WEF/AWWA
Transformative Issues Symposium on Workforce 2019

August 7-9, 2019
Washington, DC
Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill
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This symposium is jointly hosted by the Water Environment Federation and the American Water Works Association, in cooperation with the Chesapeake Water Environment Association, the Federal Water Quality Association, The Water Research Foundation, and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies.
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Pre-Conference Workshops
Wednesday, August 7
(Additional registration fees apply)

Workshop A: Employee Engagement in the Water/Wastewater Sector
Wednesday, August 7
8:30 am – 12:00 pm
This is an interactive workshop presenting leadership philosophies that will help engage and motivate self and others. Concepts of transformational, servant, and ethical leadership, incorporating the decision-making process, and changing organizational culture in order to optimize utility performance will be presented.

The Utility of the Future (UOTF) is facing many challenges for water and wastewater agencies in the US; including climate change, drought, rising costs, aging infrastructure, increased regulatory requirements, population changes, and a rapidly changing workforce. The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), the Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF), and the Water Environment Federation (WEF) are addressing these challenges and have documented them in The Water Resources Utility of the Future: A Blueprint for Action. This document includes a focus on employee and leadership development to achieve sustainability, including actions like hiring and retaining motivated employees and creating a collaborative organization and positive workplace environment. This session focuses on leadership development and employee motivation to address the challenges of the UOTF. This is increasingly important as new generations enter the workforce.

Workshop B: GET READY. GET SET. GO! Is Your Organization Ready for Transformation?
Wednesday, August 7
1:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Organizational transformation is not an easy undertaking. In a research study conducted by McKinsey and Company, 70% of all transformations fail. Many change efforts take longer and cost more money than leaders and managers anticipate. The success of a transformation initiative depends on how individuals in the organization embrace and adopt to the changes. For an organization to successfully change, individual behaviors need to change. The success of a transformation lies with each impacted employee doing their work differently. Through communication, support, education and the knowledge of how to implement a transformational model, successful transformation is possible.

In this workshop we will discuss transformational models which provide a framework to assist participants with ensuring their organization is strategically capable of increasing the organization’s effectiveness through change. Participants will leave the workshop with tools and business case information to successfully deploy transformational activities within their organizations.

- Assess your organization’s readiness to confidently launch a successful transformation.
- Discuss how transformational activities improve organizational results.
- Learn how to use change management models and tools.
- Create an action plan for next steps in your transformation process.
Opening General Session
Thursday, Aug 8
8:30 am – 10:00 am

Moderator: Andy Kricun, Camden Water, NJ, 2019 Symposium Chair

More information coming shortly.
Session 1: Models of Community Partnership: One Solution to Workforce Challenges
Thursday, August 8
10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Moderator: Catherine Curtis, Baywork Chair & SFPUC Workforce Reliability Manager

Workforce challenges in the water/wastewater industry can be improved by Community Partnerships and collaboration. This session will highlight some examples and lessons learned from these partnerships such as Baywork, SOP Collaborative and BACWWE.

10:30 am Baywork, A Regional Community Partnership
Catherine Curtis, Baywork Chair & SFPUC Workforce Reliability Manager

11:00 am A Cooperative Effort to Promote the Sharing of SOPs
Jeff Oxenford, Director, SOP Cooperative

11:30 am Industry Partnership in Candidate Development
Levi Fuller, Current Chair Executive Committee BACWWE

12:00 pm Session Adjourns
Session 2: Engaging the Generational Groups in Innovation
Thursday, August 8
10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Moderator: Zakiya Seymour, Arcadis

This session will provide utility-proven tactics for stakeholder engagement in innovation activities. It will also examine which stakeholder tactics or tools would be most effective for each generational group in our current workforce.

10:30 am  Innovation as a Catalyst for Workforce Engagement
Joanna Brunner, Arcadis

10:45 am  Breakout Groups: Develop Generational Group Persona

11:00 am  The Intersection of Innovation and Workforce at DC Water
Matt Ries, DC Water

11:15 am  Breakout Groups: Determine Tools and Tactics for Each Persona

11:30 am  Building a Culture of Innovation at WSSC
Keith Tyson, WSSC

11:45 am  Breakout Group Report-Out and Overall Findings

12:00 pm  Session Adjourns
Session 3: Developing Workforce Training Programs to Support At Risk Youth
Thursday, August 8
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Moderator: Kristyn Abhold, Spring Point Partners LLC

In this session, attendees will learn how the neighboring utilities and communities of Philadelphia, PA and Camden, NJ have successfully partnered with NGOs to train at-risk young adults in green infrastructure maintenance, GIS, etc. and connect them with real job opportunities.

