



# **Wage and Hour Bureau**

## **2014-2015 Strategic Plan**

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**Wage and Hour Bureau  
1101 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1101**

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**Table of Contents**

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Letter from the Bureau Chief .....	Page 3
Organizational Overview.....	Page 4
Opportunities and Challenges.....	Page 5
Mission, Vision and Goals.....	Page 6
Measures and Objectives.....	Page 7
Operational Definitions of Key Measures.....	Pages 12

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## Introduction

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Dear colleagues and fellow North Carolinians:

We are proud to present the revised **North Carolina Wage and Hour Bureau Strategic Plan for 2014-2015**. This plan outlines how we will be going back to basics and from this day forward, the plan will guide everything we do here at the Bureau.

Wage and Hour is focused on better customer service through quality, accurate, and consistent work while protecting employee's wages. We should always ensure that employees have access to file grievances against employers when wages are not paid.

We could not have accomplished as much as we have so quickly, without the professionalism and continued dedication of the staff, but our work here has only just begun. Contained within these pages are the ways in which we will carry out our vision for the future: *Back to Basics for Everyone*. Back to basics for everyone simple means better customer service through quality, accuracy, and consistent work.

In working to make our vision of Back to Basics for *Everyone* a reality, supervisors and staff were given the important task of fundamentally reforming how they do business. They developed and undertook new strategies focused on innovation, evaluation, and improved implementation. Central to these efforts is the ongoing evaluation of strategies and outcomes which will, in turn, foster a culture that emphasizes continuous improvement in the work we do.

Our Strategic Planning process started with our staff evaluating internal and external factors that dealt with our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities to improve, and threats that could hinder improvement. From there we developed our strategic plan that will be used to guide us in accomplishing our goals. In our Action plan you will find our mission, vision statement and goals. Our mission, vision and goals are central to everything we do on behalf of employees and will continue to shape our Bureau over the next two years.

By no means is our mission complete, but it's important to acknowledge that we are focused and on the right track. We are rethinking and refocusing our efforts, with the goal of providing the best possible service to the citizens of North Carolina. This plan marks yet another step on that journey to transform our Bureau into the most focused, efficient, and effective Bureau it's ever been, for our customers deserve nothing less.

Valentine Eucare III  
Bureau Chief

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## Organizational Overview

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The Bureau is assigned a total of 33 “general fund” positions and an annual budget of \$2,034,657.00 to carry out the legislative mandates assigned.

The Bureau consists of one Administrator (Bureau Chief) and a Deputy Administrator who oversees the daily operations of Wage and Hour’s call center and enforcement activities.

To assist with the enforcement of labor laws in North Carolina, there are three supervisory districts consisting of three supervisors and twenty field investigators covering North Carolina’s 100 counties. Yearly complaints average around 4,357 cases or 236 cases per investigator. This dedicated staff accounts for nearly 73% of back wages found due and collected.

To help with the overall management of the Bureau’s call center is one Office Manager who oversees five public information specialists and two investigative assistants. The Bureau’s call center is most often the Department’s initial point of contact for most customers. The high-volume, customer service call center is manned by five highly motivated staff members. Their job is to provide information to customers and to determine the applicability of state/federal wage and hour laws, drug testing laws, private personnel service, and Employment Discrimination laws for caller concerns. If applicable, they obtain required information and enter the complaints directly into an electronic database for assignment, investigation and tracking. Additionally they refer callers to other Department of Labor bureaus; appropriate local, state and federal agencies tasked with enforcement of laws related to their concerns; or, provide resource data and contact information for lawyer referral and legal aid centers when unaware of any government agency that can assist the caller.

Four of these staff members are fluent in Spanish and provide direct assistance to callers, investigators and other Department of Labor personnel when dealing with Spanish-language matters. The two investigative assistants assist field investigators by contacting the employer for whom a complaint was filed and assist where they can in collecting back wages and or information to further a case along should an employer fail to cooperate with the Bureau.

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## Opportunities and Challenges

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Over the next two years the Wage and Hour Bureau administration will experience new challenges based on a decline of institutional knowledge and changes brought forth by both internal and external changes.

Quality of work will continue to increase based partly on changes in procedures as suggested by an internal State Audit this year and being focused on professional quality work that is accurate and consistent.

New technology will produce a change in the way data is inputted and collected; while training on using the new computer system; productivity may see a decline short term. However, overall the new computer system is intended to reduce redundancy; increase overall accuracy in both investigative and statistical reporting which ultimately will lead to overall quality customer service.

The Bureau conducted an extensive assessment involving our overall strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This process is intended to help an organization determine its strategic challenges in accomplishing its mission and helped prepare this strategic plan that will guide us in carrying out mission over the next two years.

## THEMES FROM THE ASSESSMENTS

Looking at a variety of data and information, the following broad themes/trends were noted as critical for consideration in the planning and setting of future direction.

