



Board of Nursing Update

Health Occupations Subcommittee Briefing

January 27, 2026

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Summary Overview

Since the signing of *HB0611- State Board of Nursing – Sunset Extension, Licensure Exceptions, and Board Operations and Membership*, significant progress has been made in in several primary areas identified by 2 independent evaluations:

- Constituent Services & Communications
- Technology & Application Processing
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Complaint Response and Investigation
- Staffing

MDH Independent Evaluation

- On May 10, 2023, MDH released an RFP for an independent evaluator to assess MBoN in accordance with HB 611
- MDH posted a competitive, emergency procurement, for the independent evaluation and received one bid
- Ernst & Young (E&Y), a global consulting firm, was awarded the contract based on their proposal, which included examples of prior experience working with health occupation entities and administrative workflow improvement
- **This report details the progress the Board has made since May of 2023**
 - Internal and external meetings with stakeholders yielded a plan of action to address noted areas of opportunity across the MBoN spectrum which has allowed for flexible and rapid progress in reforming the Board's responsiveness and functionality.

OPEGA Independent Evaluation

- In January 2023, the Executive Director of DLS directed OPEGA to conduct a performance evaluation of MBON.
- OPEGA conducted a stakeholder analysis that led to a focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of (1) the licensing process, including the renewal of licenses; (2) the complaint investigation process; and (3) the general management of the office.
- Their final report, published in December 2023, examined the operations of MBoN with a focus on the service received from the Board and the efficiency with which these services were provided, and included associated recommendations.
- Additionally, OPEGA solicited direct feedback from customers of MBoN which provides an insightful look into the reactions of the public to MBoN.

Operations of the MBON

House Bill 611/Ch. 222

- Signed by the Governor on April 24, 2023
- Gave the Secretary of Health authority over the infrastructure operations and staffing of the Board until July 1, 2025.

House Bill 19/Ch. 416

- Signed by the Governor on May 6, 2025
- Extended the Secretary of Health's oversight of certain staffing and infrastructure operations of the Board until July 1, 2030.

Constituent Services & Communications

Prior Feedback on MBON

(Google Rating was 1.2 in March of 2023)

“The website is extremely frustrating to navigate. It’s full of non-relevant information and the important links are difficult to find. I don’t understand how some of the functions are not supported by common browsers.” – Google Review (March 2023)

“I started my renewal process over a month ago to just get a new paper application in the mail this week requiring a duplicate payment. The worst part is my license expires next Friday. They smiled in my face and told me 21 business days and better luck next time. So I am out \$280 and may be laid off after Friday for not having a license.” – Google Review (July 2022)

“What you don’t see is the people who don’t show up because they don’t want to go through the process and fail, or they show up on a day that the doors are locked for lunch and that’s the only time that they can go there... We’ve got the capacity to do all of these pretty bold things as it relates to recruitment, but if they can’t go down to the Board of Nursing and get certified, we’re sort of spinning our wheels.” – Professional Association Representative

“The man who handled my request said that they discovered an IT issue that had caused my application to be lost. He said they would work on resolving it and that I should call back Monday to verify that the issue had been resolved.” – Google Review (January 2020)

“They informed me that they have no paperwork from me. They asked me if I took photos of my paperwork as proof that I completed it.” – Reddit Post (2022)

“It’s common for phone calls to not be answered. I spoke with one of our members... She waited on hold five hours on two separate occasions to speak with someone. And when calls are answered, applicants are not always given correct information. Another nurse that I spoke with was told that they had to come in person to submit something and then when they got there in person and waited in long lines and got to the front, they were told no. You can only do this online, so they had wasted an entire day.” – Professional Association Representative

“I lost my dream job because of this board of nursing. I waited for WEEKS to MONTHS calling and emailing every day. After demanding to speak to someone... they informed me that my addresses didn’t match up.” – Google Review (January 2022)

Current Feedback on MBON

(Current Rating 3.6/5 as of January 2026)