1:30 pm Introductions
Kristyn Abhold, Spring Point Partners LLC

1:35 pm PowerCorpsPHL and Philadelphia Water Department: Developing a Sustainable Career Pathway Partnership
Learn how PowerCorpsPHL and PWD partner to provide opportunities to disconnected young adults and returning citizens to advance Philadelphia’s environmental stewardship (GI maintenance), youth violence prevention, and workforce development priorities.
Julia Hillengas, PowerCorpsPHL
Terrance Thompson, PowerCorpsPHL
Alex Warwood, Philadelphia Water Department

2:00 pm You Don't Have to Reinvent the Wheel, Replicate What Works!
Learn how Camden successfully replicated the Philadelphia model. You can do it too!
Andy Kricun, Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority

2:20 pm Opportunity + Infrastructure = Transformation in Camden, NJ
Learn how Hopeworks utilizes advanced curriculum to train youth (17-26 yrs/old) in website design/development, GIS and Salesforce to advance career opportunities and provide real world experience. Hear from American Water on how they contract with Hopeworks.
Dan Rhoton, Hopeworks Camden
LeAundra McCullough, Hopeworks Camden
Chris Kahn, American Water

2:45 pm Overage and Q&A

3:00 pm Session Adjourns
Session 4: NACWA Session
Thursday, August 8
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Utilities have a unique opportunity to go beyond their traditional mandate of providing clean water to rate payers and serve as anchor institutions that can boost the economy, create jobs and expose a new generation to careers in the water sector.

More information coming shortly.
Session 5: It Takes a Community: Workforce Programs that Give Back Thursday, August 8 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Moderator: Jim Horne, U.S. EPA Office of Water

Ensuring a sustainable and effective workforce is a challenge for every water sector utility—made even more critical by the expected retirement “tsunami” facing many of these utilities. The basic steps of analyzing a utility’s critical workforce needs, developing an effective recruitment strategy, providing effective training, and keeping good people are essential building blocks for success. In addition, many utilities, especially those in urban areas, are now seeing the benefits of working with various partners to engage the community, explain the value of water workforce employment, and actively seek out community members, including youth and those that may face barriers to employment, as part of their “workforce of the future”. These utilities see this kind of approach as the classic “win-win” scenario, and part of their strategy of giving back to the communities they serve.

Accordingly, this session will focus on steps three utilities with differing challenges are taking to develop “real world” strategies that addresses their short and long-term workforce needs, but also help sustain the communities they serve. Each speaker will briefly address the “what” and “how” question behind their programs, but also the challenges they face and some practical advice for others considering embarking on a similar path.

Following these brief presentations, the moderator and panel will engage in a facilitated discussion with the audience to address questions and have a dialogue designed to share insights that will inspire other participants to embark on their own journey to workforce and community sustainability.

3:30 pm Welcome and Moderator Remarks
Jim Horne, U.S. EPA

3:35 pm Streamwork: Atlanta’s Workforce Resiliency Strategic Plan
Andrada Butler, City of Atlanta

3:50 pm Just Another Tool in the Toolbox! MSDJobLink A Workforce Portal Tool
Sharise Horne, Louisville MSD

4:05 pm Building the Pipeline for the Workforce of the Future
Mimi White, Montgomery County, Ohio

4:20 pm Facilitated Discussion with the Audience
Jim Horne, U.S. EPA

5:00 pm Session Adjourns
Session 6: Employee Optimization/Self-Actualization, and Infusing a Sense of Mission in our Water Workforce

Thursday, August 8  
3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Moderator: Roshanak Aflaki, City of Los Angeles Sanitation

Self-actualization is correlated to the level of employee engagement with its four dimensions; commitment, motivation, loyalty and autonomy and trust. Meaningful work, positive work environment with culture of recognition, self-directed dynamic learning and trust in leadership boost employee engagement.

