility under the new law, and requests are being processed.
- NC State Parks Internship Program – The Division hosted 23 interns across the state this summer. The interns worked on a variety of tasks throughout the summer, from making improvements at parks, conducting educational programs, monitoring sea turtles, assessing accessibility at state parks, conducting prescribed fires and other natural resource management projects, and working on the division's applications systems.
- Accessible Parks Grants – This program offered \$12.5 million in matching grants for parks and recreation to benefit people living with disabilities. During the August PARTF meeting, 23 local government applications were selected for funding. A second round will open this fall to award the remaining \$4 million.

Museum of Art

- The Museum continues to provide sensory, American Sign Language, and Audio Description tours of the People's Collection and special exhibitions and has added programs for individuals living with autism and memory loss.

Museum of Natural Sciences

- The Museum participated for the third year in a row with iPAGE (the Science Museum of Minnesota's leadership program for informal STEM institution (ISI) professionals. iPAGE is designed to help leaders bring about meaningful and lasting institutional change and participating staff from the past two years attended a gathering of iPAGE consorts to review ideas and discuss actions taken.
- A Career Pathways group entered its second year and looks at the opportunities available for existing staff for advancement, training, and general career growth.

NC Zoo

- The Zoo has increased advertising and solicitation for employees in additional markets such as statewide radio (La Ley (Hispanic), urban radio stations, local billboards, INDEED, digital media, community festivals, Zoo Files, and our Zoo website.

Museum of History

- The Museum shared job postings with African American and American Indian advisory councils, the African American Heritage Commission, and the American Indian Heritage Commission to ensure wider dissemination within their respective networks to encourage more candidates to apply for open positions.

Our divisions have expanded recruitment efforts to share job opportunities with professional organizations and at conferences. Several divisions have enhanced training for employees, and many divisions have expanded their programming to reflect the full range of our state's history.

Assignment of Responsibility and Accountability

Secretary, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The Secretary of DNCR is responsible for providing executive leadership and oversight to ensure that the department adheres to the policies and programs that have been adopted by the State Human Resources Commission and approved by the governor and takes actions as necessary to achieve and implement the plan's goals and objectives.

The Chief Deputy Secretary, Deputy Secretaries, and Division Directors shall ensure that objectives of the program are accepted and that opportunities for employment comply with the intent of the Secretary's policy for equal employment opportunities for all persons. They are to ensure that all employment practices and all aspects of the employment function within DNCR are implemented in a manner which is equitable for all applicants and employees.

The Secretary, Chief Deputy Secretary, Deputy Secretaries, and Division Directors support equal employment opportunity by:

- Adhering to the policies and programs that have been adopted by the State Human Resources Commission and approved by the Governor;
- Ensuring each manager and supervisor has, as a part of his or her performance plan, the responsibility to comply with EEO laws and policies, and assist in achieving EEO goals established by the agency;
- Designating a management-level official responsible to oversee the EEO program;
- Surveying the organizational climate and employee attitudes and evaluate the resultant data;
- Communicating the agency's commitment to EEO to all employees, applicants and the public;
- Providing necessary resources to ensure the successful implementation of the EEO program; and

- Taking measures to ensure the work environment is consistent with the intent of this policy and supports equal opportunity.

Human Resources Director, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The Human Resources Director is responsible for the general administration of the plan and will review all personnel policies, employment practices, and procedures and make recommendations on steps to ensure equal employment opportunity.

Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The duties of the equal employment opportunity officer shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Interpret and apply Federal laws, state statutes, and policies related to equal employment opportunity;
- Ensure the EEO Plan is submitted by March 1 annually in accordance with the EEO Instruction and Format Guide as specified by the Office of State Human Resources;
- Ensure hiring recommendations are reviewed for compliance with EEO program objectives prior to the final agency hiring decision;
- Ensure all employees are made aware of the EEO policy including the annual EEO Plan, EEO Policy, Reasonable Accommodation Policy, and Unlawful Workplace Harassment Policy and develop strategies to prevent unlawful workplace harassment and retaliation in the workplace;
- Maintain and analyze data on workforce utilization and employment practices, including records of all complaints and grievances alleging discriminatory practices;
- Advise management of the EEO program's impact and effectiveness;
- Provide or coordinate EEO training for management and employees;
- Provide confidential consultation for management and employees in matters involving EEO concerns;
- Ensure federal laws prohibiting job discrimination are posted in work locations where notices to applicants and employees are customarily posted and easily accessible to applicants and employees with disabilities;
- Establish and maintain effective working relations with groups concerned with EEO;
- Coordinate programs to achieve program objectives;
- Present information on the EEO plan and program to management and employees on a regular basis; and
- Ensure all newly hired, promoted, or appointed supervisors and managers complete required EEO training in accordance with N.C.G.S. 126-16.1.

