



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
CONSUMER
A F F A I R S

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022–2027

AMENDED OCTOBER 2024

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As the director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), I am proud to share DCA's 2022–2027 Strategic Plan.

DCA is uniquely comprised of various entities that license and regulate millions of professionals in more than 280 license types. This plan outlines DCA's organizational objectives and path forward for upcoming years. With our mission, vision, and values as touchstones, we pledge to protect the 40 million Californians who depend on the Department for their health, safety, and services.

The Department holds itself to a high standard in providing outstanding support services, oversight, and innovative solutions to those who regulate California professionals and vocations so that—through this partnership — all Californians are informed, empowered, and protected.

Our state's values are a source of pride: They are the gift of our past and the foundation of our future as we create and celebrate a California for All. These values are evident in DCA's strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as in our shared dedication to each and every consumer.

For nearly 150 years, California—the Golden State—has served as the nation's gold standard for consumer protection. With this latest Strategic Plan, DCA will build upon California's legacy of leadership and service by focusing on goals in six key areas:

1. Policy and Advocacy
2. Communications
3. Organizational Effectiveness and Services
4. Technology
5. Enforcement
6. Licensing

Like consumer protection itself, this Strategic Plan is a true team effort, drawing on the diversity, expertise, and dedication of our staff. This guiding document is the direct result of feedback, insights, and inspiration from employees at all levels. It belongs to all those who participated, to those we support, and to our entire workforce. On behalf of DCA, I thank all who played a role in this vital process.

I invite all DCA employees to join me in implementing this Strategic Plan. Together, we protect California consumers.



Kimberly Kirchmeyer

Director, Department of Consumer Affairs

ABOUT US

DCA is a unique and dynamic department made up of 36 different boards, bureaus, a committee, a commission, and a program (referred to as boards and bureaus hereafter) that license and regulate more than 3.4 million licensees in more than 280 license types including certificates, registrations, and permits. Together, DCA protects and serves consumers in many ways:

- **DCA is a service provider**—Through several administrative divisions and offices, including Communications, Legislative Affairs, Legal Affairs, Human Resources, Business Services, Fiscal Office, and Information Technology, DCA provides oversight and support services for these boards and bureaus to assist them in their mission of consumer protection.
- **DCA is an educator**—DCA and its licensing boards and bureaus educate consumers by giving them information they need to avoid being victimized by unscrupulous, unlicensed, or unqualified people who promote deceptive or unsafe services.
- **DCA is a licensing entity**—Through its licensing boards and bureaus, DCA licenses more than 3.4 million professionals and enables consumers to check the license status of these professionals online or by phone.
- **DCA is a regulator**—Through its licensing boards and bureaus and its Division of Investigation, DCA investigates consumer complaints on issues under its jurisdiction. If violations are found, license holders can face discipline that may include probation, suspension or revocation of a license, fines and citations, letters of reprimand, cease and desist orders, or criminal charges.

DCA is committed to supporting the core mission of consumer protection, which is shared by all its boards and bureaus. The individuals who serve at DCA inform and empower consumers, promote consumer interests before lawmakers, enforce consumer protection laws, collaborate with law enforcement to fight consumer fraud, promote use of fair and valid licensing examination programs, and work to ensure that consumers are protected in California.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Our Mission

Provide outstanding support services, oversight, and innovative solutions to boards and bureaus that regulate California professionals and vocations so that through this partnership all Californians are informed, empowered, and protected.

Our Vision

Together, protecting California consumers.

Our Values

- Accessibility
- Accountability
- Communication
- Consumer Protection
- Diversity
- Equity
- Inclusion
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Transparency
- Trust

GOAL 1: POLICY AND ADVOCACY

DCA advocates on behalf of boards and bureaus by ensuring that statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures support and further the mandates and mission of DCA.

- 1.1** In partnership with the boards and bureaus, evaluate the regulation process to promote efficiency, reduce time frames, and maximize resources, consistency, and transparency.
- 1.2** Establish a regulatory subject matter expert group inclusive of all boards and bureaus to promote an understanding of the regulatory process, provide mentorship, and develop and share best practices.
- 1.3** Standardize coordination, monitoring, and assessment of legislation implementation to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.
- 1.4** Develop continuing education guidelines to ensure the education creates a more competent licensing population to enhance public protection and cultural competency.
- 1.5** Establish a committee to build a sustainable diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy to strengthen policies, enhance training, and provide opportunities for employee engagement.
- 1.6** Review departmental policies and update as necessary to ensure that policies are inclusive, accessible, and unbiased.
- 1.7** Update the DCA style guide to address the need for plain and inclusive language to ensure clear and consistent communication.
- 1.8** Develop a Language Access Policy to guide DCA and the boards and bureaus on interpretation and translation services and resources to increase outreach to all Californians.

