

# National Transportation Safety Board

## Strategic Plan Fiscal Year 2022–2026



**INTEGRITY ◊ TRANSPARENCY ◊ INDEPENDENCE ◊**

**EXCELLENCE ◊ DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

# FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan

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### Chair's Message

It is my pleasure to present the [National Transportation Safety Board's](#) (NTSB's) Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2022 to 2026: a roadmap that will guide our agency over the next 5 years. It's important to recognize that transportation is dynamic and ever evolving. The NTSB needs to ensure that we recognize and adapt to the changes occurring in the transportation industry and be prepared to address safety challenges that may arise.



The strategic goals, objectives, and strategies presented here will be used to gauge our success in improving our processes and products, to ensure we are efficient and effective, to engage openly and fairly with our employees, and to improve transportation safety for everyone.

This plan builds upon our current [FY2020-2024 strategic plan](#) by addressing the many evolving technologies and techniques being used to improve transportation safety. We aim to encourage and promote beneficial changes to all stakeholders within the transportation community—changes that help fulfill, and are consistent with, our mission and core values.

The three strategic goals outlined in our plan will 1) ensure our preparedness for investigations involving emerging transportation technologies and systems by enhancing staff training on new technologies and developing collaborations with industry stakeholders in these developing fields; 2) improve processes and products by enhancing our data-driven decision making and improving the timeliness of our investigative products as well as improving how the public accesses our data; and 3) optimize organizational effectiveness and efficiency by investing in our workforce and providing the training and tools they need while growing and developing a diverse and inclusive environment.

We continue to foster a culture of forward-thinking decision-making. Our dedicated and engaged staff have developed these strategies to ensure we are ready for the future. It is essential we remain up to date on evolving technologies and have techniques in place to investigate and provide effective recommendations. We take pride in enhancing our ability to learn and to improve our work.

I believe that the strategies outlined here will allow the NTSB to address current and future challenges in the transportation community. I look forward to working closely with my fellow colleagues to achieve these goals and make our transportation system safe for everyone.

Jennifer Homendy  
Chair

## NTSB at a Glance

### About the NTSB

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant accidents in other modes of transportation—railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline. We determine the probable cause of the accidents we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents from occurring. In addition, we carry out special studies concerning transportation safety and coordinate the resources of the federal government and other organizations to assist victims and their family members impacted by transportation disasters. We also conduct safety research focused on broader safety questions and topic areas. Additionally, we serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

### Our Mission

Making transportation safer by conducting independent accident investigations, advocating for safety improvements, and deciding pilots' and mariners' certification appeals

### Our Legislative Mandate

*Maintaining* our congressionally mandated independence and objectivity

*Conducting* objective accident investigations and safety studies

*Performing* fair and objective pilot and mariner certification appeals

*Advocating for* safety recommendations

*Assisting* victims of transportation accidents and their families

### Our Core Values

Integrity

Transparency

Independence

Excellence

Diversity and Inclusion

# FY 2022 – 2026 Strategic Plan

## About this Plan

In accordance with the [Government Performance and Results Act of 2010](#) and the [Office of Management and Budget's \(OMB's\) Circular A-11, Part 6](#), our strategic management process and performance framework starts with this strategic plan, which establishes long-term priorities and performance goals, objectives, and metrics to gauge our success. In November 2021, we posted a draft of this plan in the Federal Register and solicited stakeholder feedback. We used that feedback to refine and finalize the plan.

We continue to cultivate a performance-based culture, which remains a focus of agency management and staff. As we continually improve this process, we will be able to demonstrate more outcome-related performance results and make the best use of the resources entrusted to the agency. We believe that our results-oriented culture will continue to evolve and promote better governance in the future, leading to further improvements in transportation safety. These goals and strategies will improve the relevancy and effectiveness of our work.

