

# *Strengthening Rhode Island's One Water Workforce*

## **Part 2: Messaging for Workforce Recruitment and Leadership Support**

**Thursday, August 27, 2026**



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📍 Syracuse, NY



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**Technical Specialist**  
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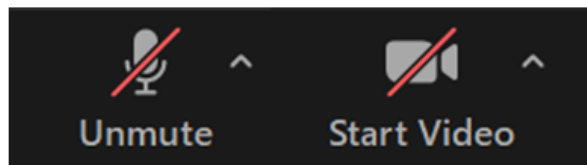
📍 Detroit, MI

# Zoom Logistics

## Audio/Webcam Settings

Mute, Unmute, select your audio source, or test audio settings.

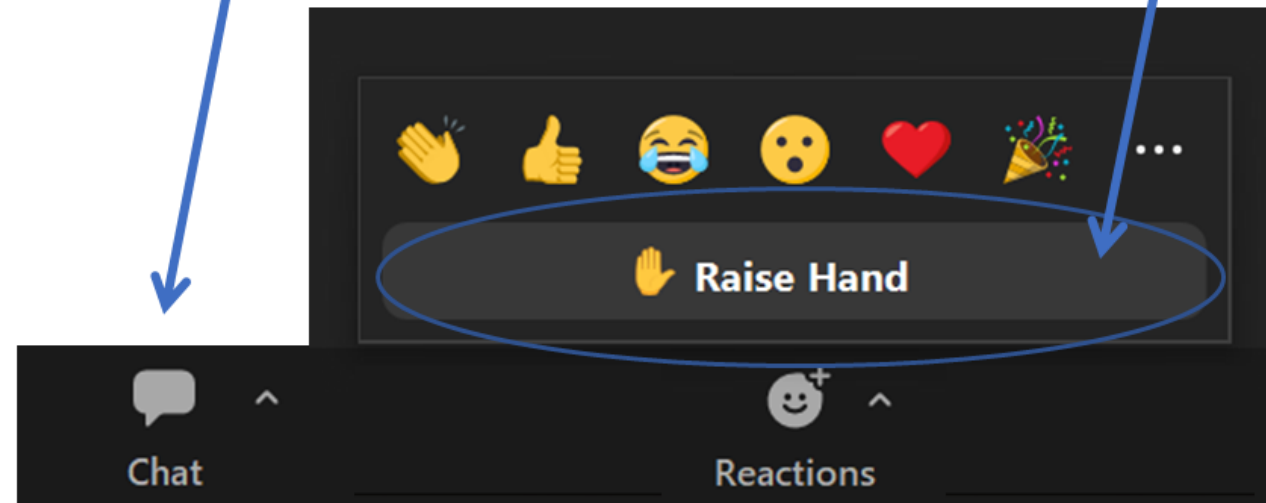
Turn webcam on or off



## Asking a Question

Type questions into the chat box any time throughout the session

If you would like to **unmute** to ask a question, please **raise your hand** under the **Reactions** tab.



# Continuing Education Credits

**This training is approved for:**

2.0 Drinking Water and Wastewater training credit hours  
(TCH) by the RI DOH and RI DEM



**To receive credit and/or a certificate:**

- You must attend the **entire session**
- You must register and attend using your real name and unique email address - **group viewing credit will not be acceptable**
- Certificates will be sent via email within 30 days



*If you have questions  
or need assistance,  
please contact  
[smallsystems@syr.edu](mailto:smallsystems@syr.edu)*

# About the EFCN

The **Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN)** is a university- and non-profit-based organization creating innovative solutions to the difficult how-to-pay issues of environmental protection and water infrastructure.

The EFCN works collectively and as individual centers to address these issues across the entire U.S, including the 5 territories and the Navajo Nation. The EFCN aims to assist public and private sectors through training, direct professional assistance, production of durable resources, and innovative policy ideas.



# Meet Our Partners:



# Meet Our Partners:

New England  
**neefc**  
Environmental Finance Center

[neefc.org](http://neefc.org)

**SNEP**  
  
**NETWORK**

[snepnetwork.org](http://snepnetwork.org)

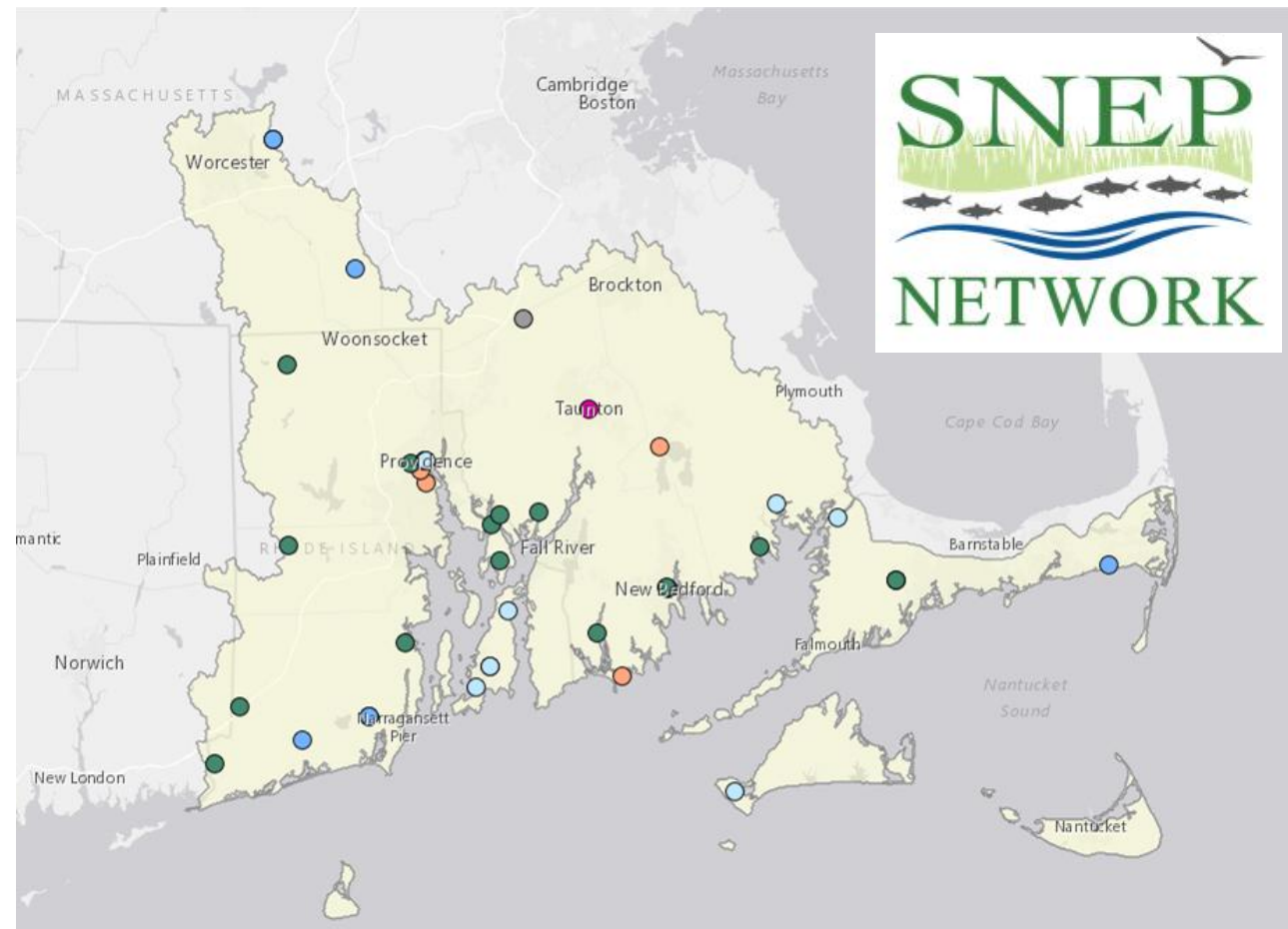
# Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Network

