



STUDENT OUTREACH PRESENTATION

TOOLBOX

APWA is committed to recruiting our nation's future public works professionals. This is your toolbox to initiating or responding to outreach opportunities in schools and in the community to enhance understanding of public works activities and careers.

The content includes ideas, templates, and materials to help you present and implement your outreach programs.

APWA's primary goals for school outreach activities include:

- Educating students about the nature of public works
- Presenting viable career options in public works to young people no matter what their academic achievement
- Providing APWA members with the tools and resources for working with high school students

Recognizing that every APWA member and chapter is unique in terms of the capacity and opportunity to engage in outreach, some of the programs described will work for you, and others will not be appropriate for your situation. Look at the outreach activities described here as a menu of opportunities and select those that will help you and APWA bring public works to the top of the list for parents, students, teachers, and counselors in your community.

WHERE TO START?

You want to reach out to students in your area, but who do you contact? Consider some of the below steps:

- Contact school districts, technical schools, individual teachers, guidance counselors, departments of education:
 - o Inquire into existing curriculum, and where APWA outreach materials could make sense to present.
 - For example, a history class could be studying President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and "The New Deal." This could be a perfect time for a presentation on the value of a career in public works.
 - o School Career Fairs
 - o School Assemblies
 - Think about a visible project in your year area. Show off the project and use it to demonstrate all the jobs that contributed – from finance to drafting, engineering to equipment operators, public outreach to inspectors, materials management, and fleet support.
- Your chapter could host a career fair.
- Contact community clubs and organizations such as: ROTC, scouting groups, 4H clubs, Future Farmers of America, church groups, etc.

SAMPLE TEMPLATE TO REACH OUT TO SCHOOLS:

Dear Guidance Counselor,

There are exciting opportunities for your students in public works! At the American Public Works Association (APWA), we are committed to recruiting our nation's future public works professionals.

Public works jobs are available now!

Public works jobs are everywhere: in every town, city, county, and municipality. These individuals range from those who started working fresh out of high school to those with professional certifications or advanced degrees. Public works departments in a typical, mid-sized city employ as many as 200 to 500 people from all educational backgrounds who can have unlimited earning potential. With this comes above average insurance and time off benefits. These individuals range from those who started working there fresh out of high school to those with professional certifications or advanced degrees.

This is the perfect time to join the public works community. The \$1 trillion infrastructure bill, signed into law in November 2021, will funnel billions to states and local governments to upgrade outdated roads, bridges, transit systems, and more. This bill will deliver \$550 billion of new federal investments to America's infrastructure over five years, touching everything from bridges and roads to the nation's broadband, water, and energy systems.

Public works has jobs starting with the only educational requirement being a high school diploma, while others may offer on-the-job training or apprenticeships. There are also career paths that require vocational/technical degrees, associate degrees, undergraduate degrees, and even graduate level degrees. Public works departments employ individuals to help provide important services to the community.

Public works careers cover the following areas:

- Administration and Management
- Construction Management
- Emergency Management
- Engineering and Technology
- Facilities, Grounds and Urban Forestry
- Fleet Services
- Public Rights-of-Way
- Solid Waste
- Transportation
- Water Resources (Drinking water, Stormwater and Wastewater)

We would like to request a time to present on the value of a career in public works. In addition to our presentation, we have a career booklet that guides students to a career in public works based upon their current plan of study and interests. This career booklet lists 150 jobs along with education requirements and annual salaries.

Sincerely,

PUBLIC WORKS PROFESSIONAL:

Who should present?

Getting the right presenter is crucial, you will want to solicit a presenter from your chapter that is engaging and can make a connection with the students.

Questions to ask for potential presenters:

- Are you outgoing? Eager to meet new people?
- Do you have a personal story with public works that you can share?
- Do you have experience working with young adults or talking to groups?
- Do you have a sense of humor that appeals to young adults?
- Are you able to leave work at least a few times a year for outreach activities?
- Do you have an aptitude for teaching, explaining, or giving demonstrations?

**TIP! BUILDING AN
OPENING FOR A
PRESENTER:**

Effective openings not only introduce a topic, but they also build rapport with the audience, “hooking” their attention with an amazing fact, a provocative question, or a story that engages listeners’ minds and emotions.

TEMPLATE OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION:

This presentation can be followed in conjunction with the Shaping the World of Public Works career booklet.