The EEO Officer is located in the Human Resources Office, 3rd Floor, Suite 310, Archives & History/State Library Building, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh (919) 814.6682.

Division Directors, Managers and Supervisors, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Each Division Director shall communicate to all management and supervisory staff, the intent of the equal employment opportunity program and require that they inform all their employees. In addition, the directors shall appoint a representative to serve on the Engagement, Accessibility, and Opportunity Committee, with the responsibility to ensure that the overall objectives of the program are being met.

Managers and supervisors at all levels shall be held accountable for the progress of the department's EEO program and will be evaluated annually through the performance evaluation process to ascertain results produced within their respective sections.

The specific responsibilities of managers and supervisors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assist in the development and implementation of the EEO plan and program and establish program objectives;
- Assist the EEO officer in periodic evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the EEO program; and
- Provide a work environment and management practices which support equal opportunity in all terms and conditions of employment.

Office of Program Outreach and Engagement, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The Office of Program Outreach and Engagement is committed to providing a climate and culture that fosters, promotes, and encourages social interactions that support, appreciate, and celebrate our differences. By supporting accessibility and opportunity, the department strives to enhance cross-cultural understanding, improve program outreach, and create an engaged workforce. The Office of Program Outreach and Engagement mission ensures that our place can be anyone's place. The Office of Program Outreach and Engagement's goal is to promote opportunity among our employees and ensure that our programming be accessible to our state's population by expanding engagement and outreach.

Engagement, Accessibility, and Opportunity Committee, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The purpose of the DNCR Engagement, Accessibility, and Opportunity Committee is to ensure that the department values and increases cultural engagement through: (1) engagement with a wide array of multifaceted constituent groups and communities; (2) development, expansion, and promotion of content, exhibits, and programs that reflect our state's unique population; and (3) increased use of historically underutilized businesses. The committee will look across the department to identify areas where sound practices are already in place, as well as aspects that need improvement, and will suggest steps to address those issues. The committee will also support the department's Equal Employment Opportunity program and will seek to ensure that all employees are valued, respected, and treated fairly and that accessibility is appreciated in the workplace.

Working collaboratively with other divisions, the committee will have the following goals:

1. To promote fair and impartial treatment and opportunities for advancement;
2. To promote awareness regarding engagement, accessibility, and opportunity topics;
3. To host listening sessions, lecture series and cultural events;
4. To encourage spending with underrepresented contractors and vendors;
5. To ensure the department engages with a broad array of constituent groups and communities;
6. To ensure that the department's educational and outreach programs and materials reflect the breadth of the state's culture and history;
7. To promote department activities and attract new visitors through broad-based marketing via other institutions, social media, and newspapers.

Committee membership shall be composed of at least one representative from each DNCR division. Committee members will be appointed by division directors with approval by the DNCR Secretary. Membership shall have representation from across varying job categories within the department. The Deputy Secretary for Cultural Engagement and the Department's Equal Employment Officer shall serve as ex-officio members of the committee, and the Director of Program Outreach and Engagement shall chair the committee. Members will serve two-year renewable terms. The committee shall elect a secretary to serve a two-year renewable term.

Action Steps:

- Serve as a communication link between managers and employees and the EEO staff on aspects of the EEO Plan and Program;
- Review and evaluate the EEO Plan and Program;
- Review workforce representation data in each occupational category;
- Survey the organizational climate and employee attitudes and evaluate the resultant data;
- Meet with the Secretary in conjunction with the EEO Officer to discuss EEO Programs, report employees' concerns, and recommend changes or additions to the EEO Policy, Plan, or Program;
- Identify recruitment resources and other activities designed to strengthen the EEO Program;
- Meet quarterly to remain engaged and active; and
- Members shall attend the EEO training, if they have not already completed the course.