GOAL 2: COMMUNICATION

DCA provides resources, tools, and support for delivering relevant, timely, and accurate information that strengthens DCA's commitment to a California for All.

- 2.1** Develop an internal communications plan for consistency and efficiency of content delivery.
- 2.2** Develop an external communications plan to standardize communication, reach diverse audiences, and educate about DCA's roles and responsibilities.
- 2.3** Promote the development of consistent, efficient, and relevant content to increase awareness and understanding of DCA's value to boards and bureaus.
- 2.4** Highlight DCA success stories and services available to consumers to assist boards and bureaus in raising awareness of their consumer protection efforts with the public.
- 2.5** Expand outreach through multilingual communications, partner agencies, stakeholder groups, trusted messengers, and other strategies to increase accessibility, awareness, and utilization of resources for consumers, licensees, and future applicants.
- 2.6** Evaluate innovative and emerging modes of communication to enhance user experience, ensure user accessibility, and reduce service request wait times for the Consumer Information Center.
- 2.7** Standardize public meeting information on all board and bureau web pages to improve accessibility.

GOAL 3: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND SERVICES

DCA utilizes effective leadership, governance, and best practices to provide oversight and quality services to support the boards and bureaus.

- 3.1** Implement service catalogs with service-level targets to set expectations and provide consistent services to clients.
- 3.2** Enhance and update internal webpage/intranet information to centralize communication and resources.
- 3.3** Create a modernized board and committee member database to improve the ability of Board and Bureau Relations to provide services to the boards, bureaus, agencies, and the Governor's Office.
- 3.4** Assess feedback from boards and bureaus on central services to improve customer service.
- 3.5** Equip leaders, managers, and supervisors with the tools and resources to establish results-based management.
- 3.6** Utilize innovative methods to expand recruitment efforts and widen candidate pools to enhance DCA's ability to fill vacancies with qualified applicants.
- 3.7** Implement a more comprehensive onboarding process to prepare employees for working at DCA and understanding their roles in supporting DCA's mission.
- 3.8** Implement a more comprehensive offboarding process for employees to promote better security and safety.
- 3.9** Incorporate implicit bias awareness training for all employees to create a culture of awareness of implicit bias and how it may impact the decision-making process.

GOAL 3: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND SERVICES *(CONTINUED)*

DCA utilizes effective leadership, governance, and best practices to provide oversight and quality services to support the boards and bureaus.

- 3.10** Create a pool of licensing and enforcement experts to transfer knowledge to existing staff and assist with mission-critical workloads during times of influx.
- 3.11** Capitalize on lessons learned and best practices from COVID-19 to eliminate barriers, improve processes, and modernize services.
- 3.12** Develop best practices for the Department and the boards and bureaus regarding the collection and utilization of demographic data to promote consistent and legally defensible practices.
- 3.13** Create opportunities to generate additional ideas, input, and feedback from internal and external stakeholders regarding changes made to support Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA).
- 3.14** Add DEIA accomplishments to the annual report template to ensure boards and bureaus continue embedding DEIA into processes and procedures.
- 3.15** Each DCA division will create and implement three DEIA action items that support DCA's mission and values.
- 3.16** Increase outreach to underserved and underrepresented communities to further pathways to employment with DCA.

GOAL 4: TECHNOLOGY

DCA addresses business needs through creative, secure, accessible, and intuitive solutions.

- 4.1** Create Department-wide security architecture to ensure data security and compliance with the state's CAL-Secure Initiative.
- 4.2** Continue DCA Business Modernization efforts for all boards and bureaus to enhance digital user experience and reduce carbon footprint.
- 4.3** Encourage DCA divisions to assess critical internal processes and reduce processing times.
- 4.4** Implement a tracking system for DCA services to ensure accountability.
- 4.5** Develop a DCA-wide mobile application to increase access and outreach to consumers.
- 4.6** Develop measurement tools to transition to results-based management focusing on performance, delivery, efficiency, and accountability.
- 4.7** Increase the accessibility, usability, and visibility to DCA's Open Data Portal to encourage greater usage and understanding of the resources available.

GOAL 5: ENFORCEMENT

DCA provides resources for its boards and bureaus to promptly protect consumers from harmful conduct by unlicensed and licensed professionals who pose a threat to the public's health, safety, and welfare.