..Maryland Board of Nursing Endorsement Team has really been very supportive and responsive. The detailed guidance and the timely response I received from the team has been incredible. The service I have received from the team demonstrates customer service at its best. I am fully satisfied with their service! I am very grateful especially for the service and support I received from Dr. N and Ms. F through email exchange. Regards, Rahel Kebede"
Google Review (January 2026)

"This was shocking to me that the MBON two responses came back in less than 8hrs. I have not known MBON to be this fast. I want to them for excellent changes they are doing to help nursing career receive the first position in saving lives. I am more than glad and will write a review at anytime for my BON." - **Google Review (July 2025)**

"I emailed to ask a question about nursing renewal requirements. I received a very prompt response. I asked for further clarification and again received a very prompt and detailed response. Thank you very much!" **Google Review (September 2025)**

"MD BON has been nothing but amazing in regard to their timely responses, professionalism, and support. Their team makes it very easy to communicate with administrative individuals via email. I have always received prompt, immediate, thorough, and accurate responses to my questions. I can't thank their team enough for making the communication aspect so simple and smooth." **Google Review (February 2025)**

The Maryland Board of Nursing's customer service team is excellent. They responded to my email in under an hour and were able to correct my concern with only one email exchange. If you have ever had to conduct business with state boards, in many other states as I have, you will completely understand how shocking it was for me to feel so satisfied with the Maryland Board of Nursing's customer service team. They are a breath of fresh air! **Google Review (October 2024)**

"My license renewal process was quick and smooth! The staff I communicated with via email responded to my questions promptly and kindly. It took only half day to update my license status! Thank you again for your help through the process!!" -**Google Review (May 2025)**

"Although I have initially had struggles with the board of nursing application process it has become much more streamlined in the past three years. Including the renewal department, the APRN, and RN department everyone has been responsive to email. Recommend it as a way of having our questions answered or just go in person." **Google Review (August 2025)**

"At first, I was skeptical about sending an email, unsure if the issue would be addressed the same day. To my surprise, I received a prompt response stating it would be looked into — and just four hours later, the matter was fully resolved. The situation was handled immediately, and the communication throughout was fast, clear, and professional. Thank you for resolving the issue so efficiently and allowing me to continue seeing patients without any disruptions." **Google Review (November 2025)**



Constituent Services: Resolving the Backlog of Cases

- MDH Office of Constituent Services works with MBoN and other health occupations boards to track open constituent cases. Metrics are tracked on a weekly basis and cases are considered overdue after seven business days.
- MBoN has made significant progress reducing the backlog of overdue cases

	Total Number of Open Constituent Cases	Total Number of Overdue Cases	Oldest Overdue Case
February 17, 2023	24	24	177 days
April 28, 2023	12	10	185 days
September 8, 2023	6	1	9 days
December 28, 2023	0	0	-
April 1, 2024	1	0	-
January 21, 2026	2	0	-