Dissemination Procedures

Internal Dissemination

All DNCR employees will have access to the NCDNCR EEO Plan. EEO information will be disseminated in the following ways:

- The EEO plan will be distributed to deputy secretaries, leadership team, and division directors following approval by the Office of State Human Resources;

- Division Directors will be asked to distribute the plan to their managers and supervisors;
- The EEO Policy statement shall be posted on bulletin boards in common areas and other areas where employees and/or the public may congregate;
- Newsletters and other in-house publications are used to communicate information about the EEO Plan, programs, and policy on a regular basis;
- The entire Plan will be available electronically through employee-accessed SharePoint;
- The EEO policy statement signed by the Secretary and EEO Officer will be distributed to all employees via email to include providing the name and address for the EEO Officer, a link to the full EEO plan, and the EEO Informal Inquiry Complaint procedures through employee-accessed SharePoint;
- During new employee orientation, each employee will be provided information regarding the EEO policy and EEO Plan;
- EEO training will be provided to managers and supervisors; and
- Input encouraged from all employees regarding the Department's EEO Plan, Policy, and Program.

External Dissemination

The public will be informed of the department's position on equal opportunities as follows:

- The Department will post the EEO Plan on its website;
- Provide a copy of the Agency vacancy list, job announcements, and any other pertinent material to the appropriate recruitment resource(s);
- General contract terms and conditions include a section on nondiscrimination compliance for vendors to comply with State and Federal laws regarding fair employment and treatment of employees without regard to discrimination; and
- The Department will include the statement, "An Equal Opportunity Employer" on all job advertisements, and any other recruitment material.

Program Activities and Action Steps

DNCR will adhere to the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan by doing the following:

- Reaffirm the department's commitment to equal opportunity in its employment practices, program operations, and service delivery systems.
- Our goals include:
 - Attract a broad pool of applicants to each occupational category, including veterans and persons with disabilities;
 - Follow the State's recruitment and selection guidelines and ensure that all steps in the selection process are nondiscriminatory and job-related;
 - Provide the same level of orientation to all new employees, to ensure their understanding of the agency's organizational structure and their role;
 - Enhance upward mobility and fully utilize the skills of the existing workforce in a nondiscriminatory manner;

- Enhance employee development and advancement opportunities at all levels;
- Ensure that all employees receive compensation and benefits without discrimination by analyzing practices to determine patterns and trends;
- Hold managers and supervisors accountable for the progress of the agency's EEO Program by including it as an expectation in their performance evaluations;
- Ensure performance management system, including employee performance standards, are free from bias;
- Provide equitable treatment for all employees in accordance with the Employee Disciplinary, Appeal and Grievance policy; and
- Ensure fair and equitable review of complaints in accordance with the State Employee Grievance policy.

The **Disciplinary Action Policy** can be found on the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) website at: <https://oshr.nc.gov/policies/disciplinary-action-policy>.

The **Grievance Policy** can be found on the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) website at: <https://oshr.nc.gov/policies/employee-grievance-policy>.

Recruitment

The department is committed to attracting a broad pool of applicants to each occupational category.

Action Steps:

1. Reviewing and monitoring recruitment procedures to abolish any discriminatory practices which may exist;
2. Reviewing all recruitment literature to ensure that it includes and is relevant to all employees;
3. Instituting measures that will improve the recruitment process as it relates to the established program objectives;
4. Actively recruiting underutilized groups, using known resources and utilizing recruitment programs offered by the Office of State Human Resources;
5. Specifying measures for maintaining contact with recruitment resources and informing those resources of employment opportunities, particularly in management, professional and technical level position;
6. Identifying efforts to actively recruit veterans;
7. Strengthening existing alliances with public and private universities in North Carolina, and college and university programs which promote educating and employing individuals with disabilities;
8. When possible, participating in career fairs and advertising in publications targeted at under-represented groups;
9. Supporting goals and objectives of the Employment First initiative by actively recruiting and retaining qualified employees with disabilities; and

10. Continuing HBCU and Minority Institutions of Higher Education summer internship program to allow internship opportunities across the agency to encourage and promote a robust pipeline of talent.