## Summary of Goals and Objectives

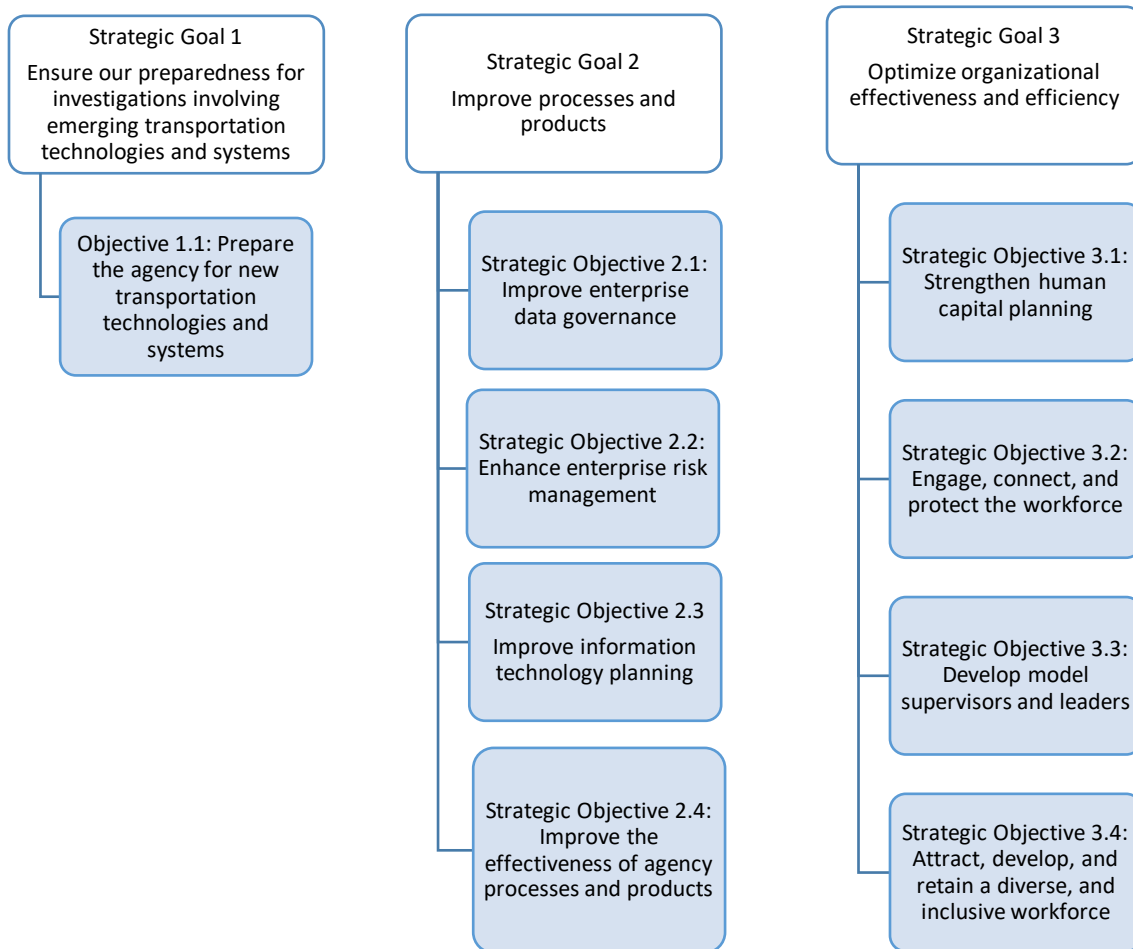


Figure 1: Summary of Goals and Objectives

### **Strategic Goal 1: Ensure our Preparedness for Investigations Involving Emerging Transportation Technologies and Systems**

Innovations in transportation, such as automated vehicles, commercial space transportation, uncrewed aircraft systems, urban air mobility, supersonic aircraft, high-speed ground transportation, and clean energy propulsion, will continually challenge us to grow and expand our investigation processes and tools. It is essential that we remain up to date as these technologies evolve and have the techniques and resources in place for investigating transportation-related accidents and making effective recommendations to prevent their recurrence.

#### **Objective 1.1: Prepare the Agency for New Transportation Technologies and Systems**

Examining the operational concepts and risks associated with emerging transportation technologies will allow us to understand how investigations involving these technologies will need to be conducted in the future. Our ability to conduct comprehensive investigations requires continuing staff development and acquisition of the tools and equipment necessary to understand and investigate accidents involving these advanced systems and technologies. To develop staff and acquire the necessary tools and equipment, we must first assess what future emerging transportation technologies will be operating and determine how best to approach them from a multimodal perspective.