Experience Toolkit (Guide, Checklist), why employee experience matters and how to build employee engagement strategies that work will be presented. Employee engagement with the first greenfield advanced oxidation process (AOP), UV/HOCl AOP design in the World implemented will be discussed. The award-winning process was developed by the Los Angeles Sanitation in a unique public-private partnership between the Los Angeles Sanitation, Xylem Corporation and the technology experts. Project Awards for the AOP Process include: 2017’s ENR Best of the Best from across the U.S. in the Water/Environment category, NACWA Research & Technology Award, 2019 IUVA Engineering Project of the Year Award

3:30 pm  How to Boost Employee Engagement/Experience Toolkit (Guide, Checklist)  
Roshanak Aflaki, City of Los Angeles Sanitation

4:00 pm  Make Room to Foster Creativity  
Slavica D. Hammond, Parsons Corporation

4:30 pm  Satisfaction  
Seung Tag Oh, City of Los Angeles Sanitation

5:00 pm  Session Adjourns
Special Session Format: Deep Dives  
Friday, August 9  
8:30 am – 12:00 pm

This special session will run concurrently on Friday morning and will offer an opportunity for symposium attendees to participate in an interactive session format. Specific topics and presenter information will be made available shortly.
Session 7: Workforce Implications of Digital Water  
Friday, August 9  
8:30 am – 10:00 am  

Moderator: Cheryl Davis, CKD Consulting

Digital tools become “digital solutions” only when utility staff are prepared to use them effectively. This session will help you think through the selection processes and workforce investments needed to make full use of digital tools.

8:30 am  Introduction to Workshop  
Cheryl Davis, CKD Consulting

8:35 am  Digital Tools Available  
Sharon Peters, EMA

Ware Research Foundation Findings on Implications of Digital Water on Water Operations  
Jeff Oxenford, Rural Community Assistance Partnership

Successful Implementation  
Mark Poling, Clean Water Services  
Ting Lu, Clean Water Services

Utility/Regional Perspective  
Catherine Curtis, SFPUC BAYWORK

Consultant Perspective  
Cristina Ahmadpour, Isle Utilities

Recommendations for Utility Preparation  
Cindy Goodburn, Cindy Goodburn Consulting

9:45 am  Small Group Discussion of Challenges/Solutions to Digital Implementation  
- After hearing about the implications of a digitized workforce in water, what questions come up for you and your organization?  
- What do you still need to know?  
- What have your experiences been like when implementing a digital solution – challenges/successes/lessons learned?  
Distribution of Surveys on Participant Experiences/Lessons Learned

10:00 am  Session Adjourns
Session 8: Bridging the Gap: Leveraging the Utilities Core Purpose to Create Pathways of Employment for the Youth and “Hard to Place” Adults

Friday, August 9
8:30 am – 10:00 am

Moderator: Korey Gray, DC Water

This session explores how to transition hard to employ individuals to the workplace. Included will be a discussion on risk factors associated with employment, and leveraging external resources for their training, placement, and ongoing support.

8:30 am  Background and Overview of DC Water’s Water Works Program
Korey Gray, DC Water

8:50 am  Case Study on training and employing a returning citizen
Linda Fennell, DC Water

9:10 am  Panel Discussion on Engaging the Youth and Hard to Employ
Panelists:
  ❖ Korey Gray, DC Water
  ❖ Dwayne Jones, UDC
  ❖ Linda Fennell, DC Water
  ❖ Arlen Harrell, DC Infrastructure Academy

10:00 am  Session Adjourns
Session 9: A 3-Dimensional View of Leveraging a Community Based Partnership to Engage Youth, Address Gaps in the Water Workforce, and Develop the Workforce of the Future

Friday, August 9
10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Moderator: Paula Hogg, Hampton Road Sanitation District

The HRSD/HRPWA 11-year partnership has provided over 75 internships. A HR Professional, Supervisor and students will present perspectives along with the program’s success in addressing the need for a qualified, diverse and knowledgeable workforce.