Selection

The department is committed to following the State's recruitment and selection guidelines and ensuring that all steps in the selection process are nondiscriminatory and job-related.

Action steps include:

1. Ensuring that job analyses are conducted to establish job-related qualifications statements, selection criteria, training needs, and career ladders or to initiate any other selection procedure;
2. Analyzing the flow of applicants through the selection and appointment processes, determining reasons for the rejection of qualified applicants from underutilized groups in areas where program objectives have been set or underrepresentation exists, and monitoring the employment of individuals to ensure the assignment of work and workplace is nondiscriminatory;
3. Cooperating with the Office of State Human Resources or other trained resources on the review and validation of written tests, interviews, or other selection devices;
4. Training all employees who screen applications and interview applicants for employment in proper techniques to eliminate any potential bias;
5. Establishing sign-off procedure to ensure that the selection process in underrepresented occupations reflects established program objectives and timetables;
6. Ensuring that testing and interviewing processes are accessible to persons with disabilities; and
7. Developing and implementing structured interview procedures that are documented, and reviewed by the EEO Officer.

Onboarding


The department is committed to providing the same level of orientation to all new employees, to ensure their understanding of the agency's organizational structure and their role. All new employees participate in an online new hire orientation that provides each employee with information regarding state government, the department, as well as HR and Safety policies and benefits.

Action Steps:

1. Ensuring each employee receives a written employment letter outlining the terms and conditions of employment; and
2. Informing employees about the Agency EEO Plan and Program.

Promotion

Employees who are interested in a promotional opportunity must apply through the State of North Carolina electronic application process (NEOGOV) which is subject to fair and valid



selection criteria as outlined in the OSHR recruitment policy. Promotions within the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources are subject to all federal and state equal employment laws and policies. DNCR Human Resource Managers review and analyze the selection criteria to ensure they are equitable.

Action Steps:

- Informing all employees of the NEOGOV system and encouraging employees to register for the job alert option within the system for notifications of promotional opportunities within the Department;
- Enhancing upward mobility and fully utilizing the skills of the existing workforce;
- Reviewing and analyzing promotion processes, procedures and selections;
- Encouraging employees to apply for promotional opportunities for which they are qualified;
- Providing employee's information to enhance understanding of necessary information on an application for it to be complete; and
- Exploring additional ways to actively support and enhance career development and succession planning initiatives.

Training

The Department will provide opportunities for career development and advancement for all employees on a nondiscriminatory basis and will identify barriers and challenges to remove them or develop solutions.

Employee Training

All DNCR employees are encouraged to use the Learning Management System (LMS) to request training. Various training opportunities are also available through the state Employee Assistance Program vendor portal and are released on a monthly basis to all employees.

Management Training

DNCR complies with NCGS 126-16.1, which requires the department to enroll each newly appointed supervisor and manager in EEO training within one (1) year of their initial appointment. Managers and supervisors will be provided information and training on their role in employment decisions and their EEO responsibilities. Training will include:

- The definition of equal employment opportunity;
- The legal basis for EEO;
- Interpreting and applying EEO policies and guidelines;
- The guidelines for valid and legal selection procedures;
- Identifying and eliminating artificial barriers which can lead to discrimination; and
- Implementing the EEO Program.

DNCR has two certified EEO Instructors to provide training to employees in addition to the statewide courses through the Office of State Human Resources.

Action Steps:

1. Analyzing the performance requirements for all job classes in which underutilization exists for identifying the Department training needs; and
2. Ensuring that training opportunities are accessible to all employees and that all employees are notified of all training opportunities for which they qualify.

Compensation and Benefits

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources aligns with the State of North Carolina's compensation system and salary administration policies. The Department utilizes a structured procedure for the fair and equitable administration of compensation and benefits. This process includes a systematic method to determine salaries, including, but not limited to evaluating related education, training, experience, and pay factors, as well as the salaries of current employees performing similar duties and responsibilities.