*A network of **16+ local and regional experts** with expertise in **stormwater and watershed management, sustainable financing, ecological restoration, and climate resilience***

## Offerings

Access **free training, tools, and technical/financial assistance** for municipalities and tribes, helping **build local capacity and advance projects** from planning to implementation.

***Empowering communities to achieve healthy watersheds, sustainable financing, and long-term climate resilience through management of stormwater and restoration projects.***



*Map of the SNEP Region and SNEP Network Assistance Projects from 2019-2024*

*Upcoming RI Online Training:*

# Capital Improvement Plan Workshop



**September 23, 2026**



**10 AM - 3 PM Eastern Time**



SOUTHWEST  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
FINANCE CENTER



*TCH approval pending*

Scan to register



<https://efcnetwork.org/event/ri-online-training-capital-improvement-plan-workshop/>

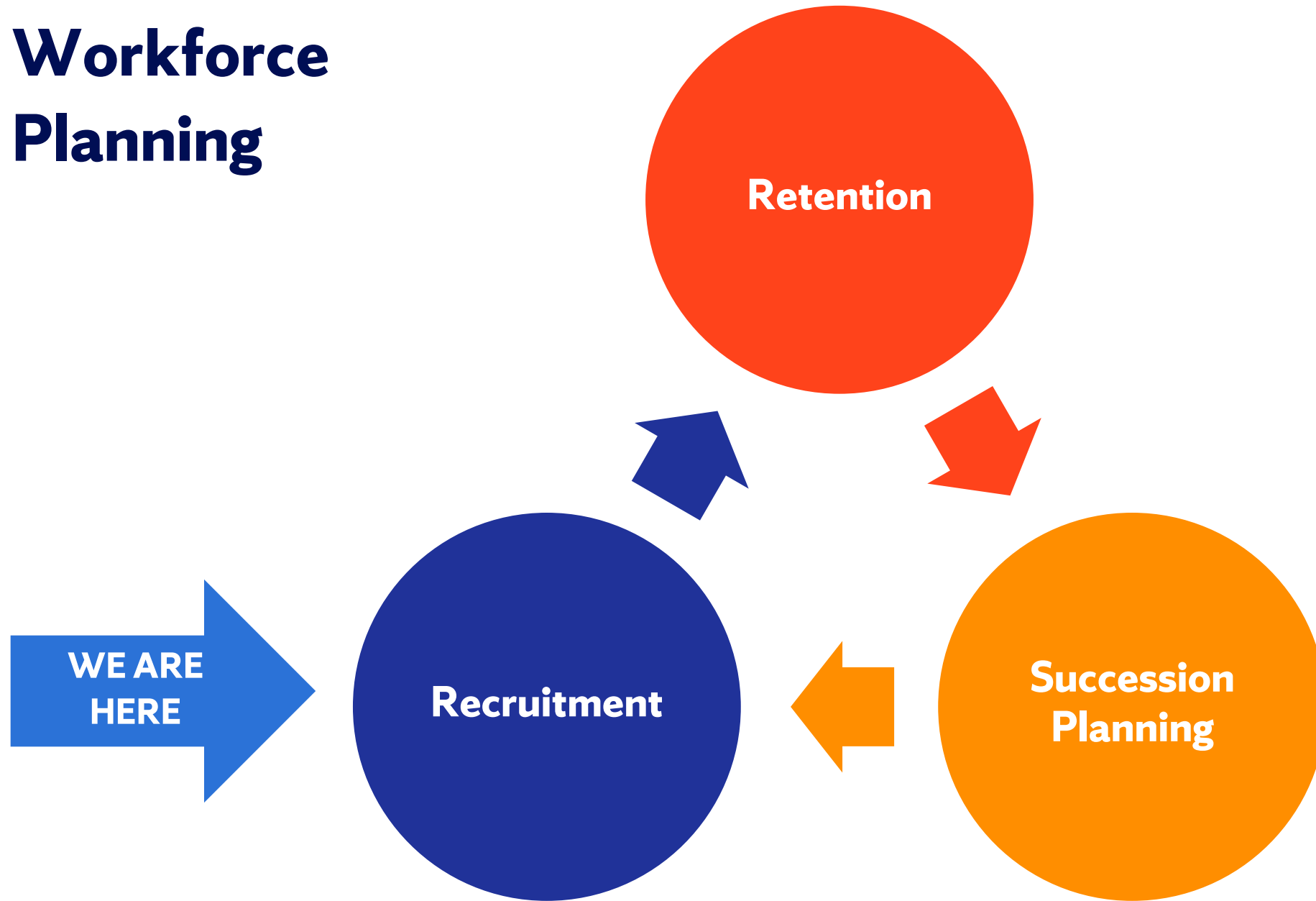
[efc.syr.edu](https://efc.syr.edu)

# Session Overview

Questions will  
be answered  
throughout!  
Send in chat or  
raise hand

1. What Motivates Different Generations
2. Turning Messaging into Smart Marketing
3. Navigating Job Portals & Postings
4. Communicating with Leadership and Decision Makers
5. Leveraging Partnerships
6. **Group Discussion:** *Peer Learning, Sharing Lessons, and Troubleshooting Challenges*