Consultant Recommendations: Constituent Services & Communications

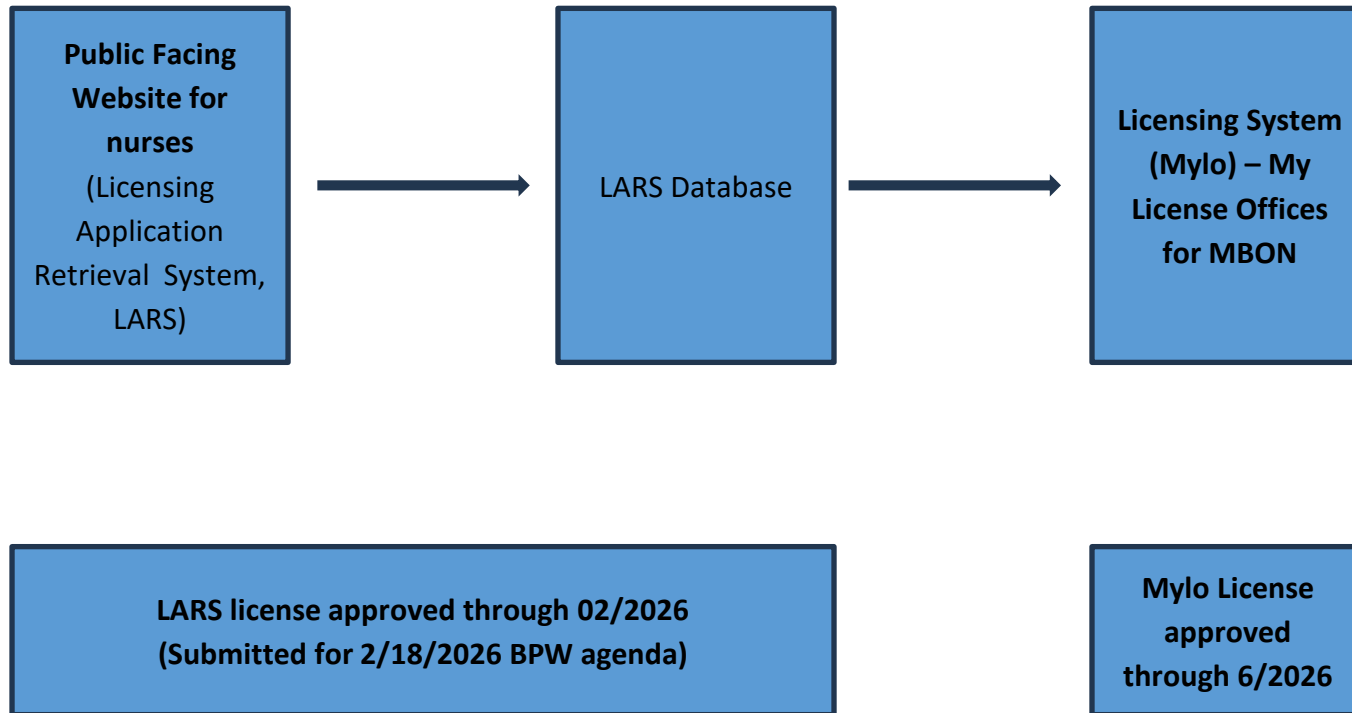
EY Recommendation	OPEGA Recommendation	Next Steps
Investigate and repair the current phone system (i.e., IVR routing) to address the failed calls.	MBON should staff at a level that ensures phone calls are answered.	MBON's phone hardware and software were insufficient to meet the demands of constituents, these have been upgraded in line with MDH standards. The Board went from <u>64 phone lines to 110</u> . Hiring and capacity for future hiring as noted in Complaint Response/Investigation increases responsiveness to constituent needs.
Create and implement a communications plan.	-	MBON is working with the MDH Communications Office to address immediate communications needs, including assistance with updating their website.
Begin standup of an Office of Performance Improvement with detailed governance, responsibilities, and resourcing.	-	MBON hired a Performance Improvement Manager to begin developing strategies to establish the department. Will develop SOPs and position descriptions for team members.
Define roles and responsibilities of a Communications specialist; begin recruitment process.	-	MBON is in the process of drafting this position description to define roles and responsibilities. MBON works collaboratively with the MDH Communications department to respond to media inquiries.

Technology & Application Processing

Reconnection and Security Updates

- **Network Reconnection** - Effective June 30th, 2023 the Board was reconnected to MDH network for the first time since the 2021 network security incident. Poor network connectivity was also resolved.
- **Security Updates** - MDH is upgrading both the physical and information security of the Board's campus and systems. Additionally, MBoN's licensure system has been migrated to a secure server.
- **Hardware replacement** - MBoN's physical computer needs were assessed and the lobby area kiosks were replaced. MBoN is part of the MDH 5-year endpoint refresh program; MBoN will continue to receive additional new computers annually.
- **Database Migration** - The current MBoN database, LARS, was migrated from outdated Linux server to current, secure Windows server on January 8, 2024. This includes securing a new server which increased the boards capability as well as security.

MBoN's Current Licensure System



Technology Modernization Project

Modernizing the Maryland Board of Nursing (BON) licensing system - moving from a reactive, paper-heavy process to a proactive, data-driven ecosystem.



Public Safety Through Real-Time Data

Shift from static, periodic license verification to a dynamic system integrated with national databases (like Nursys).



Enabling a "Digital-First" Experience

Replace manual forms with a 100% online self-service portal with intuitive application workflows and instant status tracking.



