

CHAPTER 2:

Administration/Legal/ Management Services

The Administrators, Legal and Management Services provide administrative, legal and day-to-day support services to the effective operations of the Department.

Administrators

The Administrators of NDEE provide oversight and policy direction in all areas of NDEE's activities. The Administrators include the Director, Deputy Directors, Legal Counsel, and Environmental Managers. The Director and Deputy Directors are responsible for the overall function and coordination of NDEE activities.

NDEE Environmental Managers (Division Administrators) are responsible for coordination with other local, state and federal agencies. Staff serve on various committees within the state. The Administrators are also responsible for coordination and negotiations with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A significant amount of the agency's funding derives from the EPA, and substantial coordination is required. In addition, the agency coordinates certain activities with the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Director coordinates agency activities with the Governor's Office and the Nebraska Legislature. The Director is responsible for ensuring that NDEE effectively responds to state legislative activities and actions.

The Deputy Director of Administration serves as the manager of the Management Services Division and is largely responsible for day-to-day administrative activities and Agency operations. The Deputy Director is also given responsibility on a case-by-case basis for coordinating special activities which cross the divisional lines of responsibility.

The Deputy Directors coordinate the various agency programmatic activities.

Legal Division

The Legal Division provides legal and other assistance to the Director, Agency, and Environmental Quality Council. Legal Division responsibilities include:

- Supporting enforcement case development and return to compliance;
- Preparing administrative orders and other enforcement actions for the Agency;
- Coordinating Agency response to variance requests;
- Representing the Agency in administrative proceedings;
- Preparing judicial referrals to the Attorney General;
- Assisting the Attorney General as requested;
- Serving as hearing officers for public and administrative contested case hearings;
- Assisting review and development of proposed legislation, rules and regulations;
- Advising the Director and Agency staff on duties and program responsibilities;
- Advising the Environmental Quality Council as requested;
- Drafting and reviewing contracts, leases, environmental covenants, and other documents
- Reviewing other Agency documents as requested; and

Representing the Director and Agency as requested by the Director. The Legal Division works cooperatively with the Attorney General, Secretary of State, Legislature, Governor's Policy Research Office, and other state and federal agencies on a variety of interagency functions, including adoption of rules and regulations, litigation involving the Agency, and legislative activities.

Management Services

The Management Services Division provides administrative and technical support to NDEE programs. The Deputy Director of Administration heads the division. The division's staff is divided into six areas — Fiscal Services, Human Resources, Records Management, Information Technology, Public Information, Emergency Response and Grants/Contract Coordination.

Fiscal Services

The Fiscal Services Section is responsible for agency finance and accounting functions, which includes managing NDEE purchasing, spending, receipting, budgeting, forecasting, and auditing responsibilities. The section has seven staff who offer financial advice and assistance to programs and also conduct financial reviews of grantees. Fiscal Services also provides significant staff assistance to support key programs and to serve as advisors in regard to financial planning, in addition to the collection, tracking and reporting applicable fees. The Fiscal Team was challenged to create ways to streamline, condense or simplify processes used in the past.

Major accomplishments during fiscal year 2025:

- Successfully assisted in the creation, discussion, and final business plan that joined NDEE and NeDNR, two agencies with distinct and separate fiscal processes by the merger date of July 1, 2025.
- Aligned Department practices to reflect recent changes implemented by DAS and AS Materiel which updated state guidelines and policies, with a focus on procurement activities. We will continue to update Department policies in a timely manner when DAS provides new procedures.
- Assisted agency leadership review policies, positions, programs, and expenditure patterns, to support the budget preparation during the 2025 Legislative Session.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Section consists of three staff members, who together plan, direct, coordinate, and administer the day-to day human resource operations. The Human Resource team supports the agency efforts to provide a working environment that strengthens individual and organizational performance.

Human Resources has a Training Coordinator which is responsible for analyzing training needs, developing curriculum and consults with the managers and supervisors of the agency to assess training needs and develop programs to match these needs. The coordinator continually evaluates procedures to monitor and analyze course effectiveness, updates the curriculum as needed and identifies opportunities for staff personal and professional growth.