# Workforce Planning



## ***Icebreaker:***

**When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you “grew up”?**

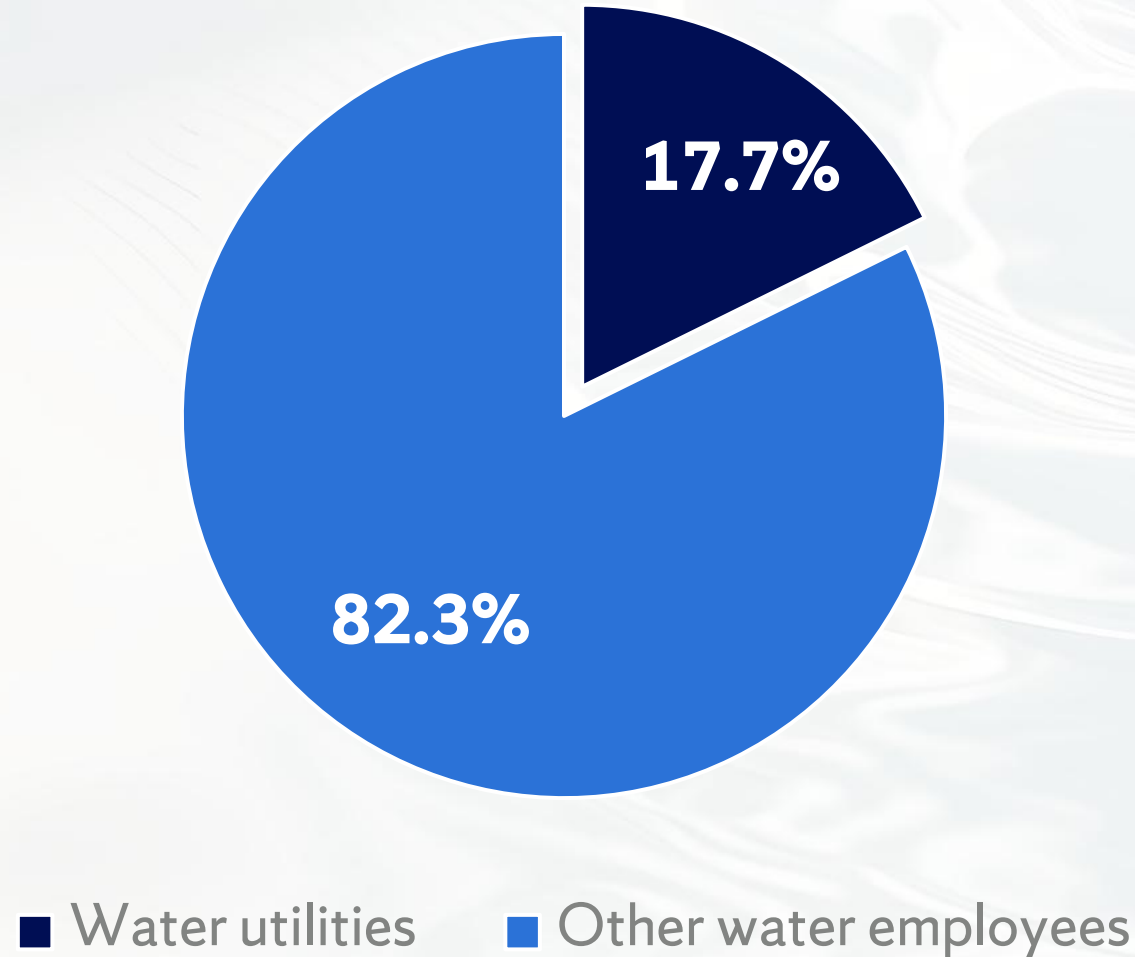




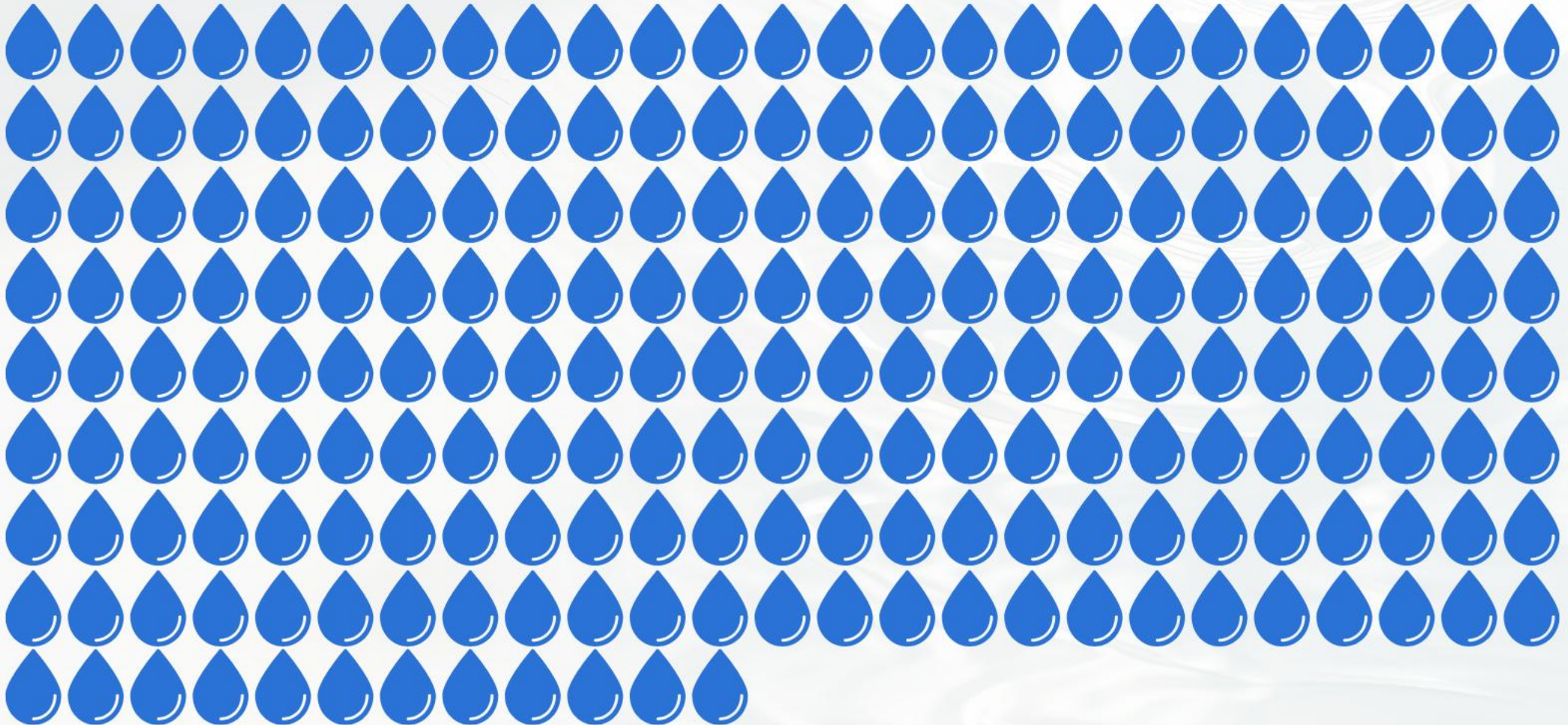
# The Why



# Brookings: Utility Share of Water Workforce Employment



# Brookings: At least 212 Unique “Water Occupations”





## Conservation

- Aquatic & Fisheries Scientist
- Ecologist
- Environmental Scientist
- GIS & Mapping Technician
- Hydrogeologist
- Interpretive Naturalist
- Interpretive Naturalist
- Natural Resource Technician
- Marine Biologist
- Meteorologist