Automated Compliance and Regulatory Accuracy

Automate identity verification, education requirements, background check clearances, and clinical hour thresholds.



Unified Cybersecurity and System Resilience

A single, hardened security perimeter. Centralization for prompt patching and greater resilience.



Operational Agility and Scalability

Transition to a cloud-native architecture that promotes seamless data exchange and can handle seasonal renewal surges without downtime.

Transforming Licensing and Regulatory Processes



Inter-Board Data Sharing and Public Safety

360 Degree practitioner view and management across boards.



Centralized "Digital Front Door" for Marylanders

Manage multiple licenses (e.g., nurse, massage therapist) via a single solution.



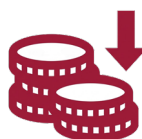
Statewide Workforce Intelligence

A unified database provides the state real-time "heat map" of the entire healthcare workforce.



Accelerated "Time-to-Work" for Healthcare Professionals

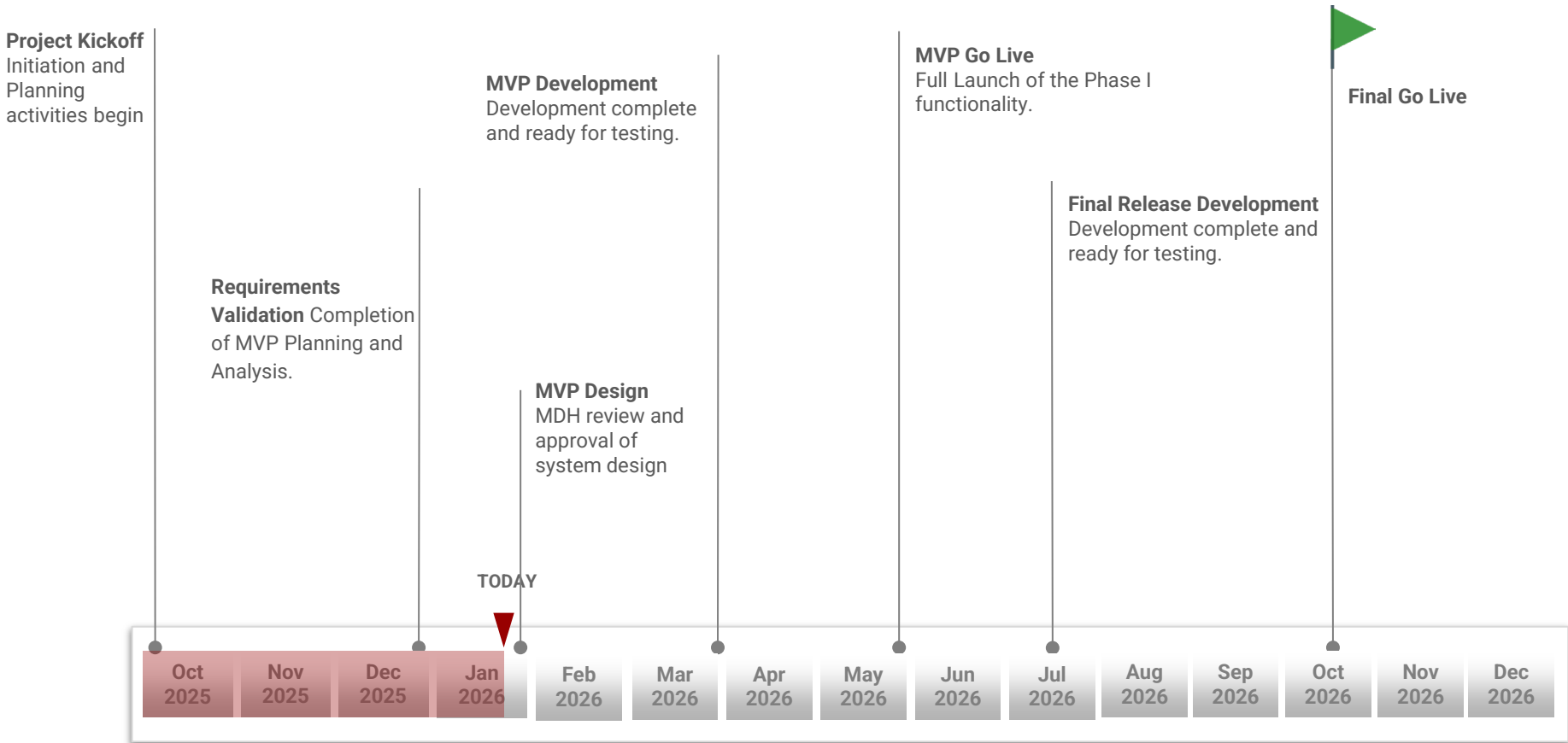
Standardized workflows and automation for faster processing times.



