

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

# CAL FIRE STRATEGIC PLAN 2024



*Transforming  
Tomorrow*



“We are an all hazards, all risk organization focused on fire prevention, natural resource protection, and fire suppression. This is who we are. This is CAL FIRE. *Transforming tomorrow* is included in the title of the plan, I expect we will embrace technology and find efficiencies to reduce the “green tape” that will allow CAL FIRE to be in a better position to be ready for any task.”

JOE TYLER  
CAL FIRE Director/Fire Chief



“Every day, the men and women of CAL FIRE make California proud. When wildfires bear down on our communities, upending lives and prompting evacuations, CAL FIRE’s finest head the other way, into the flames and harm’s way, to protect lives, property and landscapes.”

WADE CROWFOOT  
California Natural Resources Agency  
Secretary

# BASICS OF THE PLAN



# ABOUT THE PLAN

Plan development was organized in four distinct phases:

## PHASE 1

A consultative process and pre-planning, the creation of the CAL FIRE Strategic Plan Executive Steering Committee, including hiring a Project Manager, reviewing previous strategic planning efforts, assessing what had been accomplished since the 2019 Strategic Plan, and presenting the development of the Plan at several workshops and meetings.

## PHASE 2

Bringing employees together to create the framework for drafting the Plan including creating a governance structure, engaging CAL FIRE's Executive Team<sup>1</sup>, soliciting internal feedback through a department-wide survey, and packaging feedback into actionable items.

## PHASE 3

External engagement and implemented online tools for employees, partners, collaborators, colleagues, and the public to participate including soliciting external feedback through a survey.

## PHASE 4

Drafting the Plan, internal and external leadership review and approval, sharing the Plan departmentwide for all employees to incorporate into their work plans and daily life, and the establishment of a Strategic Plan Action Committee under the Department Leadership Team (DLT)<sup>2</sup> for creation, reporting, and monitoring of the Department's annual action plan.

# ENGAGEMENT

## *Internal Outreach*

From December 2022 to May 2023 a strategic planning survey, distributed to all employee mailboxes, gathered a statistically significant sample comprised of 1,331 respondents. Over 70% of responses were positive or neutral, indicating feeling acknowledged and appreciated by CAL FIRE, though there were noted areas for improved engagement.



# ENGAGEMENT

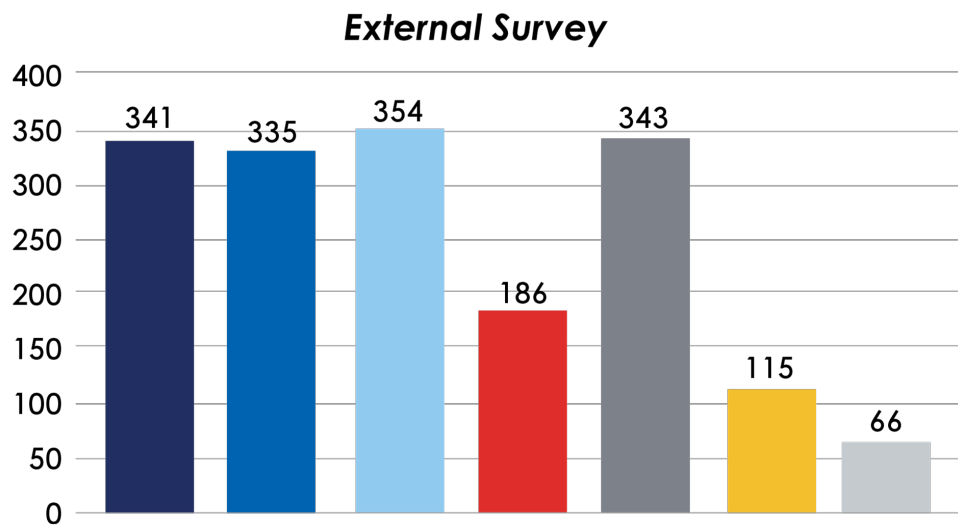
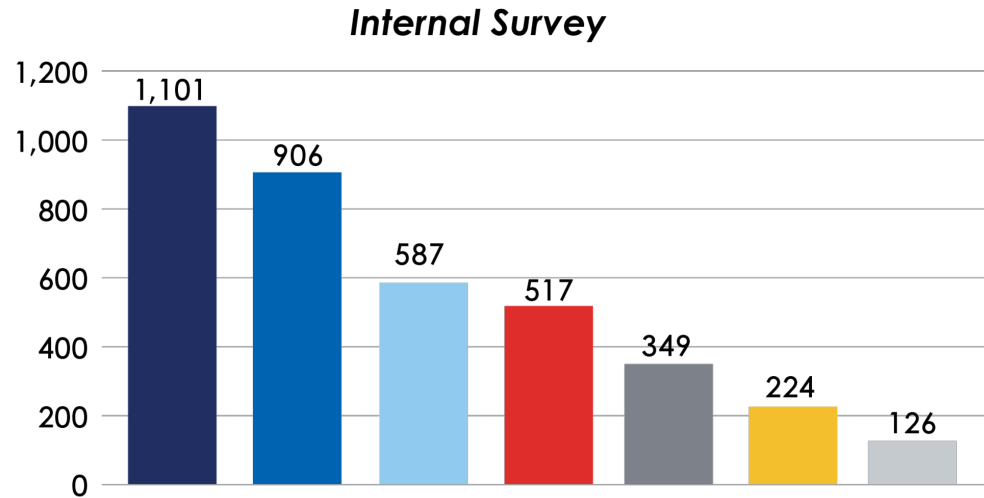
## *External Outreach*