## Monitoring

- Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator
- Diver
- Environmental Engineer
- Laboratory Analyst
- Mechanical Engineer
- Water Quality Technician
- Surveyor



## Treatment

- Aquatic Scientist
- Biochemist
- Chemical Engineer
- Environmental Engineer
- Mechanical Engineer
- Microbiologist
- Treatment Plant Operator
- Wastewater Operator



## Usage

- Agricultural Scientist
- Aquaculturist
- Botanist
- Electrical Engineer
- Water Quality Technician
- Hazardous Waste Technician
- Landscaper



## Supply & Distribution

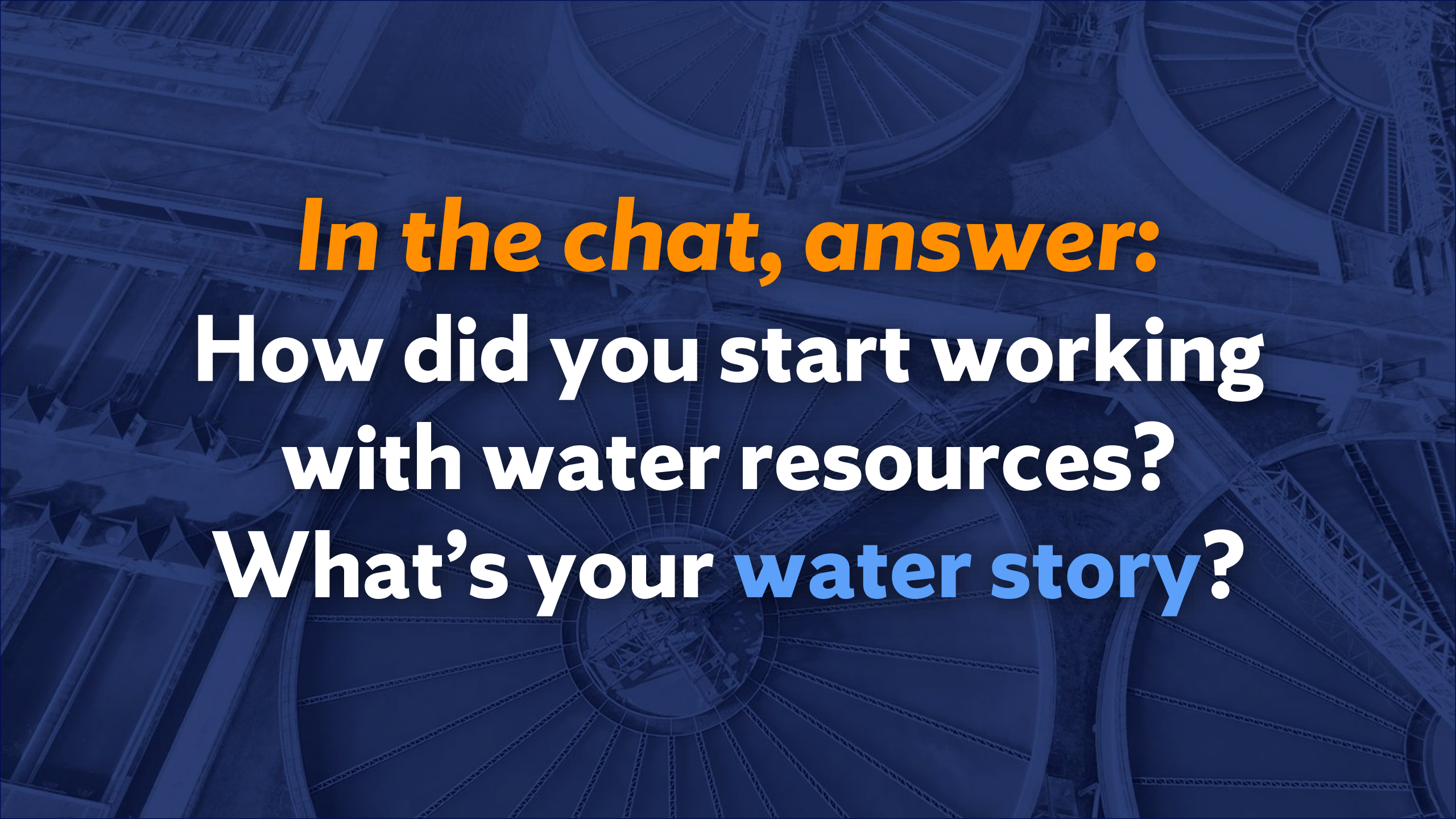
- Agricultural Engineer
- GIS & Mapping Technician
- Diver
- Landscape Architect
- Plumber
- Process Controller
- Pumping Station Operator
- Town and Regional Planner
- Water Operator



## Auxiliary & Support

- Administrator
- Cybersecurity Analyst
- Training Practitioner
- Accountant
- PR / Marketing Professional
- Project Manager
- Economist
- Electrician
- Environmental Health Officer
- Equipment Operator
- IT Specialist
- Lawyer
- Leisure & Recreation Provider
- Geologist
- Laboratory Analyst
- Meter Reader
- Zoology

