



**dhec**  
bridge  
strategic  
plan 2022–2024

# *Mapping Our Strategic Path Forward*

DHEC's 2022-2024 Bridge Strategic Plan maps our agency's strategic path forward for fulfilling its mission of promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

## **Vision**

Healthy people living in healthy communities

## **Mission**

To improve the quality of life for all South Carolinians by protecting and promoting the health of the public and the environment

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# Core Values

Non-negotiables of our agency's character, defining how we interact with others, shaping our decision processes, and guiding our organizational beliefs about how we achieve our mission. We keep these core values in **SITE<sup>2</sup>** (*Service, Innovation, Teamwork, Excellence, Equity*) through the work we do each day.





# Strategic Pathways

These pathways represent the strategic focus areas that unite our teams, align our work, and guide our agency in a unified direction to advance our shared vision and mission.

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## Investment

Invest in the development of our current and future workforce and infrastructure to ensure our teams have the resources they need to continue to provide mission-critical services for all South Carolinians.

DHEC's greatest asset is our people. Our capacity to provide mission-critical health and environmental services to all those who live, work, learn, and play in South Carolina relies on our ability to recruit, develop, and retain a strong, diverse workforce at all levels and in all areas of expertise. At the same time, we recognize that our employees must have the necessary infrastructure and resources in place to do their jobs well. Therefore, it is important that we invest in efforts that maximize the job satisfaction of current teams, provide an efficient and welcoming recruitment and onboarding process for new and future team members, continue to train and develop our teams, and ensure workspaces for our teams across the state are functional, safe, clean, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly.



## Education and Engagement

Educate and engage our teams, partners, and communities by encouraging greater cohesion, collaboration, and coordination to help increase open lines of communication, enhance transparency, and support better-informed, evidence-based decisions.

We are committed to engaging and educating our team members, stakeholders, and communities by providing access to relevant, timely, and accurate scientific data and technical information to improve health and environmental outcomes for everyone. This includes ensuring reliable, evidence-based data is readily accessible for use by our team members, partners, and communities to support sound, informed, and objective decisions. In addition, we strive to better serve our communities by unifying our teams within DHEC and developing and maintaining relationships with diverse partners through strengthening collaboration and coordination at the federal, state, and local levels.



## Improvement

Improve our processes to better support our internal and external customers by serving as a model for best practices in environmental and health excellence and promoting a culture of continuous improvement.

We aim to support a high-performance organization and a culture of continuous improvement through streamlining, improving, and modernizing critical processes across our agency. This requires our agency and its teams to continue to develop our people, strengthen our processes, identify challenges and opportunities, and measure our progress so that we can meet the diverse needs of the communities we serve. As part of this ongoing effort, we are focused on enhancing our online services, fostering innovation, setting goals to improve environmental and health outcomes, modernizing service delivery, and implementing best practices and policies.



## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do.

We respect diverse viewpoints and perspectives that are inclusive of the many different unique experiences of our employees, stakeholders, and all those we serve. In doing so, we endeavor to enhance collaboration across diverse groups, encourage the building of a diverse, skilled workforce, and direct day-to-day operations in a manner that fosters better health and environmental outcomes for all. This includes eliminating health and environmental disparities, addressing the social determinates of health, and protecting local communities from hazardous conditions.



## Science in Action

Act based on sound, science-based data and evidence so that we continue to make and support informed decisions that promote and improve environmental and health outcomes in South Carolina.

We use sound science, quality data, and analytical processes to make fully informed, well-reasoned decisions that instill trust and confidence in DHEC's expertise and decision-making capabilities. To inform these critical processes, we engage our internal and external subject matter experts and apply current research to promote the use of and access to evidence-based best practices and services.





## Agency Goals

DHEC's long-term goals reflect our role as the state's environmental, healthcare, and public health agency and define our priorities we want to achieve. They are measured at the deputy and service area levels.



### Partner with Stakeholders and Communities

Promote partnerships to enhance the abilities of our communities across the state to promote and protect healthy people and environments.

- Integrate consistent customer and partnership feedback into the agency's evaluation processes.
- Expand existing and meaningful, performance-based partnerships with federal, state, community, and non-traditional partners.
- Increase health and environmental facility compliance.
- Increase communication and engagement with the Office of the Governor, Legislature, and state and local governments.
- Collect and securely provide actionable environmental, health, and patient care data to support informed decisions.
- Develop a plan to thoughtfully increase information, educational, and data sharing opportunities provided for and within our historically marginalized and other vulnerable communities.



### Promote Healthy Outcomes

Improve health outcomes and access to safe, quality healthcare services for all.

- Increase the length of healthy lives and healthy living options for all South Carolinians.
- Eliminate disparities in the impact of communicable diseases.
- Eliminate disparities in morbidity and mortality from chronic diseases.
- Improve maternal and child health.
- Reduce harm to workers, residents, and visitors due to injuries, substance use, violence, and environmental hazards.
- Increase the quality and safety of patient care within our own clinics and among the healthcare providers and facilities we regulate.
- Promote equitable access to environmental, health, and patient services by identifying and addressing barriers.
- Protect and improve the health of our public and the environment by utilizing appropriate legal and regulatory actions.



## Protect the Environment

Protect, enhance, and restore the environment, while promoting a balance of equitable resource management.

- Reduce the statewide emissions of criteria air pollutants.
- Report on wetland acres impacted, preserved, and restored in the coastal zone.
- Increase the acres of contaminated land available for reuse.
- Restore South Carolina’s impaired natural resources and sustain them for the future.
- Ensure that solid waste is safely and efficiently managed with an emphasis on prevention, reduction, and recycling.
- Increase the percent of South Carolina’s population with access to safe and reliable drinking water.



## Provide Quality Services

Advance DHEC’s organizational capacity to provide quality internal and external services by focusing on workforce recruitment, retention, and engagement; agency funding and investments; and internal process improvements.

- Recruit, retain, and develop a skilled and diverse workforce at all levels within the agency.
- Increase our national rankings in per capita environmental and health funding.
- Secure funding and build a new public environment and health laboratory.
- Enhance collaboration at all levels within and outside of DHEC to ensure better coordination of services and increase engagement in agency decision-making.
- Identify priority business processes to streamline the provision of timely, efficient, effective, and meaningful services internally and externally.
- Modernize the agency’s information technology infrastructure.



Read more about the  
2022–2024 Bridge Strategic Plan, how we got here,  
and where we’re going.

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