From February 2023 to August 2023, a strategic planning survey was made available to partners, collaborators, colleagues, and the public through publication on CAL FIRE's forward-facing webpage dedicated to strategic planning efforts.



# ENGAGEMENT

## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE TOP INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES THAT THE DEPARTMENT WILL FACE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?



- Retention and Recruitment
- Hiring
- Funding
- Training
- Climate Change and Increased Fire Activity
- Write-In Responses
- Lack of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

### Write-In Responses (Categorized):

- Accountability and transparency
- Collaborations
- Declining support
- Employee Labor Organizations
- Fire activity, management, and enforcement
- Forest management
- Government
- Lack of knowledge, education, or awareness
- Outdated or lacking infrastructure/technology
- Political and special interest group pressures
- Public perception
- Retention
- Utility Companies
- Wildland Urban Interface
- Workforce capacity needs

# ENGAGEMENT

## *Working Groups*

As we began to gather initial feedback, a need was identified to further focus on identified issues and evaluate and operationalize goals and objectives. As a result, two working groups were formed: 1) The Strategic Plan Working Group which consisted of DLT members representing Sacramento Headquarters and the Regions, and 2) The Front-Line Strategic Plan Working Group representing Region and Unit field personnel.





# THE CAL FIRE 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

## Key Accomplishments



### ***Advanced Fire Protection Operations,***

we increased the number of year-round engines, acquired and replaced frontline and reserve fleet, increased firefighting personnel, added diversified hand crew models, and expanded relationships with our partners.



### ***Enhanced Aviation Resources,***

we expanded our aerial firefighting fleet to include S70i Firehawk helicopters, C130 air tankers, intelligence aircraft, exclusive use aircraft, and Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) program, and we implemented night flying aviation operations.



### ***Enriched Internal Operations,***

we increased critical administrative and program support personnel, created a secure, responsive, and integrated user-centric technology culture, reduced waste and streamlined business processes, and improved internal and external communication.



### ***Focused On People,***

we enhanced departmental recruitment and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, expanded the Training Center to three additional sites, distributed grants to underinvested communities, and we continue to work on addressing paramedic shortages.

# THE CAL FIRE 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

## Key Accomplishments



**Increased Situational Awareness Capabilities,** we expanded the wildfire camera network, improved incident command data analysis, established predictive modeling capability for fire personnel, expanded intelligence, introduced artificial intelligence in fire detection, and installed telematics.



**Promoted Safety, Health, and Wellness,** we implemented the Voluntary Wellness Screening Program, introduced First Responder's Resiliency, updated personal protective equipment and uniform wear, employed science-based methods to reduce stress exposure, and increase physical fitness, and provided COVID-19 support for employees and the community.