- Back to Basics for Everyone (Better customer service through quality, accurate, and consistent work),
- Decreased Institutional Knowledge based on staff experience within the Bureau,
- Updating Operational Manual and develop Administrative and Training procedures,
- Developing and implementing new ways of dealing with and decreasing inventory (backlog) over 90 - 181 days,
- Interactive workflow computer system that helps process cases in a timelier and accurate manner by eliminating redundant work processes and errors,

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## **Mission, Vision and Goals**

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### **Mission**

Investigate complaints of alleged back wages owed; child labor violations and protect youths under 18 years of age from unsafe working conditions.

### **Vision**

Resolve and collect back wages determined owed using conciliatory means

### **Wage and Hour Goals**

- Goal 1:** Improve customer service by reducing the number of errors in civil money penalties and back wages owed.
- Goal 2:** Improve customer service by processing complaints in a timelier manner.
- Goal 3:** Improve customer service through better call center techniques.
- Goal 4:** Maintain a safe and healthy work environment for our employees.

## Measures and Objectives

### Goal 1

Improve customer service by reducing the number of discrepancies in civil money penalties and back wages owed as well as increase the collection rate for back wages found owed.

### Objectives

#	Measure	2013 – 15 Objective	Target Date(s)
1.1	# of major errors in civil money penalty reports per investigator	≤3	April 30, 2015 April 30, 2016
1.2	# of major errors in back wages owed reports per investigator	≤3	April 30, 2015 April 30, 2016
1.3	% of increase in the collection rate of back wages owed	≥3% ≥4%	April 30, 2015 April 30, 2016

### Notes:

- 1.1 Over the next two years investigators shall not have more than 3 major discrepancies noted during civil money penalty quality case reviews. Supervisors shall review monthly; all cases assessed civil money penalties in accordance with (IAW) the Operations Manual and all sections pertaining to CMP procedures for accuracy and consistency. Accuracy and consistency is defined as adhering to policies and procedures and accomplishing reports (IAW) per the Operations Manual. Supervisor shall provide timely and specific feedback monthly on errors and corrective action needed to ensure historical and statistical data is recorded accurately. Measured monthly throughout the grading period using Report #2 – Amount Due/Collected; direct observation and review of closed case stored in FileNet; and a spreadsheet detailing the number of cases with and without errors; and remarks indicating corrective action. Deputy Administrator will grade and provide feedback to supervisor's in the same manner.
- 1.2 Over the next two years investigators shall not have more than 3 major discrepancies noted during civil money penalty quality case reviews. Supervisors shall review monthly; all cases assessed minimum wage and overtime first and/or (3) wage payment cases in accordance with (IAW) the Operations Manual and all sections pertaining to procedures for accuracy and consistency. Accuracy and consistency is defined as adhering to policies and procedures and accomplishing reports (IAW) per the Operations Manual. Supervisor shall provide timely and specific feedback monthly on errors and corrective action needed to ensure

historical and statistical data is recorded accurately. Measured monthly throughout the grading period using Report #2 – Amount Due/Collected; direct observation and review of closed cases stored in FileNet; and a spreadsheet detailing the number of cases with and without errors; and remarks indicating corrective action. Deputy Administrator will grade and provide feedback to supervisor's in the same manner.

- 1.3 Over the next two years increase conciliatory payments by employers of assessed back wages 3% by April 30, 2015 and 4% by April 30, 2016. Measured using "Amount Due/Collected by Inv" under Summary Totals. Historical data shows that a 100% collection is not possible because of bankruptcies or businesses with no assets that close or employers that cannot be located for whatever reason.

## **Goal 2**

Improve customer service by processing complaints in a timelier manner.

### **Objectives**

#	Measure	2013 – 15 Objective	Target Date(s)
2.1	# of closed cases per quarter per investigator	≥60	April 30
2.2	% of cases closed in 180 days or less	100%	April 30
2.3	# of reductions of return to queue calls per information specialist	≤20 ≤15	April 30, 2015 April 30, 2016
2.4	% of unpaid civil money penalties and write-offs monitored	100%	Monthly

### **Notes:**

- 2.1 In order to meet expectations investigators shall close (60) cases or more per quarter and no less without written approval from their supervisors and or Bureau Chief. Investigators shall not have any week (does not include vacation, sick, etc...) where cases are not closed without consulting with their supervisor in advance. Measured monthly and quarterly by supervisor using report Amount Due/Collect by Investigator.
- 2.2 Once assigned to an investigator, 100% of cases shall be closed in 180 days or less. Measured monthly by supervisor using Report #3 – 45 Day Listing (closed) cases and supervisor's direct observation during case reviews.
- 2.3 Maintain good customer service by reducing the number of calls returned to queue over the next two years from 20 to 15 per operator. Returns to queue are calls placed back in the system because of operator error and does not provide



for good quality service. Measured by supervisor's observation and using Symposium data monthly for end of year results.

- 2.4 Senior Investigative Assistant will monitor unpaid civil money penalties and write-offs for those penalties in which all collection efforts have been exhausted and cannot be processed by budget within 30 days. Measured by supervisor's direct observation and tracking form.