Staff retention continues to be an important goal for NDEE. Staff turnover impacts continuity in NDEE's programs and activities, and results in additional costs for recruitment and training of replacement staff members. NDEE strives to foster and maintain an employee-friendly workplace by offering transfer and promotional opportunities for qualified internal applicants. The agency continues to look for ways to retain and attract new talent. The State of Nebraska implemented a 2% plus a 3% performance increase for on July 1, 2024.

NDEE monitors diversity to encourage the receipt of applications from qualified members of protected groups by seeking to recruit members of protected groups.

The summary on the right shows staffing activity for FYs 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. With historically low unemployment, the agency has been very fortunate to have the opportunity to hire and promote 63 of the best and brightest new employees during this fiscal year timeframe. The agency continues to anticipate a large number of retirements over the next few years, as the baby boomer generation is reaching retirement age. We have been actively developing redundancy in positions (succession planning) to avoid a significant loss of agency knowledge and expertise.

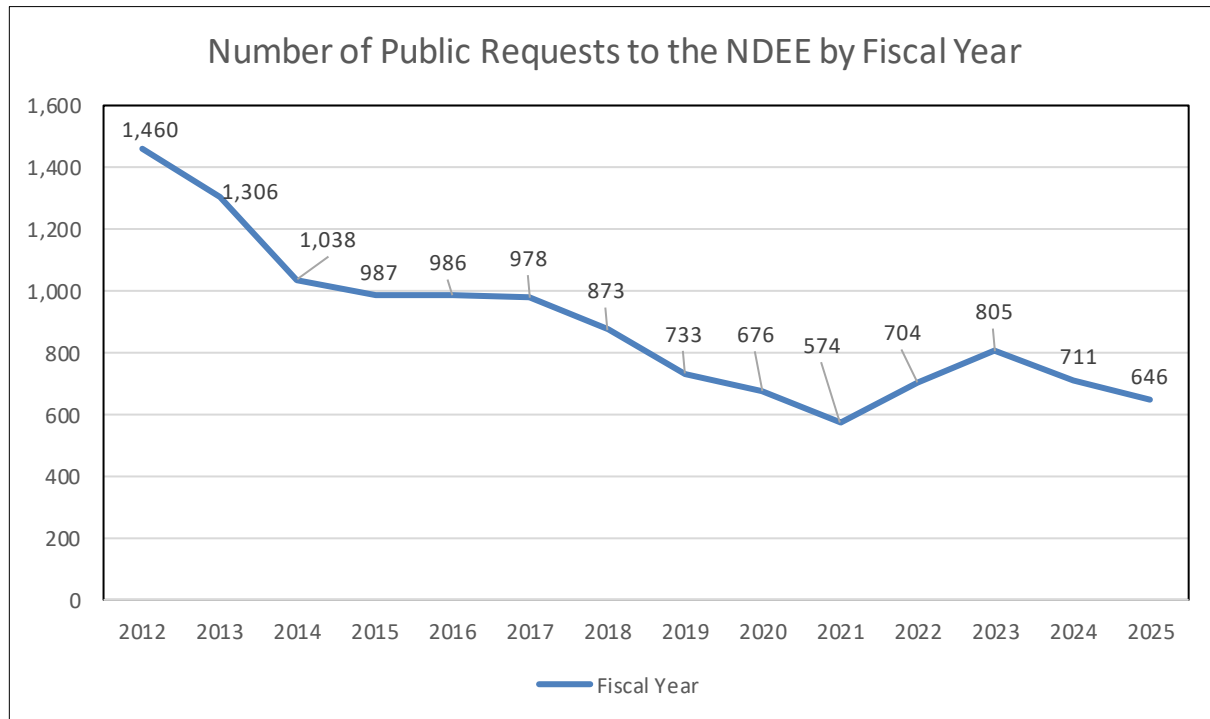
Staffing	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
New Hires	25	32	35	39	45
Retirements	17	9	9	7	9
Resignations/ Terminations	11	18	12	27	23
Transfers	4	8	6	18	9
Promotions	24	29	47	22	18

Records Management

The Records Management Section is responsible for managing the agency's paper and electronic records, centralized mail handling process, and requests for public information. Section employees also furnish support functions to agency programs.