**Stewarded Healthy Forests and Safe Communities,** we increased pace and scale of prescribed fire and fuel-reduction activities, improved interagency data sharing, developed sophisticated web applications, established tribal, forest health, and wildfire prevention grants, and developed an online burn permit process.

# THE ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

To translate these priorities into actionable metrics annually, prior to the fiscal year, we will leverage a variety of methodologies and tools to:

- Identify five to six objectives for focus.
- Develop and implement key performance indicators (KPIs) that provide clear, quantifiable measures of our progress. These metrics will serve as a yardstick, enabling us to track our journey toward the fulfillment of our aligned objectives.
- Identify and assign the responsible CAL FIRE program(s), function(s), and/or committee(s).



# OUR MISSION

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California.



# OUR VISION

At CAL FIRE, we lead a dedicated, diverse, and inclusive workforce while maximizing partnerships to create a safer and more resilient California.



# OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIORS

Our values consist of the core principles that shape our culture and are further defined by their strategically aligned behaviors.

**INTEGRITY:** We demonstrate our ideals and intentions by doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.

## *Integrity Behaviors*

- **Honesty:** We are truthful and straightforward in our personal and professional actions, communications, and relationships. We are committed to sincerity and integrity, avoiding deception and falsehood. We are genuine!
- **Accountability:** We accept responsibility for our actions, or lack thereof, as a mark of professionalism. The duties performed by each of us contribute to the overall achievement of our mission, and we must be responsible for our role in this effort.

- **Reliability:** We deliver consistent and trustworthy service to the public, our partners, and our colleagues.

**SERVICE:** We provide selfless care for all through dedication, professionalism, and preparation.

## *Service Behaviors*

- **Humility:** We are confident in ourselves and receptive to other perspectives.
- **Selflessness:** We put the care of others above individual gain and treat all with respect and compassion.
- **Dedication:** We are devoted to our mission and professional growth.

# OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIORS

**COMMUNITY:** We foster inclusive relationships with diverse groups of colleagues, cooperators, and the communities we serve to further partnerships, collective goals, and interests.

## *Community Behaviors*

- **Collaboration:** We work together through open communication and understanding to achieve a common goal.
- **Trustworthiness:** We are reliable, honest, and dependable through transparent communication, ethical behavior, and consistent actions.
- **Engaging:** We actively participate, interact, and contribute to shared interests, discussions, or activities. We foster connections, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of involvement to create a vibrant and connected community.

**DIVERSITY:** We cultivate an environment of support and we respect individuals with differing backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

## *Diversity Behaviors*

- **Understanding:** We are mindful of varying perspectives while demonstrating respect and compassion.
- **Inclusivity:** We ensure equal voice and opportunity for all by actively creating an environment where everyone collaborates towards a common goal while being receptive to the ideas and contributions of others.
- **Respectfulness:** We create a positive and supportive environment to provide one another with the confidence and ability to safely share opinions and perspectives.

# GOAL 1

## Attract, hire, and retain quality employees.

### Objective 1.1

Develop, implement, and maintain a career-related website that provides comprehensive resources including, but not limited to, examinations, job opportunities, and an electronic application process to improve access and education about CAL FIRE's diverse career opportunities.

### Objective 1.2

Review, evaluate, and modify job class specification requirements including essential functions, working cooperatively with applicable control agencies, to encourage inclusivity and ensure qualified applicants are being reached.

### Objective 1.3

Develop and implement an employee feedback portal to inform data-driven improvements in the areas of recruitment, on- and off-boarding, and retention to ensure an adaptive approach to an evolving workforce.

### Objective 1.4

Develop and implement resources that promote work-life balance, mental well-being, and open communication to enhance overall job satisfaction and retention.

### Objective 1.5

Develop and implement a marketing strategy utilizing industry-specific resources to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

### Objective 1.6

Develop and implement a formalized mentorship program, interactive training modules, evaluations, and resources to provide employees a positive and supportive career path.



# GOAL 2

**Ensure all employees understand how the Department's various programs and job duties contribute towards efficiently achieving the CAL FIRE mission.**

## **Objective 2.1**

Develop and implement visual training tools on departmental programs/functions (what they do) and organizational structure (geographically, programmatically) to assist employees in understanding the interactions between Regions, Units, and Programs in achieving the CAL FIRE mission.