Our success in achieving this objective may be accomplished by the following strategies:

- Establishing a multimodal team knowledgeable in emerging transportation technologies to develop best practices for investigating such technology.
- Training staff on the technologies and issues impacting the safe operation of emerging transportation systems, such as autonomous vehicles, urban air mobility, and commercial space operations, as well as the vulnerabilities in these systems.
- Establishing technology points of contact within each modal office who will share lessons learned with peers across all modes when a safety issue related to a new technology is uncovered in an investigation, such as the malfunction of an autonomous system or electric-powered vehicle.
- Collaborating with industry stakeholders to ensure that we obtain and analyze data from future transportation systems.
- Exploring the use of detail opportunities for NTSB staff with associated stakeholder organizations.

### Strategic Goal 2: Improve Processes and Products

Evaluating and improving our processes and products promotes efficiency and responsiveness. In accordance with the [Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 \(Evidence Act\)](#) and the [OMB’s Memorandum M-19-23](#), we are increasing our use of data to allocate resources and achieve program objectives. The Evidence Act requires agencies to invest in and focus on the “management and use of data and evidence linking spending to program outputs, delivering on mission, better managing enterprise risks, and promoting civic engagement and transparency.” Our increased capability in data analytics and access to new sources of data will help us improve our investigative and business operations and products to inform decisions.

While we are currently managing risks at various levels throughout the agency, we must apply risk management at an agency-wide level where risk and opportunity discussions are embedded in strategic planning, resource allocation, processes, and decision-making. [OMB Circular A-123 \(A-123\)](#) provides guidance on integrating risk management into existing business activities through a formalized Enterprise Risk Management program (ERM). Building strong communication processes and data reporting criteria will give us the necessary information to evaluate risks and act on opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

The investigative and administrative products we develop are the keystones of our work. They are critical to ensuring our relevancy and are the primary sources by which the transportation industry, government, and the public understand our mission.

#### Strategic Objective 2.1: Improve Enterprise Data Governance

As data proliferate through everything we do from investigations to management, we must leverage its use. It is imperative that we understand and ensure the effective and efficient use of data to fulfill our mission. Developing a data governance plan that fits our organization gives us enterprise level oversight of data assets, their value, and their impact on the agency’s changing business operations.<sup>2</sup>

We will focus on improving how we leverage existing data to facilitate, update, and effectively manage our work. Integrating data-informed assessments into our organization will enhance organizational performance and decision-making by more closely linking objectives, strategy, and risk. Using the data maturity assessment outcomes to develop and implement a multiyear data

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<sup>1</sup> Chief Financial Officers Council, Performance Improvement Council. *Playbook: Enterprise Risk Management for the U.S. Federal Government*, July 29, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> A data governance plan includes the specific initiatives needed to improve agency data management quality, use, and access to support agency priority projects. See [Federal Data Strategy, 2021 Action Plan](#).

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strategy and governance plan, as prescribed by the [Federal Data Strategy, 2021 Action Plan](#) will fundamentally transform how data are managed and used to create value for the agency.

The purpose of data maturity assessment is to evaluate current capabilities and support processes to easily understand the agency's current state and help us conceptualize long-term goals. It allows better strategic communication with leadership regarding data improvement initiatives. Finally, it provides us an opportunity to develop a common agency language and a framework to advance data-driven decision-making, assess our infrastructure, and evaluate ourselves against documented best practices, determine gaps, and identify priority areas for improvement. The maturity assessment results will inform investment decisions and prioritize subsequent actions.

Our success in achieving this objective may be accomplished by the following strategies:

- Continuing to develop an agency data governance program to advance data-driven decision-making and cross-office risk management.
- Evaluating and implementing new tools to provide agency decision-makers and staff timely, comprehensive information on project execution and key performance indicators.
- Implementing systems and procedures to leverage labor cost accounting data that support investigation projects to make informed management decisions.
- Evaluating and improving the agency's records management system.
- Evaluating data solutions to establish an enterprise data library to share digital content with agency users and the public.

### **Strategic Objective 2.2: Enhance Enterprise Risk Management**

Improving upon our current risk management process provides us with a logical and systematic process for making decisions and responding to risks and opportunities as they arise. An acceptable level of ERM maturity is essential for us to successfully address challenges in a dynamic federal environment. Establishing portfolio and project management tools to develop and apply ERM principles is key to remaining resilient in changing environments. It also provides a best-practice approach to identifying and managing potential events that may impact our agency and provides a management structure to oversee and implement risk management activities.

Our success in achieving this objective may be accomplished by the following strategies:

- Advancing risk-based decision-making and risk identification by establishing a more formalized agencywide ERM program.
- Promoting risk management principles at all levels of the organization to remain resilient to changing environments.