In FY2025:

- DWEE has more than 1.7 million records scanned and stored in the Enterprise Content Management System (ECM) utilizing OnBase software applications from Hyland Software.
- Of these, over 1.3 million records are publicly available on the agency's document portal.
- In FY2025, the Records Section imaged over 13,000 legacy paper files into the ECM system. All documents associated with these files are available to view on the agency's public portal.
- The Records Section indexed over 123,000 documents into the Integrated Information System (IIS) and ECM.
- Staff in the Records Section completed 646 public records requests. The average response time for fulfillment was 2.65 days.
- Since the implementation of the OnBase ECM system, the agency's public records requests have declined by over 50%, largely in part to the accessibility of the information available on the agency's public portal.



Information Technology

The Information Technology (IT) Section responsibilities are to assist NDEE users with any problems or concerns that are not PC hardware or software related, maintain the midrange IBM Power 10 server, web page support, GIS support and development, and application development.

The application development staff is continuing development on a new notifications interface, began development of a new Tier II Reporting interface and a new Dollar and Energy Saving Loans (DESL) interface to provide process improvement for the Agency staff.

During the first part of 2025, staff actively collaborated with IT staff from the Department of Natural Resources to facilitate the successful merger of the two agencies. Through regular coordination, shared expertise, and joint planning, the teams worked diligently to support a seamless transition that maintains service quality, enhances operational efficiency, and upholds the security and integrity of all IT systems.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has assigned one OCIO support staff to the Fallbrook Blvd building for PC hardware and software support. This will help the IT staff focus and be more efficient in accomplishing other work that is not PC support.

Public Information Office

The Public Information Office serves as NDEE's initial source of communication with the public and media. The services of the Public Information Office are used by all divisions of NDEE.

A primary responsibility of this office is to handle questions from the public and media (newspaper, television, radio and web) regarding NDEE's activities.

The Public Information Office is responsible for the writing and distribution of news releases on a wide range of environmental topics that are of importance to the public. The office is also involved in the production of a number of other publications, including this annual report, brochures, fact sheets and guidance documents. These publications can be obtained by contacting the Public Information Office or by visiting NDEE's website, <http://dee.ne.gov>.

An important component of the website is to promote two-way communication. As part of those efforts, the agency's main e-mail address is provided at numerous locations on our website. That e-mail address is: NDEE.moreinfo@nebraska.gov. The Public Information Office coordinates responses to those e-mails. The site also features "Report a Problem," with a link to the e-mail address to report an environmental issue of concern at NDEE.problem@nebraska.gov. The site includes phone information and procedures relating to reporting a spill or complaint. The agency has moved toward providing more standardized forms on its website, including those that can be filled online or submitted electronically.

NDEE also maintains social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube to share agency updates, offer a resource for its audiences, and provide another way to reach the agency.

Additionally, the PIO team provides support for the small business and environment assistance program. You can review the discussion of the Department's environmental assistance activities in Chapter 4.

Emergency Response Program

Through the Emergency Response Program, NDEE staff provide technical and regulatory assistance to those responsible for spills, leaks, and accidents that pose a hazard to the environment or public health. Assistance is also provided to those at the local level who are the first on the scene at these releases; typically, this is the local fire department.

The Emergency Response Program Coordinator is responsible for training, equipping, and coordinating staff who, in addition to their responsibilities to other programs, provide initial documentation, assistance and response to spills. These individuals have the responsibility to maintain an emergency response system that is on call 24 hours a day.

The Emergency Response Program assists in arranging for the disposal of harmful and potentially hazardous materials. The Program represents the environmental interests of the state at the scene of a petroleum/chemical spill or other environmental emergency. All personnel are members of the Nebraska Hazardous Incident Team and coordinate closely with the local, state, and federal agencies involved in emergencies.

