

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, GOVERNOR**

James C. Kenney, Cabinet Secretary

NEWS RELEASE*For Immediate Release***August 7, 2023**

The Environment Department's mission is to protect and restore the environment and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations.

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Environment Department releases fourth annual Employee Engagement Survey Report

Department makes strides in diversity, promotional opportunities, employee retainment

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) released the [2023 Employee Engagement Survey report](#). The department measures employee engagement through an annual survey to hear from its employees and respond to their feedback. The report contains data from responses to 88 questions that were included in this year's survey. Key findings from this year's report include:

- 92% of employees are willing to put in extra effort to get a job done. One example of an employee going above and beyond is when Peter Garcia, Sr., of the Hazardous Waste Bureau, led NMED's wildfire response efforts in 2022, logging extra hours and miles to ensure residents knew how to properly dispose of the resulting waste and working with federal agencies to clean up all the debris with no out-of-pocket cost.
- 91% of employees say the work they do is important. To provide targeted guidance on how to prevent pathogens from contaminating ground water and impacting environmental and human health, Avery Young, of the Ground Water Quality Bureau, developed a training course for surface disposal facility operators statewide and led sessions in Santa Fe and Las Cruces for operators in northern and southern New Mexico.
- 91% of employees like the work they do. Collaborating with stakeholders, including community organizations, individual citizens, and the permittees, Megan McLean and NMED's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Group make sure that public safety is protected through compliance with the facility's operating permit. Nothing the right balance of involvement from NMED upper management who let technical staff lead during negotiations, the group was able to work through the WIPP permit renewal process that culminated in a settlement agreement that resulted in a more stringent permit.
- 89% of employees look for ways to do their job better. Last summer, NMED deployed aerial flyovers and analyzed satellite imagery to identify severe water system leaks in Chama, shortening the amount of time it took to get faucets flowing again. Andrea Telmo, project manager with the Construction Programs Bureau, worked closely with the community to identify allowable uses for existing state funding to affect emergency repairs. Drinking Water Bureau staff personally met with Chama water system operators to help troubleshoot problems and come up with prioritized solutions.

“Our employees are the best public sector employees in the state – they understand the importance of their work in service to New Mexico and put in tremendous effort to get their job done every day,” said **Environment Secretary James Kenney**. “The data from the current and past surveys will focus our upcoming budget request on proper compensation for the men and women who protect public health and the environment across our state.”

NMED employees remain highly engaged in the work they do at a **62% engagement rate**, well above the national average of 32% reported by Gallup in January 2023.

Since starting the survey four years ago, NMED employees are more confident that their opportunities to grow professionally at NMED will lead to better job opportunities, more satisfied with the job training they receive, and feel their performance evaluations more fairly reflect their work. As in past years, the results in the 2023 survey show there is room for improvement in providing more meaningful employee recognition, a better salary structure, more opportunities for promotion, and focused efforts to prepare employees for potential security threats.

Previous survey reports led the department to focus on increasing pay for employees; improving diversity, equity, and inclusion across the workplace; and streamlining administrative processes. Past surveys also measured NMED employees’ desire to work in a different office location than the one assigned. In the last fiscal year, the Department analyzed its business needs and processed duty station changes for about 12% of its workforce. Past Employee Engagement Survey Reports and other department performance reports are available [here](#).

The department currently has 515 full time employees and is actively recruiting applicants for a wide range of open positions. Candidates can find job openings at NMED by selecting “Department of Environment” [here](#) and [here](#).

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