# Introducing Careers Across the Water Workforce

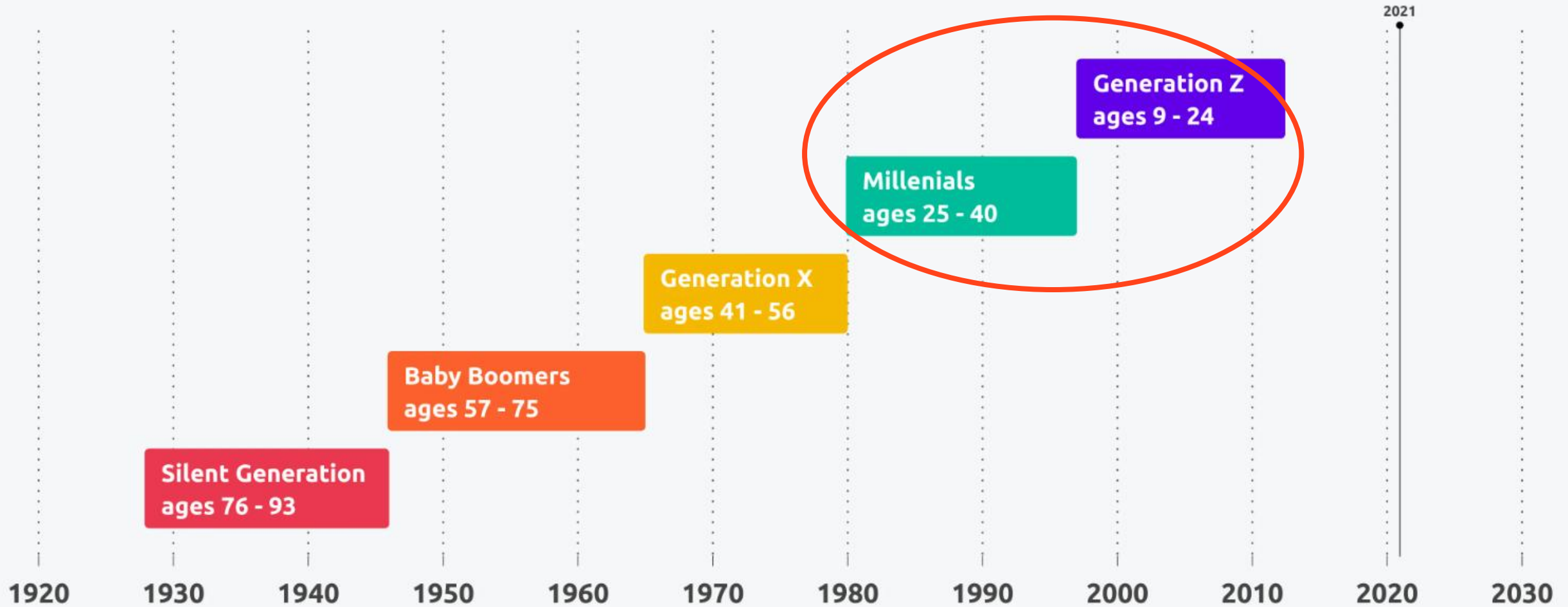
An aerial photograph of a water treatment plant, featuring several large circular clarifiers or sedimentation tanks. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered and reads:

***In the chat, answer:***  
**How did you start working  
with water resources?**  
**What's your water story?**

An aerial photograph of a water treatment plant, featuring several large circular clarifiers with radial support structures. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

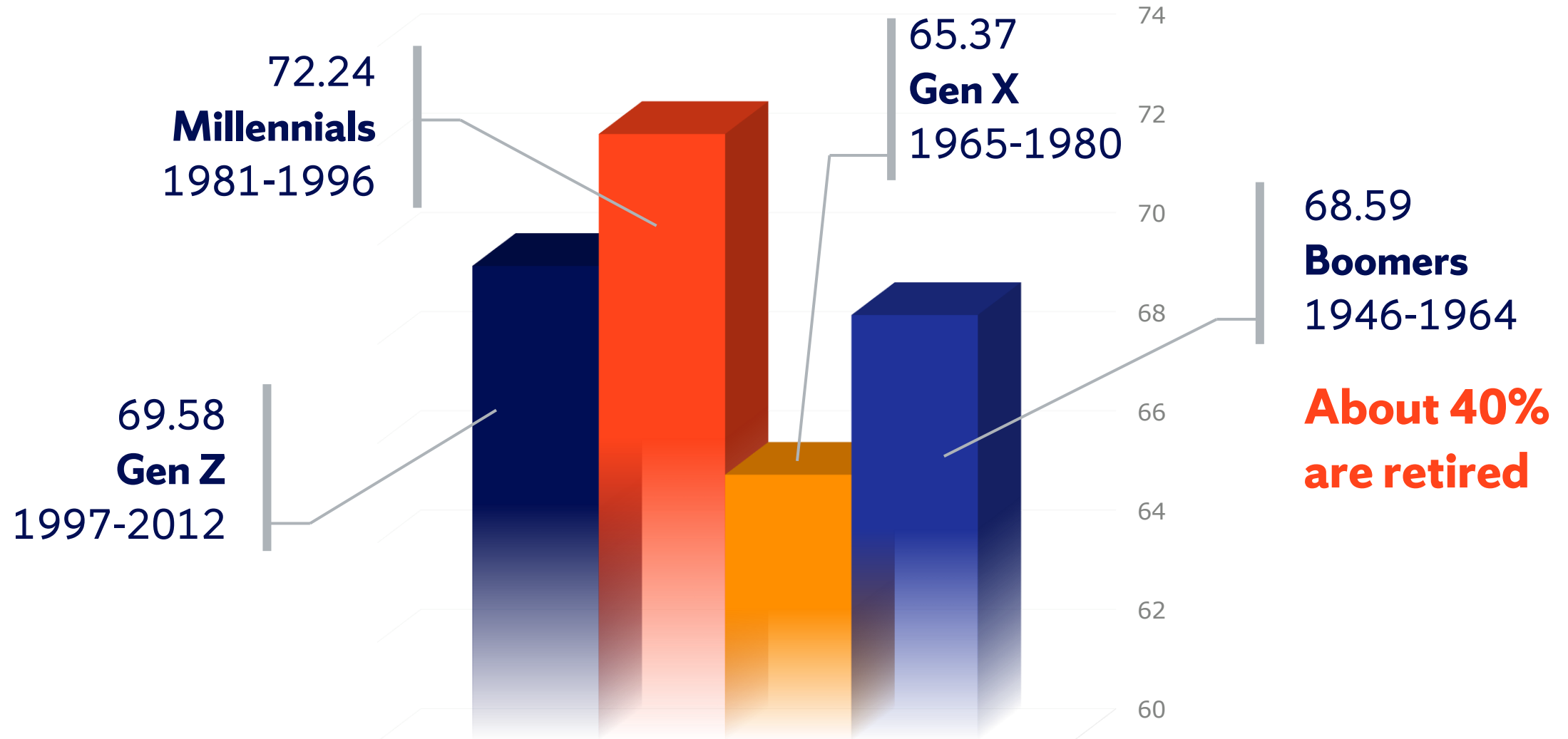
# **Creating Interest in Water Careers**