## **Objective 2.2**

Develop and implement cross-training opportunities to help employees explore the various programs and their functions within the Department.

## **Objective 2.3**

Develop and implement a real-time, web-based tool that provides employees and the public access to a clearly outlined organizational structure with job functions described and contact information available for each function.

# GOAL 3

**Promote a culture that values equal access, embraces diverse backgrounds and experiences, and actively removes barriers to cultivate a more inclusive environment.**

## **Objective 3.1**

Develop and implement a dedicated intranet page designed as a resource tool to promote education on diversity, equity, and inclusion, clarifying these principles and dispelling misconceptions.

## **Objective 3.2**

Develop and implement a geographic information system map that will present demographic census data aimed to orient and improve outreach, education, and assist with meaningful engagement of communities and diverse populations served.

## **Objective 3.3**

Develop and implement customized plans and innovative resources to better understand organizational and community needs surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

# GOAL 4

**Leverage technology to modernize internal human resources processes and create efficient and effective innovative solutions to promote, support, and enhance the employee experience.**

## **Objective 4.1**

Develop and implement ongoing customer service surveys to solicit feedback on interactions and experiences with human resources personnel and processes to measure and improve customer satisfaction.

## **Objective 4.2**

Develop and implement a process to query input from internal human resources personnel about barriers and inefficiencies they encounter, and how these could be mitigated.

## **Objective 4.3**

Develop and implement a human resources focused onboarding process (including employee orientation) to provide new and existing employees with assistance in completing new-hire paperwork, access to resources and training modules, and a contact to answer personnel-related questions.

## **Objective 4.4**

Develop and implement an internal human resources review system for determining compliance in applying employee benefits and compensation in order to streamline processes and ensure accuracy for employees.

## **Objective 4.5**

Develop and implement detailed human resources-related trainings (e.g., benefits, compensation, injury and accommodations, promotional opportunities) for all managers and supervisors to improve operational efficiencies in core and support functions.

## **Objective 4.6**

Expand and enhance the internal Supervisor's Toolbox to serve as a one-stop shop for basic personnel information and a comprehensive online resource for information.

## **Objective 4.7**

Develop and implement a human resources software solution to streamline communication by providing an automated submittal and inquiry system to improve employee access and enhance the customer experience.

# GOAL 5

**Strengthen the Department's physical and digital infrastructure and streamline access to information across core services.**

## **Objective 5.1**

Review and assess core digital infrastructure across all levels of the Department to identify prioritized areas for improvement.

## **Objective 5.2**

Review and assess physical infrastructure across all levels of the Department to identify prioritized areas for improvement.

## **Objective 5.3**

Develop and implement a technology awareness and training program to optimize processes using departmental tools and services, including artificial intelligence.

## **Objective 5.4**

Consolidate existing data and technology systems to improve departmental efficiency and modernize employee and public experiences.

## **Objective 5.5**

Identify opportunities and develop and implement solutions to simplify, streamline, and automate Technical Services program-related business processes.

# GOAL 6

## Identify core capabilities and strengthen operational capacity.

### **Objective 6.1**

Ensure the Department has the resources and infrastructure to adapt to evolving operational demands and legal frameworks.

### **Objective 6.2**

Apply emerging technology to strengthen core operations.

### **Objective 6.3**

Develop and complete a comprehensive assessment of fire protection capabilities, wildfire response standards, and values at risk to confirm the future placement of fire protection resources.

### **Objective 6.4**

Expand natural resource management and fire prevention operations to meet the state's wildfire and forest resilience goals and changing policy and legal mandates.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All employees, colleagues, collaborators, partners, and the public who participated.

CAL FIRE Front-Line Strategic Plan Working Group

CAL FIRE Department Leadership Team Strategic Plan Working Group

CAL FIRE Department Leadership Team

CAL FIRE Executive Team

CAL FIRE 2024 Strategic Planning Executive Steering Committee



The 2024 CAL FIRE Strategic Plan is the Department's Plan







[www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)