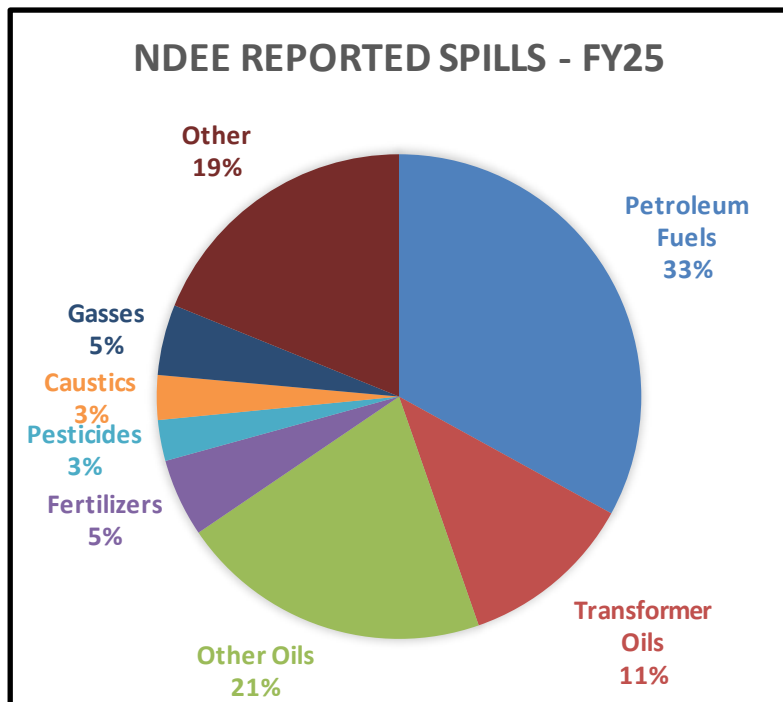


*Pesticide Spill - Saunders County
(NOV 2024)*

The NDEE recorded 373 reports of spilled materials during Fiscal Year 2025. This number is generally what we would expect to receive based on the past 10+ years. Petroleum accounts for approximately two-thirds of the reported spills the NDEE receives.

In addition to reported spills, the NDEE recorded 385 citizen complaints. Complaints are referred to and reviewed by all appropriate agencies.

NDEE personnel, in partnership with the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) and State Fire Marshal (SFM), completed annual training related to responding to an illegal clandestine drug manufacturing (March). NDEE hosted and presented training to the Nebraska Hazardous Incident team in June. Also in June, USEPA and NDEE trained NDEE staff, local health and fire officials in performing environmental sampling at environmental incidents.



Continuity of Operations

The Department has the responsibility to continue operations in the aftermath of any disaster that adversely affects its facilities and resources. The agency's *Continuity of Operations Plan* describes how we will react, respond, and recover from an incident or disaster that causes a disruption of the agency's essential functions. In March of 2025, the city of Lincoln experienced a widespread and lengthy power outage. The agency was able to fully function, in part, due to elements contained in this plan.

A functional exercise, testing the ability to reach/notify staff as described in the plan, was completed in May.

Quality Assurance

The EPA has requirements for conducting quality management activities for all environmental information to ensure that the Department's decisions are supported by data of known and documented quality. In turn, the Department is responsible for reviewing the procedures a project will use to collect and analyze samples, store, and manage data, and ensure the reports they write are of high quality. The *Quality Management Plan* is the framework for Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) which are written to outline these procedures. Management Assistance Division staff help coordinate the review of QAPPs by appropriate personnel throughout the Department. Staff were provided in-house refresher training on the agency's *Quality Management Plan* in December.

Grants/Contract Coordination

The Grant Coordinator is responsible for:

- Completing federal grant applications.
- Ensuring compliance with grant conditions and requirements, particularly reporting requirements.
- Maintaining and coordinating all official record of correspondence with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 7 grants office.
- Tracking of grant applications through the award process, and follow-up of reporting and conditions.
- Ensuring NDEE programs meet reporting deadlines, consolidating reports and verifying they are sent to and received by EPA.
- Ensuring all required sub-awards are reported to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Sub-award Reporting System.
- Corresponding with EPA Headquarters to ensure NDEE stays in compliance with Federal grant guidance and new requirements.
- Providing assistance with Requests for Proposals, contract development.
- Working with the Fiscal Services Section to ensure communication regarding grants, contracts and programs.
- Working with Records Management Section to verify all agreements and contracts are in the Enterprise Content Management system (documents imaged).

Funding of Management Services

The Management Services Division provides essential administrative and technical support to the Department. Some activities in Management Services are program specific, but many are not. Funding for the Division is provided by two methods: 1) the majority of the staff salaries and activities are funded through an overhead charge to the Department's various programs; 2) Program-specific staff time and activities are charged to those programs and the grants associated with them.