10:30 am Engaging and Developing the Next Generation of Water Workers through Community Partnerships and Meaningful Internships
Partnership and internship program overview, history, successes, lessons learned and a personal perspective.
Dorissa Pitts-Paige, HRSD Human Resources Business Partner

11:00 am The Supervisory Perspective
HRSD has to consider where future employees will come from and as a community advocate, it makes sense to recruit from the community. It provides good public relations and educates the public about what we do and why. Once the interns begin, we make sure they are not limited to mundane tasks. There may be restrictions based on age but we try to expose them to as many aspects of our operation as possible. The presentation will describe experiences and growth over the years and benefits to the interns and the work center and the role of mentoring.
Mike Chapman, HRSD Plant Manager

11:30 am Perspectives of the HRPWA Intern, Work Center Supervisor and HR Business Partner
A panel discussion will be moderated with the HR Business Partner, Supervisor and Employees (former HRPWA interns) who will be asked a series of questions to provide a student/employee, supervisor and HR perspectives. Questions will be centered around experiences, benefits, milestones, mentoring, opportunities, lessons learned and the future of the workforce. Time will also be allotted for the audience to ask questions.
Moderated by Paula Hogg, HRSD Director of Talent Management

12:00 pm Session Adjourns
Session 10: Building Organizational Capacity for and Leveraging Disruption as a Source of Transformation

Friday, August 9
10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Moderator: Pete Doyon, TMG Consulting

You must do much more, with much less--this is the reality of being a water/wastewater/stormwater utility these days. The key to success is to build the organizational capacity to transform, think, and act differently...embrace change and leverage disruption. The building blocks to achieve lasting transformation requires organizational capacity to plan strategically, embrace change, foster innovation and continuously improve performance.

Successfully achieving lasting transformation is one of the most difficult undertakings for any organization. There is nothing easy about it. Disruption provides one the greatest opportunities to drive transformation. Understanding how transformational cycles are organically and plan-fully created by disruptive initiatives is often shortsighted and shortchanged.

This session explores the internal organizational capacity requirements necessary to support transformation and details two companies' journeys with transformation to date. The good, the bad, and the ugly. The session will include presentation followed by panel and emphasis on attendee sharing experiences with internal capacity building and experiences leveraging disruption for transformation.

10:30 am Welcome and Session Overview
Pete Doyon, TMG Consulting

10:35 am Panel Introductions
- Darin Thomas, Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc.
- Kelley Dearing Smith, Louisville Water Company
- Lisa Burnett, Louisville Water Company
- Aubrey Spears, City of Lubbock Utilities
- Chris Goodloe, TMG Consulting
- Pete Doyon, TMG Consulting

10:45 am Introduction to SCIP – Building the Capacity for Strategy, Change, Innovation and Performance (SCIP)
The importance of new skills and competencies
What success looks like

11:00 am Transformational Journey - Louisville Water Company
Company Background
Project Overview/Disruptors
Customer Service Transformation
Role of Communications and Community

11:15 am Transformational Journey - City of Lubbock Utilities
Organization Background
Project Overview/Disruptors
Leadership Alignment
Balancing business and social drivers

Session 10, Continued
11:30 am  Lessons Learned Summary
11:40 am  Panel and Attendee Discussion
12:00 pm  Session Adjourns
Session 11: GWIC@Gwinnett - A Regional Approach to Addressing Workforce
Friday, August 9
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Moderator: Melissa Meeker, Gwinnett Water Innovation Center

This session will highlight possibilities and examples that are being created at GWIC@Gwinnett through a regional collaboration and community partnership program. This program includes development of creative messaging regarding the importance of working in the water industry with an emphasis on targeting youth and increasing diversity; the use of innovation as a workforce attraction and retention tool; formalizing relationships with high schools, trade and technical colleges to support the needs of industry; the development of enhanced training programs; and the creation of a workforce pipeline to address future needs which will support an active internship and apprenticeship program designed to minimize supervision challenges while maximizing the student/employer experience.

1:30 pm GWIC@Gwinnett - A Unique Foundation
Melissa Meeker, Director, GWIC@Gwinnett

1:40 pm Training Enhancements through Regional Collaboration
Pam Burnett, Executive Director, GAWP

1:50 pm Pipeline for Future Workforce
Deron Austin, Mueller

2:00 pm Innovation Driving the Future
Jason Carter, Arcadis

2:10 pm Facilitated Discussion on Approach to Scope of Session Including Audience Polling and Q&A

2:50 pm Panel Wrap-up and Key Take-aways

3:00 pm Session Adjourns
Session 13: Innovative Recruitment to Grow the Water Workforce  
Friday, August 9  
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm  

Moderator: Morgan Brown, Water Environment Federation  

This session will highlight programs designed to recruit new water workers, especially focusing on groups that have not previously been heavily recruited. These programs include:  
- WEF InFLOW (Introducing Future Leaders to Opportunities in Water)  
- AWWA Veterans Workforce Initiative  

More information coming shortly.