### **Strategic Objective 2.3: Improve Information Technology Planning**

We will project our need for technology for the next 5 years, assessing our current information technology (IT) processes to identify enhancements that will allow us to address critical agency needs more strategically. We will systematically select, manage, and evaluate IT investments, which is key to ensuring critical data systems and data are available and accessible for improving business processes.

Our success in achieving this objective may be accomplished by the following strategies:

- Developing resource and multiyear enterprise IT strategy plans to address critical agency needs.
- Evaluating our infrastructure to ensure technology resources are strategically deployed.

### **Strategic Objective 2.4: Improve the Effectiveness of Agency Processes and Products**

Effective processes and products improve agency operations and our engagement with our stakeholders, important ingredients for agency success. Our website enhances customers' understanding of the agency and its products. We must ensure key agency products remain adaptable to a fast-changing transportation environment.

We will continue to review one of our most important means of sharing our products: our public Board meetings. Board meetings are an opportunity for the public, including our safety stakeholders, to see deliberations among the Board members regarding draft investigation reports and safety studies. We will improve that medium by studying the effectiveness of Board meetings to communicate with the public, industry, and lawmakers; to advocate for safety improvements; and to reach those citizens affected by the tragedies we investigate. In addition, we'll assess the options for conducting Administrative Law Judge hearings, e.g., in person only or virtual venues, as well. The results of that review could then inform any policy governing hearings.

Our success in achieving this objective may be accomplished by the following strategies:

- Enhancing customer experience by collecting better analytics and obtaining the authority to survey stakeholders about website engagement.
- Developing and implementing recommendations to improve Board meetings.
- Examining the options for hosting Administrative Law Judge hearings.

### **Strategic Goal 3: Optimize Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency**

We will foster a culture of leadership, diversity, and accountability that enables forward-thinking decision-making while promoting teamwork, collaboration, and creativity within the agency. We are focused on empowering our multidisciplinary workforce through continuous improvement and

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innovation to achieve operational excellence and deliver quality results and products, and we have also developed strategies to ensure our resources are used effectively and efficiently.

Our highly skilled workforce is most effective when its members are motivated, engaged, and trained. Our work is better when we support a culture of diversity, awareness, inclusion, and mutual respect. Within our workforce, we will seek to develop future leaders, foster high levels of employee engagement, and provide continuous learning and development. We will focus on recruiting, retaining, and training staff with the skills and expertise to meet current and future challenges. Promoting diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect allows every staff member an equal opportunity to contribute and succeed.

### **Strategic Objective 3.1: Strengthen Human Capital Planning**

As technological advances transform transportation products and services at an astonishing rate, we know it is critical that we remain aligned with changing trends. This environment has created the need for the NTSB to conduct a comprehensive strategic workforce planning analysis to project future workload and assess the skill levels, competencies, structure, and number of employees necessary to carry out our mission. We continue to assess our current human capital planning processes to identify enhancements that will allow us to address staffing needs more strategically. Our future ability to adequately staff investigations, keep pace with rapidly advancing technology, and provide sufficient support services relies on our ability to forecast workload and determine the appropriate skills and numbers of employees needed to carry out our mission. This objective will provide a more robust look at our human capital needs and succession planning for the next 5 years.

Our success in achieving this objective may be accomplished by the following strategies:

- Recruiting an experienced Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) to lead the creation of our human capital vision and align the agency's human resources policies and programs, particularly for recruitment related, with the NTSB's mission, strategic goals, and performance outcomes.
- Assessing and developing a plan for future workforce needs to accomplish our mission now and into the future.
- Creating a data system to support the tracking and analysis of staffing levels and hiring actions.
- Developing a mechanism to collect and improve human resources customer service through customer feedback.

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### **Strategic Objective 3.2: Engage, Connect, and Protect the Workforce**

We have been recognized as one of the best places to work in the federal government for small agencies.<sup>3</sup> We accomplished this by continuously empowering staff with collaborative and integrated tools to optimize their contributions, fueling business process improvement and increasing our efficiency. Continued employee engagement is key to maintaining and increasing our performance with these goals. We also continue to implement security practices that enhance our preparedness for and resilience to personal and operational risks.

Our success in achieving this objective may be accomplished by the following strategies:

- Providing process improvement tools and training to develop a more highly engaged and productive workforce.
- Identifying and implementing employee health and safety measures.