1. WHAT IS PUBLIC WORKS?

Public works encompasses everything people in local government do to provide and sustain the structures and services we count on for an acceptable quality of life.

Public works professionals take care of our:

- **Streets** – by repairing street surfaces, placing road signs, striping, managing street cleaning, and implementing deicing and snow removal
- **Water distribution and wastewater treatment** – by ensuring we have everything from safe, clean drinking water to treatment of wastewater
- **Traffic and transportation** – by designing roadways and operating mass transportation systems
- **Engineering and technology** – by designing buildings, water and sewer systems, and roads and bridges
- **Solid waste management** – by collecting, processing, and disposing of recyclables, yard waste, and trash
- **Construction management** – by overseeing all phases of construction on public structures, such as government offices, libraries, police stations, and recreation centers
- **Fleet management** – by repairing and maintaining municipal vehicles and equipment
- **Facilities** – by managing and maintaining government offices, water treatment facilities, equipment, and fleet facilities
- **Parks and grounds** – by planning, operating, and maintaining public parks, recreational facilities, and other green spaces
- **Emergency management** – by coordinating with other first responders to place barricades and remove debris as well as to provide and operate heavy equipment

2. WHO ARE YOU?

Explain your role in public works, how you work with other departments, and share your public works story. You can also share:

- How would you describe your office/agency?
- What role does your office/agency play in the community?
- How is your office/agency organized?
- How many employees are with your office/agency (full-time, part-time, and seasonal/temporary)
- What kinds of jobs do you have [clerical, unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, marketing/communication, professional (engineering, architecture, etc.) technical, managerial]?
- What is your dress policy?
- What is your agency's involvement in education? In the community?
- What are the titles of entry level positions within your office?
- What level of education, training, skills, or experience does an applicant need for an entry-level position with your office/agency?
- What kind of benefits do you offer? Do you pay for employees to take college courses?
- What job classifications do you expect to be in the greatest demand within the next five years?

3. WHAT FIELD WOULD YOU ENTER TO WORK IN PUBLIC WORKS?

Public works careers cover the following areas:

- Administration and Management
- Construction Management
- Emergency Management
- Engineering and Technology
- Facilities, Grounds and Urban Forestry
- Fleet Services
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4. SHAPE YOUR WORLD – FIND THE RIGHT CAREER FOR YOU!

Utilize the *Shaping the World of Public Works* career booklet. Start on page 6. Read out loud from page 6:

- “Does it match my personality?”
- “Does it call for the skills I’m good at?”
- “Are the location, pay, and benefits right for me?”
- “Will it allow me to learn and grow?”
- “Will I love what I do?”
- “Will it allow me to make a difference in the world?”
- “Is this a ‘green’ job that will protect the environment and lead to a sustainable future?”

Have students use the table on pages 8-15 to find a match between career clusters that appeal to them and fit the questions they answered in the above questions.

5. DISCUSS AND SHARE

Have the students share what job was a good fit for them. Share information you know regarding those careers. Small-group, in-class presentations give students and APWA members an opportunity for open dialogue. Not only do students learn about public works, APWA presenters can hear, firsthand, student questions and perceptions, which can suggest new approaches to developing messages and media to reach this audience.

6. MAKE THE FUTURE HAPPEN

- Communicate availability of internships and jobs in your city, town, or county.
- Have your chapter plan a field trip that you can invite students to.
- Advise students to meet with their counselor to map out a career path – courses taken in high school and college will prepare the student to enter the world of public works.
- Advise student to contact you directly with any additional follow up.
- Showcase any demonstrations of survey/GPS equipment, water quality test kits, etc. *A Day in the Life* video

TIP! PUBLICIZING YOUR ACTIVITIES

Publicize your involvement in the schools by sending a news release to your local newspaper. Newspaper coverage will alert other schools to the availability of your career resources, and it helps raise awareness about the role of public works in the community. And of course, post about your involvement on social media!

Hopefully, the information presented in this toolbox will provide you with the information and resources needed to successfully promote public works as a career by:

- Educating students about the nature of public works
- Presenting viable career options in public works to young people no matter what their academic achievement

Additional supplemental documentation is provided that can assist you with templates, forms, videos, and other materials related to presenting viable career options in public works.

You can find these documents by going to APWA Chapter Leader Resources

Good luck with developing your presentation!

If you have any questions please contact Jill Wilbeck at jwilbeck@apwa.net or at **816-595-5232**.

