

Department of Environmental Quality

I. Internal Scan

1. Identify the impact of the increase in Utah's aging population on your agency. How will the changing demographic affect your agency's overarching policy issues, direction, program considerations, changing constituency needs, and management concerns?

- a. Process:

The Utah 2030 charge has been presented to the Department's Quality Council (Executive Staff including Executive Director, Deputy Director and the Directors of DEQ's Divisions and Offices). The impact of Utah's aging population was considered at that time and has been considered again as Utah 2030 has been developed. This narrative was then drafted by DEQ's Planning Coordinator and HRM Director, then endorsed by the Quality Council.

- b. Time frame and who will be involved:

An initial presentation was made to the Quality Council by the Division of Aging representative. Agency management including Department Director, Deputy Director and Division and Office Directors will consider related issue as they revisit their annual goals in the Spring of each year. Potential impacts on the senior population from environmental projects – including clean-ups and permitting-related activities – will continue to be considered on a case by case basis as each is planned.

2. If your agency has begun to address the impact of the aging population, describe what you are doing to address or respond to these anticipated changes, including identified priorities, overarching policies, programs, etc.

- a. Process:

Senior citizens, along with the very young, are more susceptible to environmental pollution. DEQ is sensitive to these populations and considers potential impacts as policies are developed and environmental clean ups are considered and implemented. Maintaining health-based environmental standards will continue to be a priority.

Mature workers are a growing component of the labor force. DEQ policies do not discriminate against the mature worker. The Department is engaged in succession planning in preparing for the retiring elderly through its Leadership and Employee Development Training Program. s.

- b. Time frame:

Ongoing.

c. Who will be involved:

Department management oversees policy development. Project managers, division leadership, and department management (as needed) are involved in addressing environmental concerns as they arise. Department management and the DEQ Leadership Steering Committee oversee the Leadership Development program which is offered to all Department personnel.

II. Priorities

1. The work of the Department of Environmental Quality proceeded in accordance with the Department's Work Plan.
2. Overarching Issues
 - a. Senior citizens are more susceptible to health problems associated with environmental pollution.
 - b. The loss of qualified staff and their expertise due to retirement will impact environmental programs and infrastructure needs.
 - c. When senior workers continue employment rather than retiring, the Department benefits from their expertise and the mentoring they can provide to newer staff members. If senior citizens with environmental expertise can be recruited - even for volunteer work - they will make a valuable contribution to the Department's overall mission.
 - d. As population grows, there will be a corresponding need to increase environmental infrastructure in order to keep pace with new regulations and new technologies. If trends continue, this will need to be done with limited funding.
3. These issues were selected by first considering each individually, then by combining like issues into the general categories: environmental health, loss of staff due to aging and retirement, and infrastructure concerns also due to aging.

III. Planning

1. Senior citizens are more susceptible to health problems associated with environmental pollution. (Overarching Issue 2.a.)

Actions:

The department will continue to review environmental data and considers its impact on sensitive populations – including the senior population. Ongoing

monitoring of the air, land and water will guide future policy development and environmental actions.

Results:

The department will continue to work with local, state and federal environmental officials to identify issues that impact vulnerable populations. As the need arises, DEQ will advise the aging populations of potential impacts and will suggest appropriate actions which may be taken. DEQ will continue to make information available to individuals, key organizations, individuals and other caregivers through the media, brochures and fact sheets, community outreach programs and the use of its website.

This type of work is ongoing and will change as conditions dictate and special needs arise. Permitting and monitoring efforts are ongoing. Federal rules and regulations set the stage for needed protection of the environment which are then implemented by the State. DEQ works with state and local officials, federal agencies, academia, and citizens to increase public awareness of issues and collaborate to improve all aspects of the environment.

2. The loss of qualified staff and their expertise due to retirement has a dramatic impact on environmental programs and infrastructure needs. (Overarching Issue 2.b.)

Actions:

The DEQ will continue partnering with DHRM, state, and local entities to identify all options available to use the expertise of our senior population. DEQ will also continue to offer training programs and other programs to enhance the skills of employees and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency.

Results:

There will continue to be an educated work force in the most up-to-date environmental processes and a trained work force in local environmental health districts, with competent health scientists and operators throughout the state. DEQ has instituted and will continue an employee development training program to build skills, and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency. Every two years a core of succession participants are being trained to potentially lead a program within the department. DEQ will work with the DHRM to identify and enhance existing benefit packages and other incentives to retain qualified senior employees and use their expertise to enhance the existing workforce while providing the needed expertise to protect the environment. DEQ offers flex schedules, telecommuting, and reduced hours.

DEQ has programs that train and certify local health and water system operators. Professional staff receive ongoing technical procedures. The state has a volunteer program that can be used to take advantage of the expertise of retired employees in meeting educational needs, mentoring, and to serve on boards and committees.

3. If senior staff decides to continue employment rather than retiring, the Department benefits from their expertise and mentoring ability. If senior citizens with environmental expertise can be recruited even for volunteer work, they also can be expected to make a valuable contribution to achieving the Department's mission. (Overarching Issue 2.c.)

Actions:

Senior citizens with environmental training provide opportunities for DEQ and the public to benefit from their expertise and insights. DEQ will partner with DHRM, state, and local entities to identify all options available to utilize the expertise of our senior population.

Results:

DEQ will work with DHRM to identify and enhance existing benefit packages and other incentives to retain qualified senior employees and to recruit senior citizens to enhance the existing workforce. This work will be ongoing.

4. As population grows, so will the need to increase environmental infrastructure to keep pace with increasing regulations, new technologies and limited funding. (Overarching Issue 2.d.)

Actions:

DEQ will continue to educate local, state and federal officials on the current and projected state of the environment. Technology that can be implemented with existing systems to enhance the quality of services will be implemented as funding can be secured. An ongoing effort is needed to educate the local, state and federal offices of the importance in securing funding to ensure adequate resources are available to protect the environment and public health of its citizens. DEQ will continue to explore all possible funding options in order to ensure a health environment for Utah's citizens. Funding will also be sought to maintain a qualified and educated workforce that is adaptable to change and addresses the needs of an aging population through research, education, partnerships, and strategic planning.

Results:

Increase funding to improve infrastructure associated with the environment. Funding provided to secure loans for local water districts to improve drinking water systems, wastewater systems, increase air monitoring equipment to monitor air quality, overall increase in the proper use of waste disposal and increase monitoring of lakes and streams for quality of life. This will be accomplished by an educated citizenship that understands the environment, its obligations and funding necessary to provide a positive state of the environment. The Department will use a proactive approach to retain qualified staff, maintain expertise needed to accomplish environmental programs and meet conditions of increasing demands with limited resources.