- 5.1** Enhance the quality, thoroughness, and timeliness of Division of Investigation (DOI) investigations to provide boards and bureaus with efficient services to protect consumers and employees.
- 5.2** Strengthen communication with the boards and bureaus to provide updates and transparency on case progression.
- 5.3** Restructure the cost model for client billing of DOI services.
- 5.4** Standardize training for DOI staff to achieve consistency and maintain quality investigations.
- 5.5** Provide special investigative (non-sworn) services for appropriate cases to reduce costs and timelines for boards and bureaus without non-sworn investigators.
- 5.6** Utilize subject-matter experts and technology to standardize processes, identify enforcement and enforcement data best practices, and improve training for enforcement staff.
- 5.7** Re-establish enforcement user groups to achieve more accurate and standardized data collection and reports.
- 5.8** Provide the boards and bureaus with standardized language and content to promote understanding of the enforcement process.
- 5.9** Standardize public posting of disciplinary actions to educate consumers and increase awareness.
- 5.10** Add DEIA to the Enforcement Academy curriculum to ensure enforcement staff are aware of issues relating to potential bias and equipped to practice inclusiveness.

GOAL 6: LICENSING

DCA provides resources for boards and bureaus to expeditiously license qualified applicants to allow timely entrance into the workforce, avoid establishing artificial barriers to licensure, and maintain consumer protection.

- 6.1** Partner with boards and bureaus to develop a standardized structure to promote understanding of licensing requirements and processes to potential applicants, licensees, and other external stakeholders.
- 6.2** Utilize subject matter experts and technology to standardize processes, identify licensing and licensing data best practices, and improve training for licensing staff.
- 6.3** Standardize training for board and bureau staff to achieve consistency and maintain quality standards among all licensing processes.
- 6.4** Re-establish licensing user groups to achieve more accurate and standardized data collection and reports.
- 6.5** Monitor and assess data to ensure licensing resources and services are expeditiously provided for military members and their families.
- 6.6** Partner with boards and bureaus to evaluate occupational licensing requirements to comply with Business and Professions Code section 139 and reduce potential barriers to licensure.
- 6.7** Promote awareness of the ability to use an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) in lieu of a social security number when applying for licensure.
- 6.8** Promote awareness of expedited licensure for asylees, refugees, and holders of special immigrant visas.
- 6.9** Increase awareness of DCA professions through targeted outreach to help create a diverse licensing population that meets the needs of all Californians and promotes access to jobs.

GOAL 6: LICENSING *(CONTINUED)*

DCA provides resources for boards and bureaus to expeditiously license qualified applicants to allow timely entrance into the workforce, avoid establishing artificial barriers to licensure, and maintain consumer protection.

- 6.10** Create an online platform that lists the education level needed for licensure for the DCA regulated professions so people can determine what they may qualify for, to support workforce development.
- 6.11** Monitor and assess language access needs in board and bureau licensure examinations to make examinations more accessible.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

To understand the environment in which the Department operates and to identify factors that could impact the Department's success, the California Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID Planning Unit (SOLID) conducted an environmental scan of the internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- Interviews were conducted with members of the DCA Executive team. Nine out of 11 members responded, and interviews were completed during January 2022.
- Interviews were conducted with members of the DCA Centralized Services Division chiefs. Nine out of 11 members responded, and interviews were completed during the months of March and April 2021.
- An online survey was sent out to board and bureau leadership, board and committee members, and external stakeholders between the months of December 2021 and January 2022. Two-hundred and twelve stakeholders completed the survey.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by the Department's executive team during two strategic planning sessions facilitated by SOLID on February 24–25, 2022. This information guided the executive team in the review of its mission, vision, and values while directing the strategic goals and objectives outlined in its new strategic plan.

DEI SUPPLEMENTAL PROCESS

In September of 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom, through Executive Order (N-16-22), strengthened the state's commitment to a "California For All" by directing state agencies and departments to take additional actions to embed equity analysis and considerations into their policies and practices, including but not limited to, the strategic planning process.

SOLID conducted a new DEI-focused scan and analysis during October, November, and December of 2023. Feedback was solicited from the DCA executive team, DCA division chiefs, board and bureau leadership, board and committee members, legislative representatives, and other state agencies. This feedback was used to assist DCA in considering a diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and accessibility perspective to its current strategic plan.

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Amended strategic plan adopted on October 1, 2024.

This strategic plan is based on stakeholder information and discussions facilitated by SOLID for the Department of Consumer Affairs on April 11, 2024. Subsequent amendments may have been made after the adoption of this plan.



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