### **Strategic Objective 3.3: Develop Model Supervisors and Leaders**

Within our workforce, we will seek to develop future leaders by providing continuous learning and development opportunities. We will define and identify core competencies and training needs of our current leaders. In addition, we'll provide learning and development opportunities to meet future challenges, build capacity, and transfer knowledge through succession planning. We will develop a strategic talent management approach to enhance our current highly skilled knowledge-based organization, strengthening knowledge sharing and growth opportunities to increase our workforce's skills and competencies.

Our success in achieving this objective may be accomplished by the following strategies:

- Implementing continuity of leadership and knowledge measures through succession planning and professional development.
- Building needed agency managerial competencies through training and development programs.

### **Strategic Objective 3.4: Attract, Develop, and Retain a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce**

Our diverse, multicultural, and multitalented workforce offers a rich range of experience and expertise to carry out the agency's mission. Our success is dependent on an effective, highly

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<sup>3</sup> The [Best Places to Work in Federal Government](#) is administered by the Partnership for Public Service. Currently, we are listed as number 9 in the best places to work [small agency rankings](#).

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skilled, engaged, and inclusive workforce. For our small agency to accomplish our mission objectives, we must ensure that the agency is operating cohesively at the full staff level and that staff is engaged and trained on new systems, technologies, and risks. We will promote diversity, awareness, inclusion, and mutual respect within our workforce so that every staff member has an equal opportunity to contribute and succeed. As we look to strategically implement Executive Order 14035, *Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce* (DEIA), we are committed to a workplace where people are valued, respected, and treated fairly. We continue to focus on recruiting, retaining, and training staff with the right mix of skills.

Our success in achieving this objective may be accomplished by the following strategies:

- Developing strategies and implementing programs to attract diverse candidates.
- Ensuring that training and development programs build needed competencies, including incorporating knowledge-sharing and mentoring.
- Promoting equity in all aspects of the employment life cycle and advancement opportunities that focus on skills required for managerial and leadership positions.

### **Key Challenges Affecting Achievement of Strategic Goals**

Our ability to achieve our strategic goals may be influenced by the changing balance of industry; other federal, state, and local government activities; national priorities; and resource availability.

The following challenges may affect our ability to achieve our goals:

- Recruiting, retaining, and developing highly skilled and diverse staff, particularly when competing against the private sector.
- Ensuring that we understand new technologies in all modes of transportation and hire and train accordingly.

### **Addressing Goal Achievement Challenges**

Effective long-range planning, open communication with lawmakers and industry, a talent-management process that is responsive to the needs of agency human capital trends, and sustained employee engagement are ways we plan to address the challenges noted above. Long-range planning in acquisition requirements, human capital management, and core operations ensures that we are ready to deal with future investigative needs. Effective communication with lawmakers and industry helps us keep these stakeholders informed of our challenges. Thinking strategically, promoting employee engagement, and encouraging staff development will allow these strategic goals and priorities to be successful.

Appendix

Appendix A: NTSB Structure and Locations

Organizational Structure

We are authorized five Board members, each nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate to serve 5-year terms. One member is nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate as chair, and another is designated by the president as vice chair, each for a 3-year term. When there is no designated chair, the vice chair serves as acting chair. Currently, we have four Board members. The figure below shows our organizational structure. For more information about our offices and their functions, visit the [organization page](#) of our website.