Appropriate analysis processes are in place to ensure that all benefits and conditions of employment are equally available without discrimination to all employees. This includes leave policies, retirement plans, insurance programs, and other terms, conditions and privileges of employment. The EEO Officer will review and monitor the salary approval process to help the Department monitor salary recommendations to identify trends and address concerns with management to minimize inequities.

Action Steps:

- Analyzing practices to determine patterns and trends to ensure all employees receive compensation and benefits without discrimination; and
- Conducting analysis of current compensation and developing a plan for addressing any disparities in compensation.

Performance Management

DNCR utilizes the State's performance management system known as N.C Valuing Individual Performance (NCVIP) within the LMS automated tool. The performance management system shall be administered without bias, and free from discrimination and requires that all covered employees' work performance be evaluated annually.

Action Steps:

- Reviewing managers and supervisor's performance in accomplishing the EEO goals in their respective areas;
- Monitoring performance ratings of all covered employees for trends and patterns; and
- Conducting annual analysis of performance ratings and developing a plan for addressing any disparities.

Transfers, Separations, RIF

DNCR requests completion of exit interviews by departing employees for determining the primary reasons for voluntary transfers, separations and/or RIF. The gathered information is

submitted to the Employee Relations section, in the Central Human Resources office, to alert management of any conditions that need immediate attention.

Action Steps:

- Creating an online exit interview form for ease of anonymous submittal and increased trend analysis designed to identify patterns and trends, and measure impact on underutilized groups.

Disciplinary Process and Implementation

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources disciplinary process and implementation are designed to be fair and equitable and without regard to biases. The Employee Relations section of Human Resources monitors and implements the disciplinary process. All written warnings, demotions, suspensions, and dismissals are included in the disciplinary process and are subject to the state and federal laws governing equal employment opportunity.

An Employee Relations Consultant is available to provide guidance to employees, supervisors, and managers to ensure disciplinary actions are for just cause and provide fair and equitable corrective actions for improving unsatisfactory job performance and to assist management with handling unacceptable personal conduct. Employee Relations and Human Resources Managers work in concert to ensure equal practices and fairness are in accordance with the Disciplinary Actions Policy.

Action Steps:

- Providing equitable treatment for all employees in accordance with the Disciplinary Actions policy; and
- Conducting an annual analysis of disciplinary actions and developing a plan for addressing any disparities.

Grievance Procedure

The grievance procedure is the administrative process designed to ensure fair and equitable review of employment complaints. The Employee Relations section of Human Resources, which includes the EEO Officer, manages the internal complaint/grievance and EEO Informal Inquiry process. The department's grievance procedure is designed to be fair and resolve issues in a prompt and equitable manner. The EEO Officer has the authority to informally examine the situation with the employee, discuss the employee's concerns, offer sound advice, suggest solutions, and/or recommend others to the appropriate authority, and offer sound advice. DNCR follows the state-wide employee grievance policy and prohibits retaliation against individuals who file a grievance or participate in the grievance process.

Action Steps:

- Ensuring the grievance process is administered equitably and without bias;
- Prohibiting retaliation against employees and applicants who file complaints or participates in a grievance procedure; and
- Reviewing and monitoring program data to identify trends and patterns.

Employment First and Reasonable Accommodation

In March 2019, Governor Roy Cooper signed [Executive Order \(EO\) #92 \(Employment First for North Carolinians with Disabilities\)](#). The EO makes Employment First the policy of state agencies to reflect the state's goals to be a leader in recruiting workers with disabilities.

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources complies with Federal and State Laws governing reasonable accommodations. This includes but is not limited to ADA, ADAAA, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act as amended. DNCR provides reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees, unless the request causes undue hardship and continues to improve recruitment and outreach efforts to attract qualified individuals with disabilities. Requests for accommodations are submitted to the EEO Officer for review and approval. DNCR encourages employees annually to complete the Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability form in the Integrated HR/Payroll System annually.

Program Evaluation and Reporting/Monitoring

Evaluation and reporting mechanisms are designed to assess overall EEO Program effectiveness and to determine the achievement of agency EEO objectives. These mechanisms will provide management, on a regular basis throughout the year, with data on the various program activities, workforce trends, and progress towards achievement of program objectives.