# The Generations Defined



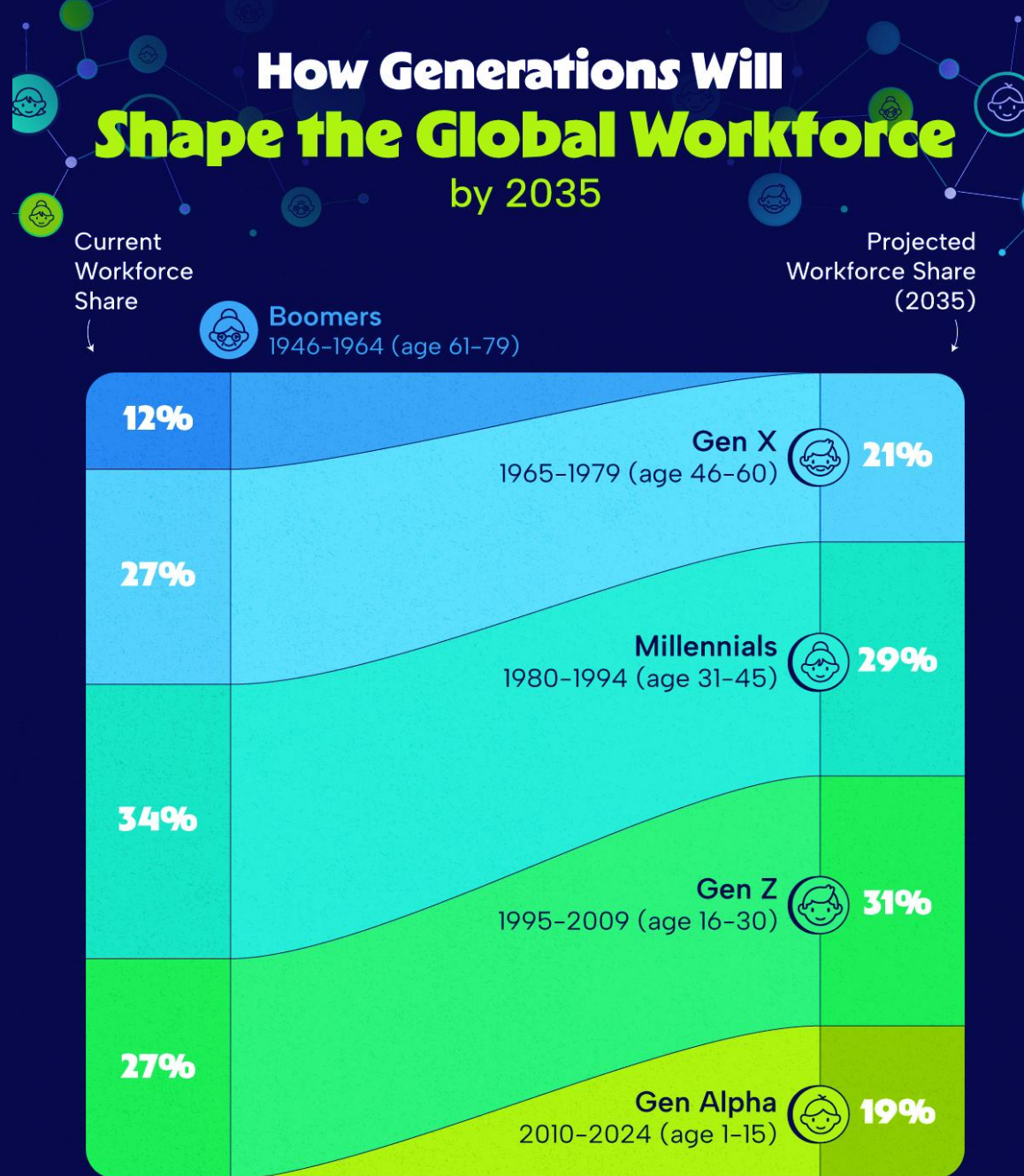
Source: Wikipedia

## Generations by Size (millions)



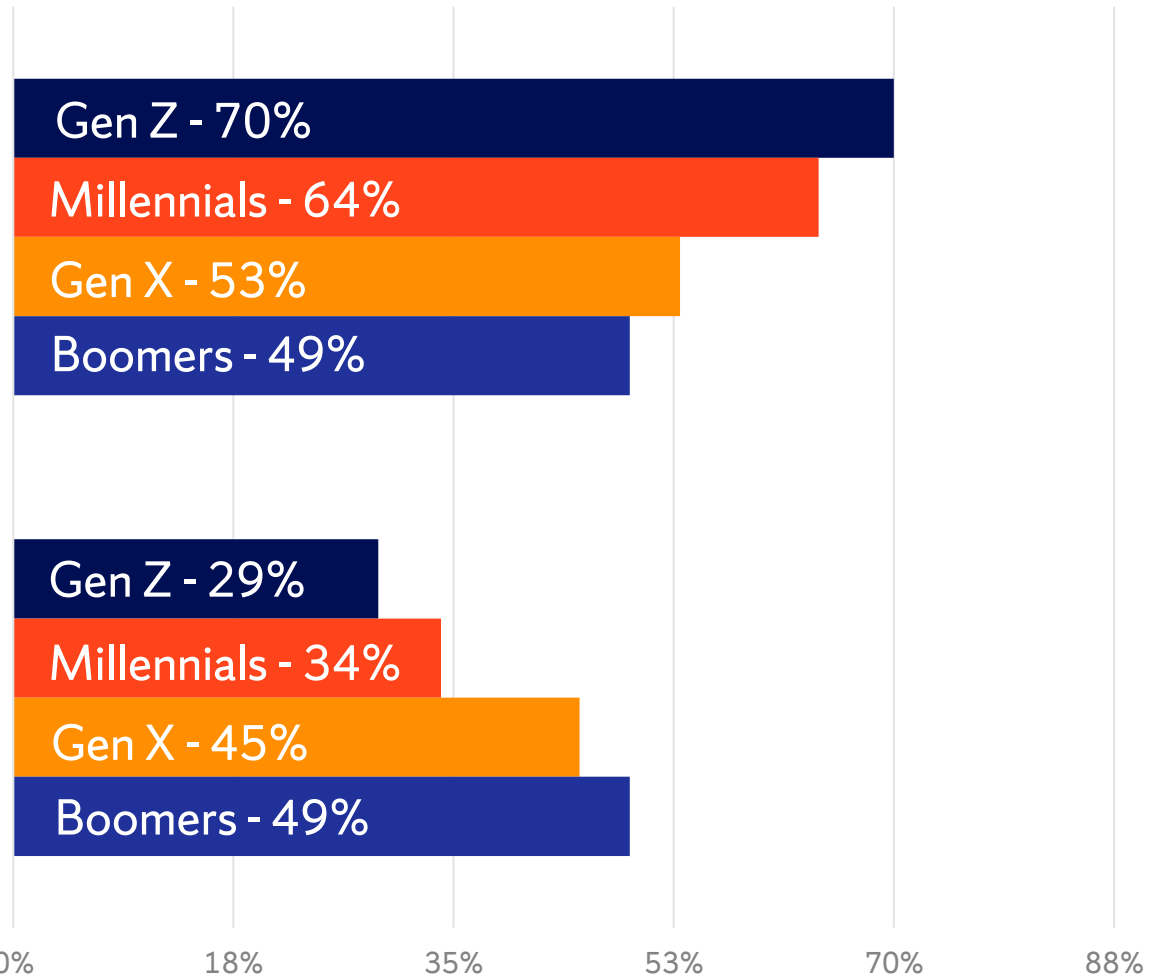
# Who is working with us?