Economies of Scale and Reduced Taxpayer Cost

Reduced fiscal burden by consolidating software maintenance, hosting, and IT support costs for 20+ boards.

Project Milestone Timeline



Consultant Recommendation: Application Processing

EY Recommendation	OPEGA Recommendation	Next Steps
Utilize CJIS rap-back program to streamline background checks.	MBoN should participate in Rap Back or SAM	MBoN agrees with these recommendations. Currently, MBoN does not have the resources to accomplish this; however, Board staff has been trained on “Rap Back” and MBoN is developing a plan to begin enrolling new applicants.
Educate constituents on best practices while applying to avoid incomplete application bottlenecks.	MBoN’s license application system should allow applicants to upload all required documentation electronically.	Will be incorporated into new system
Streamline review of educational institutions for endorsement applications by accepting license approvals from other states as proof that the applicant is qualified for an endorsement.	-	MBoN has been compiling the requirements for interstate licensure requirements so that the application process for nurses from non-MD schools can be accepted more effectively. In October and November of 2023, MBoN convened a workgroup of stakeholders across healthcare including employers and nursing program administrators. MBoN also surveyed other nursing boards. MBoN will analyze survey results and reconvene workgroup in late spring 2024.

Consultant Recommendation: Application Processing

Decreased Application Processing Times The addition of education, licensing, and certification staff has led to improved application processing times across all license and certification types.

Streamlining Endorsement Processing The Board of Nursing supported legislation passed during the 2025 legislative session, effective October 1, 2025, that permits individuals with an active, unencumbered multistate license to qualify for an endorsement license without having to present evidence of educational background

Fiscal Responsibility

Consultant Recommendation: Fiscal Responsibility

EY Recommendation	OPEGA Recommendation	Next Steps
Eliminate gap in funding to fulfill Board's strategic imperatives. Addressing the funding gap will require MBON to collect additional revenue. We note that MBON's fees are currently well below peers, and MBON may consider increasing fees to be commensurate with peers to directly address revenue gap.	MBON should study its fee structure and issue a report.	Neighboring states' licensure and certification policies have been compared to Maryland's with the aim to ensure Maryland is remaining competitive. MBON leadership has begun the process of updating rates in alignment with the recommendations of both internal review and external consultation. MDH's Budget Office has allocated a staff member to assist with budget forecasting and rate updates. MBON is working with the MDH analyst and Board staff is evaluating the cost of the resources required to enhance current services and implement new services based on the EY and OPEGA recommendations.

Fiscal Actions

- **Analysis of Current Needs** - The budgetary needs of MBoN have been ascertained and reviewed on a historical and future trending basis.
- **Fee Increase** - MBoN is currently looking across all license types and engaging stakeholders prior to presenting formal fee proposals.

Complaint Response and Investigation

Consultant Recommendations: Complaint Response/Investigation

EY Recommendation	OPEGA Recommendation	Next Steps
-	MBON should standardize its complaint form and internal database to monitor complaint sources objectively	MBON agrees with this recommendation. There should be standardization between the information gathered on the complaint form and information that is tracked in its internal database. MBON plans to revise its complaint form to be consistent with the tracking elements in the database once the licensing system has been updated.
-	MBON should have a written policy allowing staff to triage cases requiring immediate action	This recommendation has been implemented. In January 2024, the Board voted to delegate authority to Board investigative staff to administratively close all cases that are 2019 and older (cold cases). The Board also delegated authority to Complaints and Investigations staff to triage new cases and assign priority levels in accordance with the National Council for State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) guidelines