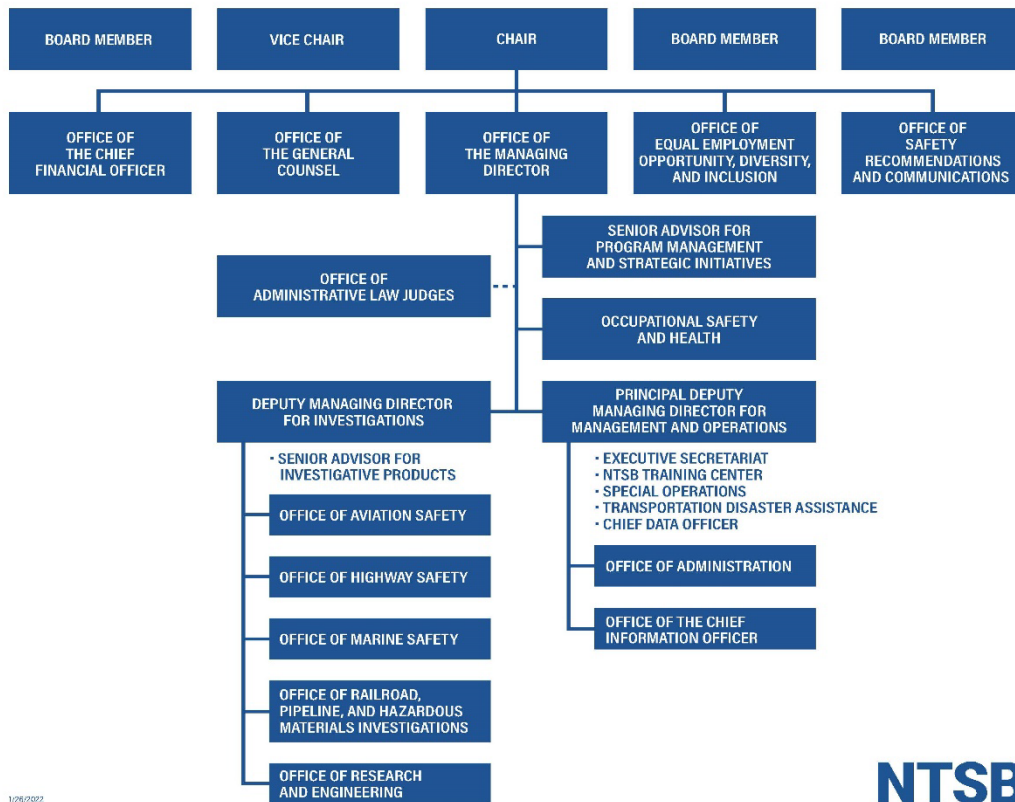


Figure 2: NTSB Organization Chart

Our Locations

We are headquartered in Washington, DC, and have staff working remotely throughout the country and in regional offices in Ashburn, Virginia; Denver, Colorado; Federal Way, Washington; and Anchorage, Alaska.

Regional Offices

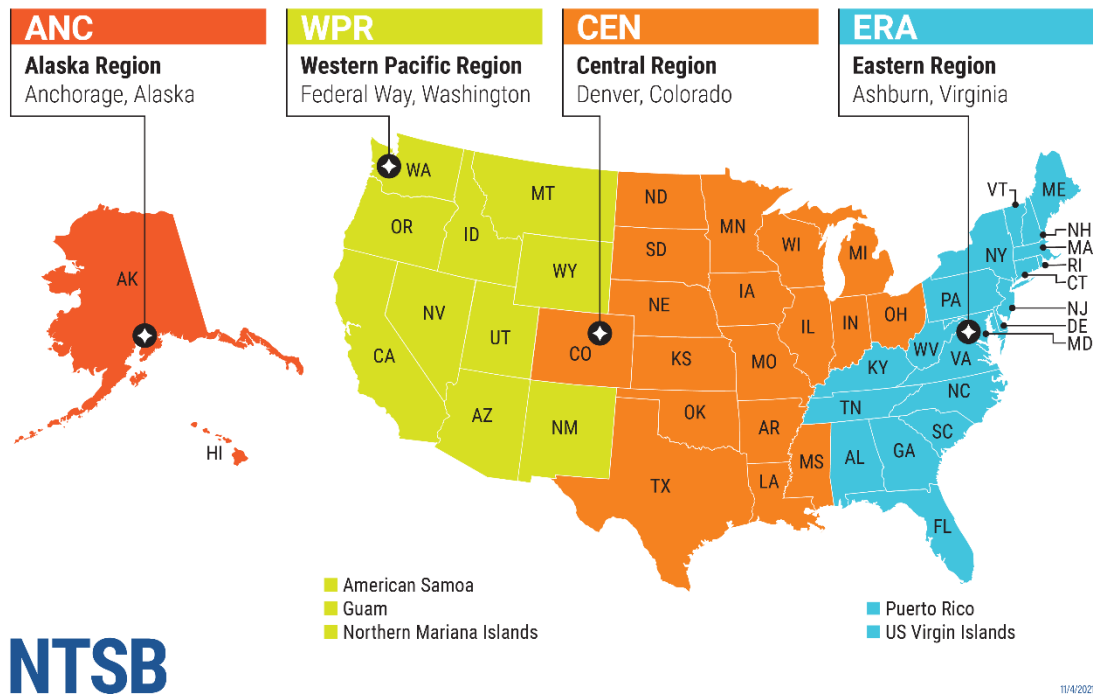


Figure 3: NTSB Regional Presence