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/charted-how-generations-will-shape-the-workforce-by-2035/>

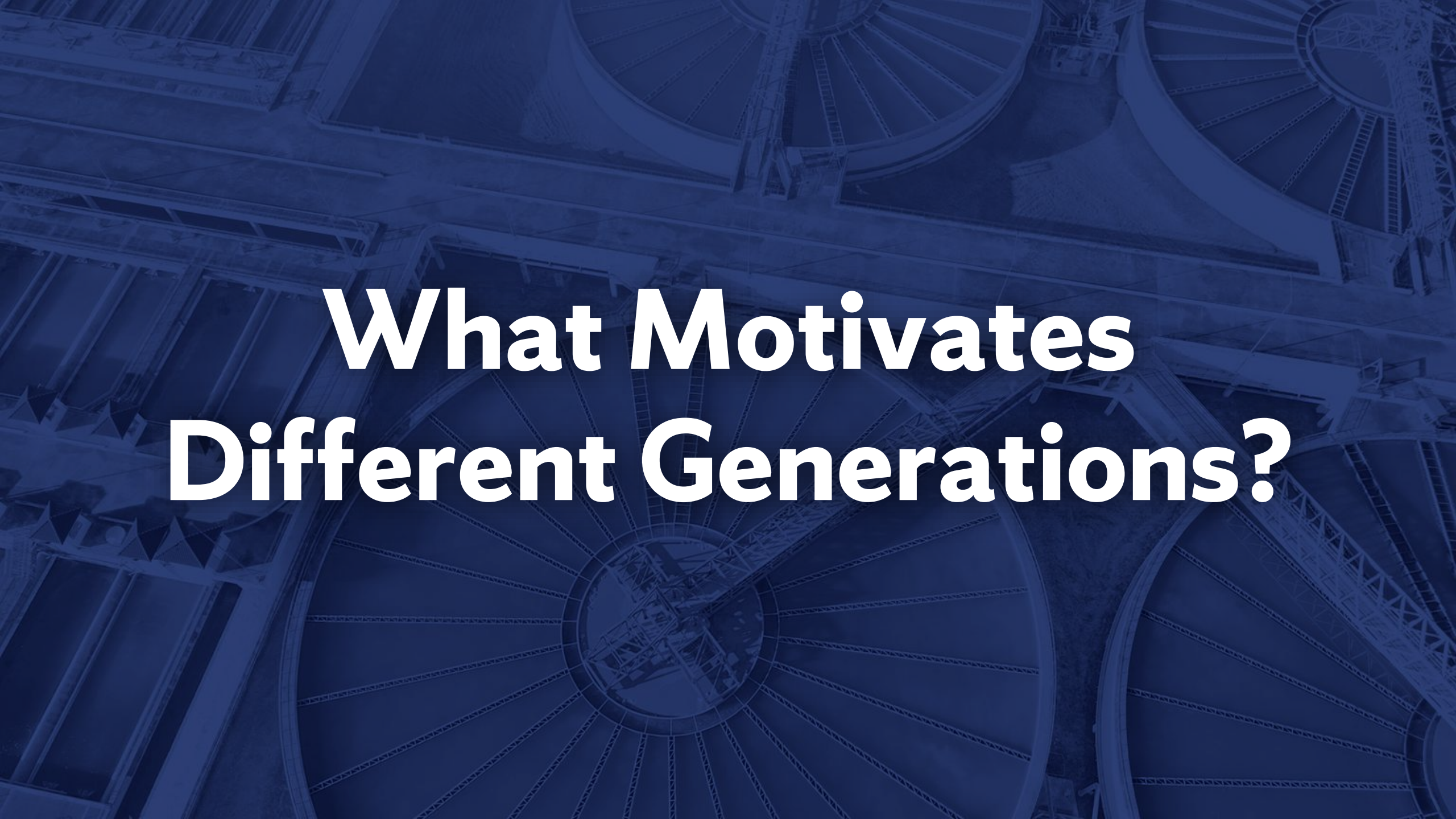


# Should government do more to solve our problems?

## Government Should Do More



## Doing too Much: Leave it to Business

An aerial photograph of a wastewater treatment plant, featuring several large circular aeration tanks with radial internal structures. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# **What Motivates Different Generations?**



# Generation Z (Gen Z)

*[ˌje-nə-ˈrā-shən ˈzē]*

The generation of people  
born from 1997 to 2012.

# What Does Gen Z Want from Work?



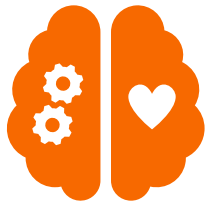
Stability and job  
security



Skill building  
opportunities



Work-life  
balance



Value alignment  
and purpose



Positive employer  
reputation



Desirable  
location



**The generation of people born  
from 1980-1996.**

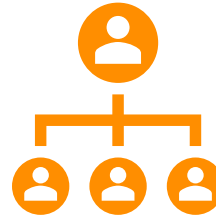
# What Do **Millennials** Want from Work?

Source:

GALLUP®



Opportunities to  
learn and grow



Quality of  
supervisor



Quality of  
management



Interest in type  
of work



Opportunities for  
advancement

An aerial photograph of a water treatment plant, featuring several large circular tanks with radial support structures. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# **Convert Your Messaging into Smart Marketing**

