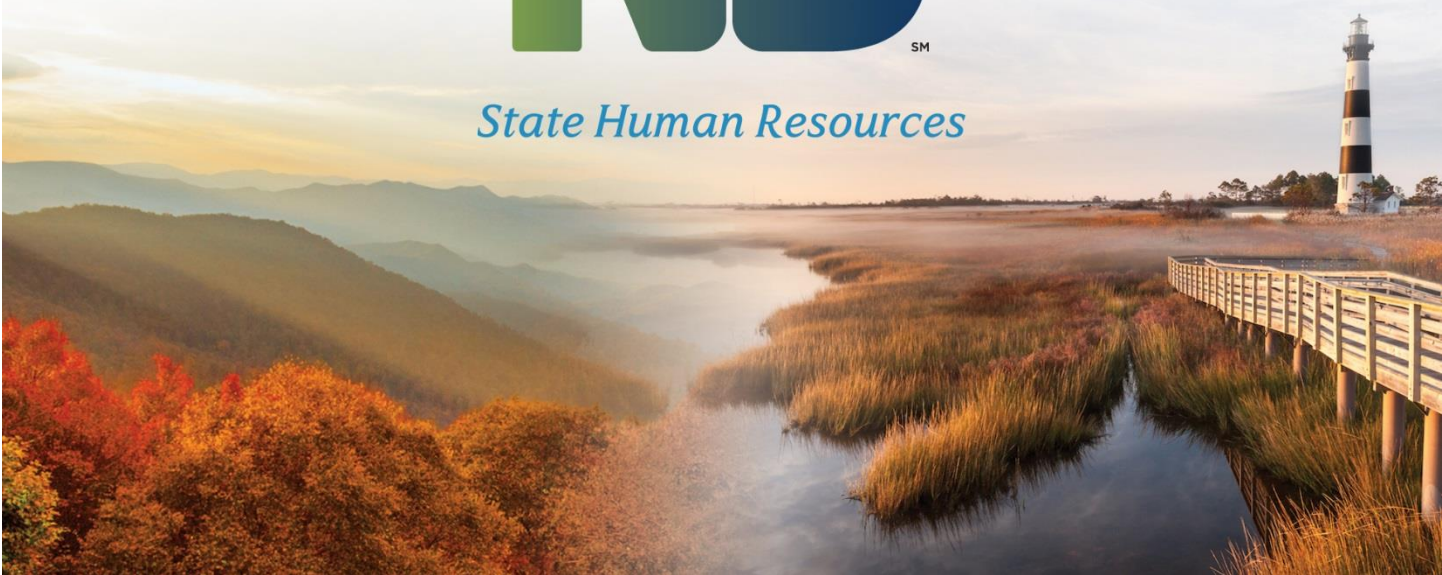




State Human Resources



NASPE - Eva N. Santos Communication Award

The Resource

A Newsletter Published by the
North Carolina Office of State Human Resources

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1. Provide a brief description of the submission.

The Resource began as a quarterly electronic newsletter developed by the communications team at the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) to keep state employees informed about the many and various Human Resources (HR)-related initiatives and projects on issues such as benefits, compensation, workplace safety, wellness, workers' compensation, employee relations, and others. It quickly expanded and has become a brand that is not only used to communicate with all employees on a quarterly basis on topics of broad interests, it is also used as a means to send targeted communications to various employee groups to update them on areas specific to their jobs or areas of influence. *The Resource* is the only NC state government newsletter that reaches all 85,000+ state employees.



2. How long has the submission been in existence?

The first issue of *The Resource* was sent out in March 2015 and has continued to be released on a quarterly basis. Plus, targeted versions of *The Resource* are developed and disseminated as needed to address specific topics such as diversity and inclusion, workplace safety, and workers' compensation.

3. Why was the submission created?

So often important and timely HR information was shared in a sporadic or piecemeal fashion, shared with contacts at each state government agency were never filtered down to the individual employees. If the information was shared, it was typically in a series of emails.