Consultant Recommendations: Complaint Response/Investigation

EY Recommendation	OPEGA Recommendation	Next Steps
Assign 'no action' to all Priority Level Three cases being investigated.	The Triage Committee should meet every two weeks, and the committee should ensure that every complaint that it reviews is triaged within 30 days of being received by MBON.	The current backlog of cases are being reviewed by a biweekly committee which recommends no action on items that would not benefit from further work.
Hire multiple full-time non-nurse investigators to clear investigations backlogs and manage future investigations.	-	Enforcement and Background review positions expanded by from 6 to 40. Creating non-nurse investigators will make filling new vacancies easier, and help reduce the backlog.
-	The full board should give more direction to the Triage Committee on what cases should be given priority 3.	MBON agrees with this recommendation. New Board staff and Board members are trained on the NCSBN priority levels. The delegation of triage authority requires Board staff to take cases that are not likely to proceed to investigation to the Board to review and ratify the recommendation to take no action.
Put investigation information and tracking on a more robust and secure system with better tracking mechanisms (reporting and notifications).	-	MBON is currently standing up a new Compliance Office which will oversee this process.

Complaints and Investigation Response Updates

- In October 2023, MDH allocated 10 non-nurse investigator positions to assist with clearing the backlog of investigations.
- MBON is actively recruiting for the 6 investigator positions
- In January 2024, the Board voted to delegate authority to Board investigative staff to administratively close all cases that are 2019 and older (cold cases).
- The Board also delegated authority to Complaints and Investigations staff to triage new cases and assign priority levels in accordance with the National Council for State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) guidelines
- Each complaint is reviewed the same day it is received
- Intake to triage time has decreased from 58 days (EY Report) to under 24 business hours
- Priority 3 complaints are reviewed by a Board committee and is recommended for “Take No Action” (TNA). The Board ratifies the recommendation at the monthly board meeting

	Cold Cases	Current Cases	Total Number of Cases
January 1, 2024	2,237	1,476	3,713
March 31, 2024	458	1,477	1,935
January 21, 2026	201	966	1167

Staffing

Consultant Recommendation: Staffing

EY Recommendation	OPEGA Recommendation	Next Steps
Prioritize hiring / naming MBON Executive Director in the near term with accountability for MBON transformation.	The Maryland General Assembly should consider repealing the requirement that the executive director of MBON be a licensed nurse.	This has been completed. Rhonda Scott was named Executive Director in 2023. In 2024, legislation was passed by the Maryland General Assembly to repeal requirements that the executive director of MBON be a licensed nurse.
Explore opportunities to enhance ways of working, such as enhanced and regular communications, hosting regular town halls with employees, define clear career paths, and discuss hybrid or remote work options.	Compensation analysis of salaries and compensation packages at MBON, at other state nursing boards, and in comparable fields in the private sector to assess whether MBON's salaries and compensation are appropriately competitive.	MDH will work in conjunction with the Department of Budget and Management to address these recommendations.

Consultant Recommendation: Staffing

EY Recommendation	OPEGA Recommendation	Next Steps
Enhance training across all levels, including ability to generate reports for decision-making and enable more effective onboarding and continuing education.	-	Best practices and SOP currently used by staff are being standardized to onboard new employees more effectively.
Streamline hiring processes by consolidating application processes.	Determine whether there are opportunities to streamline hiring practices.	The Department will work with DBM to assess hiring timelines at the Board.

Key Accomplishments: Response to Employee Needs



- Employee Engagement
- Team Building
- Improving Morale
- Community Outreach
- Job Satisfaction

Key Accomplishments: Certification and Licensure



Certification and Licensure

- Increase in staffing
- Decreased processing times
- Increase in community and stakeholder outreach
- Updated webpage: clear and direct instructions for applicants

Key Accomplishments: Engagement with Constituents and Stakeholders

Town hall meetings held for the past two years

- CNA Training Programs
- Licensure

Established a customer service email for direct engagement with constituents with immediate response and follow up

Public feedback sessions