### **Goal 3**

Improve customer service through better call center techniques.

#### **Objectives**

#	Measure	2013 – 15 Objective	Target Date(s)
3.1	% of average service level	≥99.5%	April 30
3.2	% of average talk time of 6 minutes or less	≥98%	April 30
3.3	% of average log-in-time for 1,420 hours or more	100%	April 30

#### **Notes:**

- 3.1 Information Specials shall maintain an average service level of 99.5% or more. Measured by supervisor by direct observation and call center data base (Symposium) monthly; quarterly and yearly.
- 3.2 Information Specialist shall maintain an average talk time to 6 minutes or less, 98% of the time. Measured by supervisor by direct observation and call center data base (Symposium) monthly; quarterly and yearly.
- 3.3 Information Specialist shall maintain average log in time for 1,420 hours or more 100% of the time. Measured by supervisor by direct observation and call center data base (Symposium) monthly; quarterly and yearly.

**Goal 4****Maintain a safe and healthy work environment for our employees.****Objectives**

#	Measure	2013-15 Objective	Target Date(s)
4.1	% of combined safety and health committee meetings attended by Employment Discrimination and Wage and Hour.	100%	4/30/2014
4.2	# of site inspections conducted in Bureau controlled spaces in accordance with Policy 2.	At least quarterly	4/30/2014
4.3	Review of Policy 9 with supervisors and staff.	Annually	4/30/2014
4.4	Follow prescribed procedures for investigating and reporting injuries, occupational illnesses, violence or criminal activity.	Policy 9	Per occurrence

**Notes:**

- 4.1 The Apprenticeship and Training Bureau, Employment Discrimination Bureau and the Wage and Hour Bureau have a joint unit safety committee. The committee is responsible to work in accordance with Policy 2, Designation and Responsibilities of the Safety and Health Committees. The committee will discuss any safety problems that have been identified and will review safety and health procedures for accuracy and required updates.
- 4.2 Each Bureau is responsible for conducting safety inspections of their respective work spaces to verify compliance with the safety requirements. These inspections include emergency lighting, exit signs, improper extension cords, improper storage, etc. A report of the inspection is filed with the Department of Labor's Employee Health and Safety Steering committee on the day of the inspection and placed on the intranet site.
- 4.3 Policy 9, Investigation and Reporting of Events, involves office and field staff alike. It is important that supervisors are fully aware of their responsibilities under the policy and are able to instruct their employees on the policy requirements.
- 4.4 Policy 9 gives the guidelines for the investigation of events which result in: (1) injuries, (2) occupational illnesses, and or (3) violence or criminal activity to Department of Labor employees in the course of the performance of their job duties. Upon notification of an incident, the supervisor must begin an investigation within 24 hours and report that investigation in accordance with the policy.

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## Operational Definitions of Key Measures

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Closed Cases Within 180 Days: Upon completion of the investigation and the final conference, the case will be closed at the investigator level. The investigation details and stats will be completed in the Wage and Hour database. All documents related to the investigation will be sorted, scanned and uploaded into the FileNet archive system. Cases that require litigation will then be sent to Legal Affairs for further administrative action. Case age is monitored from intake to closure. The current target goal is to complete 100% of all cases within 180 days. The age of closed cases is checked to ensure that all cases are moving toward completion and no cases are left behind. This measure is checked monthly and is calculated by dividing the number of cases closed in 180 days or less by the total number of cases closed. The number of open and closed cases is reviewed monthly with the Bureau staff and management, quarterly with Departmental Senior Management and is reported annually in the Wage and Hour Annual Report. Individual Supervisors may also access this data daily or as needed.


Wage Recovery: From the complainant's perspective, the most important service that we provide is the recovery of unpaid wages. Wages earned are compensation for labor or services but also include benefits such as vacation pay, sick leave, bonuses, commissions or other amounts promised. The wage recovery percentage is the total wages paid (collected by Wage and Hour) divided by the total wages due (calculated by Wage and Hour) and it is tracked to guarantee that all investigators are making a concerted effort to deliver wages to the complainants as soon as possible.

The Wage and Hour Bureau attempts to identify and collect all wages earned but not paid. The investigator first identifies what wages were due but not paid in violation of the Wage and Hour Act. The investigator notifies the employer of any wages due at the end of the investigation and makes a request for the wages.

Many employers voluntarily pay the wages after a determination is made. For the remaining wages, some are referred to the Department's Legal Affairs Division for litigation, and the others are referred to Small Claims Court or District Court for the employees to file their own action. These last referrals are the result of inconclusive or contradictory evidence or testimony in the case. In addition to these referrals, there are also bankruptcy cases and cases where the employers just disappeared.

All of the wages due and paid are logged into the Wage and Hour database. These numbers are reviewed monthly with the Bureau staff/management, quarterly with Departmental Senior Management and are reported annually in the Wage and Hour Annual Report. Individual Supervisors may also access this data daily or as needed.

Bureau Chief:  Date: May 5, 2014

Deputy Commissioner:  Date: May 1, 2014