The Department regularly assesses the EEO program by the following:

- Reviewing recruitment practices to ensure vacancy announcements are disseminated to a wide network of job recruiters;
- Reviewing hiring and promotion practices to ensure decisions are based on job-related abilities using standardized processes;
- Reviewing discipline, grievance, compensation, and performance management data to evaluate any trends and to ensure that bias is not a factor in decision-making;
- Analyzing data collected in the exit interview program to identify trends and share with senior management; and
- Encouraging employees to provide feedback on their workplace environment.

The EEO Officer is responsible for making reports to senior leadership and to the Office of State Human Resources, as requested. These reports will be used to ensure that the agency EEO Plan is being followed and that equal opportunities exist for employees and applicants. The EEO Officer will use the following data sources to generate necessary reports when available:

- NEOGOV applicant tracking data;
- Business Objects (BOBJ) transactional reports for compensation, hiring, separations, promotions, and other employee actions;
- NCVIP data for performance management ratings; and

- Internal tracking reports such as selection/decision logs, adverse impact analysis form, or other related information.

Harassment Prevention Strategies

DNCR strictly prohibits all types of unlawful workplace harassment which is defined as unwelcome or unsolicited speech or conduct that creates a hostile work environment or circumstances involving quid pro quo based on race, religion, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age (40 or older), political affiliation, National Guard or veteran status, genetic information, or disability.

A hostile work environment is defined as an environment that both a reasonable person would find hostile or abusive and one that the person who is the object of the harassment perceives to be hostile or abusive. The DNCR EEO Officer will investigate complaints of unlawful workplace harassment in accordance with the statewide grievance policy.

The EEO Officer will provide counseling to managers and supervisors on prevention and correction of Unlawful Workplace Harassment. New hire orientation includes information on unlawful workplace harassment, and other workplace harassment classes are available in the Learning Management System (LMS).

DNCR has established strategies to ensure that the work environment is free of unlawful workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation, and no employment decisions will be made on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age (40 or older), political affiliation, National Guard or veteran status, genetic information, or disability.

These strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Commitment by the agency to the prohibition of unlawful workplace harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation.
- Training and other methods to prevent harassing actions.
- A process for disseminating information prohibiting unlawful workplace harassment and retaliation to all employees.

The EEO Officer receives and evaluates complaints from employees. Employees may also utilize division HR Managers to discuss and obtain available options for submitting complaints. Any supervisor who witnesses such harassment or is otherwise informed of a violation of this policy is directed to bring this to the immediate attention of the EEO Officer, division HR manager, or HR Director. Failure of a supervisor (or others) with such knowledge to promptly advise the EEO Officer or HR is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. The investigation of any such complaint will be carried out promptly and will involve only those persons with a need to know.

Any employee found to have harassed another employee in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, depending on the severity of the offense.

Action Steps:

- Requiring online training curriculum regarding promoting respect in the workplace and unlawful harassment every other year;
- Communicating a commitment by the agency to the prohibition of unlawful workplace harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation; and
- Distributing information to all agency employees regarding the policy on prohibiting unlawful workplace harassment.

DNCR adheres to the state's Unlawful Workplace Harassment Policy, which is located in the State Human Resources Manual at: [NC OSHR: Unlawful Workplace Harassment](#).

Reduction in Force (RIF) and Procedures

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) has the authority to separate an employee whenever it is necessary due to shortage of funds or work, abolishment of a position, or other material change in duties or organization. DNCR complies with the State Human Resources Reduction In Force policy and the Reduction in Force Priority policy. Retention of employees in classes affected shall be based on systematic consideration.

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) shall notify the employee in writing of separation as soon as possible and in any case not less than 30 calendar days prior to the effective date of separation. The written notification shall include the reasons for the reduction in force, expected date of separation, the employee's eligibility for priority reemployment consideration, applicable appeal rights, and other benefits available. An employee separated through a reduction in force may appeal the separation only on the grounds listed in the Employee Grievance Policy.