It was difficult to distinguish the important must-know content from a casual update, and sometimes the message was lost in translation.

To combat this dilemma, *The Resource* was created to consolidate all of those messages into one easy to read and reference document that has content that is reviewed and approved by HR subject matter experts. This strategy allows the OSHR communications team to reach out directly to employees and ensure that the messages are clear, consistent, and relevant.

When considering design and format, we took into account the medium that was most likely to be familiar to state employees. Because the average age of NC state employees is in the mid-40s, we wanted to create an electronic newsletter that was also print friendly. The electronic PDF is posted to our website and directly sent to state employees via email. The articles are written by the subject matter experts in each field and are kept short and readable with links to more information. Since the newsletter is sent electronically, that allows employees to access it anytime, from anywhere. They can stay up-to-date with the latest news even if they're working off-site or on vacation. The publication's printer-friendly nature also allows readers who are more comfortable with tactile reading to print a copy as well.

4. How does this submission support the goals and objectives of your agenda/department?

OSHR's motto is "Serving those who serve NC." As North Carolina's center of excellence for HR, OSHR has an obligation to serve state employees. To do that, the OSHR leadership has worked tirelessly to not follow tradition for the sake of tradition and make changes where change is needed. This approach supports Governor Pat McCrory's initiative to bring greater innovation and efficiency to state government. The communications team is

wholeheartedly aligned with that mission, and *The Resource* is one of the primary means used to keep state employees well informed.

The state has over 85,000 employees. They work in various branches, agencies, and universities. It can be difficult to keep all those employees informed of the latest news and developments. Fortunately, through the newsletter, we're able to reach most employees and keep them up to speed on issues that impact them. *The Resource* doesn't only contain articles about legislative policies and legal information. We provide safety tips, fitness ideas, and information that saves employees money. We devote time and space to recognize employees for their excellent work. All of this reinforces the message that we embrace a positive, supportive work environment.

The Resource also helps drive traffic to OSHR's website and social media channels which adds to our ability to keep state employees—and the public—informed about the programs and initiatives they care about.

5. Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of this submission? If so, how?

Prior to the introduction of *The Resource*, OSHR would receive numerous emails and phone calls related to changes to HR policies and initiatives or even basic HR-related matters. Since the first issue of *The Resource* was released, it has led to a reduction in overhead. Emails and phone calls requesting information or clarifications have subsided significantly and employee engagement has increased. In each issue of *The Resource*, readers are reminded to share any story ideas or questions via a newsletter email address that is monitored daily. Additionally, several OSHR divisions were each designated a general email address to field questions about their specific programs. We've received numerous inquiries and suggestions to these general email addresses, which provides valuable insight on how we can continue to improve our HR communications. Many state

employees have expressed an appreciation for this publication, and the communications team is routinely asked when the next issue will be published.

By driving traffic between the newsletter, website and social media, we're able to reach more of the younger employees in state government. Many of them get a lot of news and information from social media. When we posted a story about Cool Jobs (OSHR's video series to promote jobs within North Carolina State Government), we uploaded a video about the apprenticeship program onto OSHR's Facebook page and included a link on the newsletter. That video has been viewed over 5,200 times on Facebook and over 700 times on Youtube. By promoting our Facebook and Twitter accounts on the newsletter, we've seen an increase in the number of followers on both accounts. Our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/NCOSHR) increased from 800 followers in 2014 to nearly 6,300 followers today (an increase of 787.5 %), and our Twitter account (@Work4NC) has grown to nearly 500 followers since it was created in late 2014.

Overall, the communications message is now easier to manage and is more responsive to the needs and questions of our fellow state employees. Our publication continues to introduce and encourage the use of Social Media, as well as provide a paperless version of important information. With a more direct line of communication, misinformation and rumors have greatly diminished leading to increased employee morale and better employee engagement.