Pursuant to the State Human Resources Manual, employees with career status (as defined by N.C.G.S. 126-1.1), who have received official written notification of imminent separation due to Reduction in Force, are eligible for priority consideration under the provisions outlined in the Manual. An employee shall receive priority consideration for a period of 12 months from the date of the official written notification.

DNCR adheres to the state's Reduction in Force Policy, which is located in the State Human Resources Manual at: <https://oshr.nc.gov/policies/reduction-force-policy>.

Pregnancy Workplace Adjustments

In December 2018, [Executive Order #82 \(Promoting Health and Wellness by Clarifying Protections Afforded to Pregnant State Employees\)](#) was issued by Governor Roy Cooper. This Executive Order required that state agencies extend workplace protections and modifications to pregnant employees upon request, unless doing so would impose significant burdens or costs.

This Order specifically required that state agencies:

- Post written notice of the rights afforded to pregnant state employees under OSHR policies and this Executive Order. This notice must be physically displayed in a conspicuous area in each office maintained by the agency;
- Collect and compile information regarding efforts to educate management and staff of their obligations and employee rights under OSHR policies and Executive Order; and
- Provide OSHR information in the annual EEO Plan on the following:
 - The number of notices in each state agency office that educate management and their staff of their obligations and employee rights;
 - The content of those notices; and
 - Information regarding any additional education initiative(s) carried out by the agency, specifically the nature of the initiative (form and/or medium), the information conveyed, and the estimated number of management and staff who were able to obtain information from or otherwise had access to the initiative.

DNCR communicated information regarding the requirements of the Executive Order with all divisions to include the notice of rights afforded to pregnant state employees provided by OSHR. This notice is required to be posted at all DNCR locations in common areas in which all employees have access.

Action Steps:

- The inclusion of this requirement in new employee orientation materials;
- Include information on the rights of pregnant state employees on the DNCR internal SharePoint site; and
- Communicate a reminder of the requirement for posting the notice at all locations.

Prohibiting the Use of Salary History

In April 2019, [Executive Order #93 \(Prohibiting the Use of Salary History in the State Hiring Process\)](#) was issued by Governor Roy Cooper. This Executive Order prohibited state agencies from requesting salary history from applicants or relying on previously obtained prior salary information in determining an applicant's salary. OSHR was required to remove the employment history fields from the state application.

This Order specifically required that state agencies:

- Collect and compile information regarding their efforts to educate relevant staff about this Executive Order.
- Provide this information to OSHR in their annual EEO Plan.

DNCR communicated information regarding the requirements of the Executive Order with all divisions to include OSHR's removal of the salary information from the state application, the revisions to the salary administration guidelines, and our commitment to pay equity. DNCR HR staff are responsible for ensuring the previous salary of candidates are not part of the salary decision.

Action Steps:

- Monitor forms, hiring documentation, and processes to ensure salary history is not utilized in salary determination;
- Include information of the Executive Order on the DNCR internal SharePoint site; and
- As referenced in the Compensation and Benefits section, conduct an analysis of current compensation and develop a plan for addressing any disparities in compensation.

Recognizing the Value of Experience in State Government Hiring

Effective June 1, 2023, [Executive Order #278 \(Recognizing the value of Experience in State Government Hiring\)](#) was issued by Governor Roy Cooper. This Executive Order directs the NC Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) to create processes to identify job classifications that do not require academic degrees and train agency human resources (HR) personnel on how to properly screen applications to broaden access to career opportunities in state government. This will help agencies address ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining the skilled workforce essential to ensuring North Carolinians have safe, effective and efficient government programs and services. It will also help agencies continue active recruitment of qualified candidates who can apply directly related knowledge and skills from prior jobs and experiences to positions across state government.

This Order specifically required that state agencies:

- All Cabinet agencies add the following language to all job postings: “equivalent combination of education and experience.” If that language appears below, then you may qualify through EITHER years of education OR years of directly related experience, OR a combination of both.” (See oshr.nc.gov/experience-guide for details).

DNCR communicated information regarding the requirements of the Executive Order with all divisions to include OSHR’s language to Agency job postings. Including this statement will boost the recruitment of qualified candidates to relieve the persistently high rate of vacancies throughout the Agency and across State Government.