# Communicate Your Values



**Your mission, visuals, and story should be matched to your target audience's values**

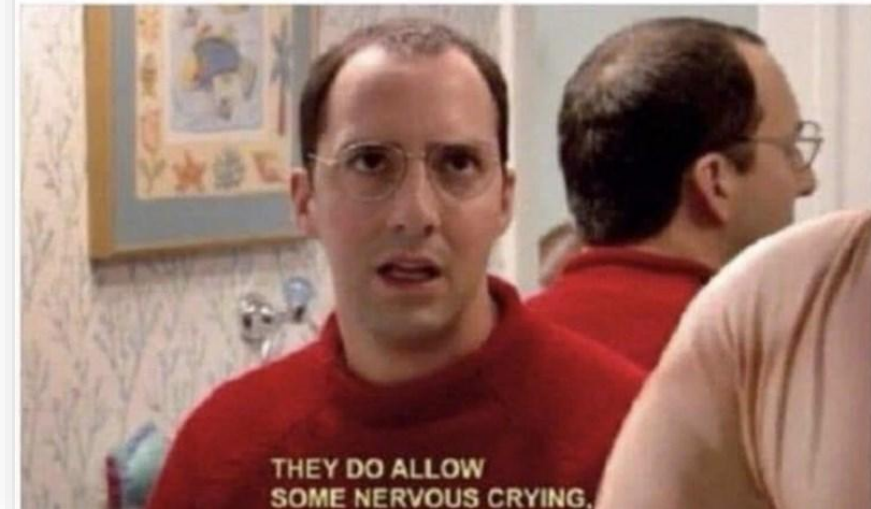
- Environmental Stewardship
- Public Service
- Community Sustainability
- Work-Life Balance
- Learning and Development

# Offer (and Emphasize) Personal Benefits

## Going beyond the \$\$\$

- Flexible schedule
- Vacation time
- Compressed work week
- Time off for volunteering
- Training and conferences

Friend: My job has pretty good benefits - 401k, vacation & catered lunches. What about yours?  
Me:



The image shows a worker in a hard hat and safety vest working on a large industrial pipe. The worker is positioned on the left side of the frame, leaning over the pipe. The pipe runs horizontally across the middle of the image. In the background, there is a large, dark-colored building with a gabled roof. The entire image has a strong orange tint. The text "Use Visuals" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

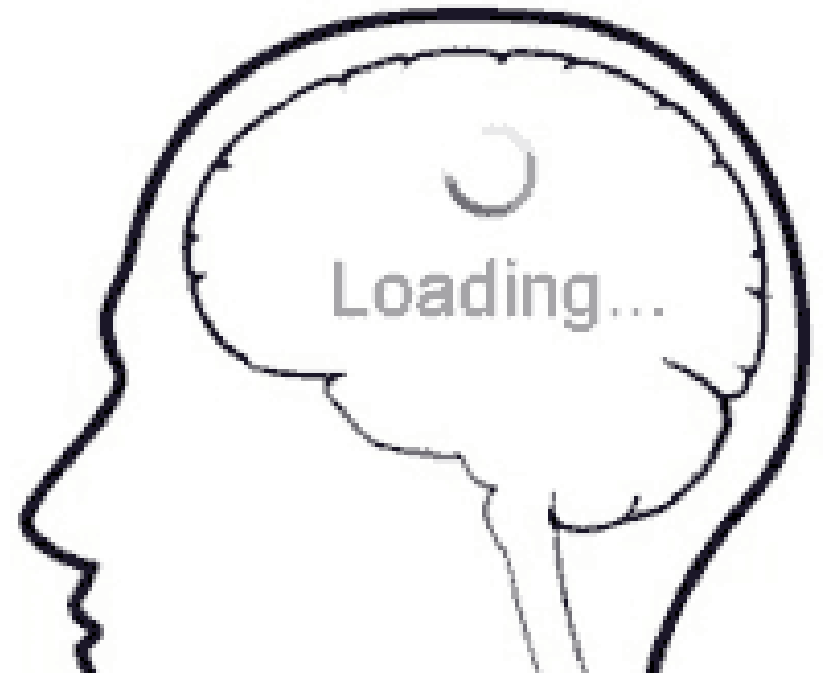
# Use Visuals



**Our minds are  
not a book**

We process images  
far faster than text:

**13 milliseconds**



Gosh what a great day yesterday. We got up early and cooked some breakfast by the campfire and then hiked for an hour in the predawn light before we got to our destination which was Mirror Lake when there was no one there and the lake was still and I could get a perfect shot in the best light with no people in the background



## Textual Description

A plane figure with four equal straight sides and four right angles

## Visual Description





**JOB DESCRIPTION JOB TITLE:** Wastewater Plant Operator

**DEPARTMENT:** Water & Sewer

**RESPONSIBLE TO:** Chief Wastewater Plant Operator

**JOB CONTENT:** Performs work as directed for the successful operation and maintenance of CUB's wastewater treatment plant equipment, buildings and sites. Under direction of the Chief Operator, strives to assure plant effluents meet or exceed all State and Federal regulations. Performs inspections, sample and data collection, laboratory tests and plant maintenance as assigned.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Monitors and controls process equipment for proper operation and chemicals to ensure effluent water meets or exceed all State & Federal regulations.
2. Understand and stay current with the State & Federal regulations requirements.
3. Collect and record data for record maintenance/reporting to designated state agencies
4. Monitor treatment process for compliance, inspect the equipment, monitor conditions, meters, and gauges to determine plant load requirements/functionality
5. Work in multiple areas of the plant and on different shifts as needed
6. Performs general maintenance including cleaning, construction, mechanical, electric, instrumentation etc...
7. Assists/Performs in administration functions of various treatment chemicals, weekly and daily report generation.
8. Maintain bulk chemical inventory
9. Installs, tests and repairs equipment throughout plant facilities as directed.
10. Collects samples performs laboratory tests and interpretation of the results according to all State & Federal Regulations.
11. Work on process improvement projects and standard operation procedures.
12. Ability to extract, evaluate and utilize data for process improvement from all applicable resources
13. Performs preventive, predictive and emergency maintenance on plant facilities/equipment.
14. Communicates with Chief Operator, coworkers and others effectively.
15. Performs housekeeping, cleaning, painting, mowing, etc. to assure outstanding plant appearance.
16. Performs duties in a safe manner. Adheres to all CUB safety policies.
17. Personal and work site safety in a construction environment.



**JOB DESCRIPTION JOB TITLE:** Wastewater Plant Operator

**DEPARTMENT:** Water & Sewer

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**WHY WORK WITH US:**

**Impactful Work:** Play a key role in ensuring clean water and a healthier environment for our community. Your contributions directly enhance public health and support local ecosystems.

**Community Focus:** We pride ourselves on fostering a strong sense of community. Join a team that values collaboration, innovation, and service to our

neighbors.

**Career Development:** We offer ongoing training and professional development opportunities, helping you grow your skills and advance your career in a rewarding field.

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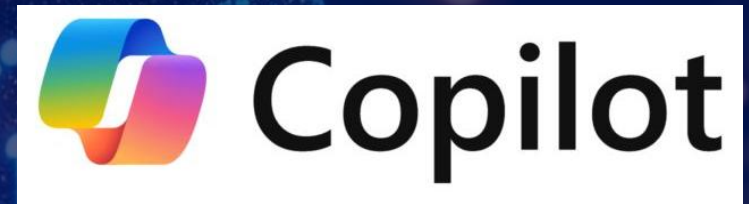
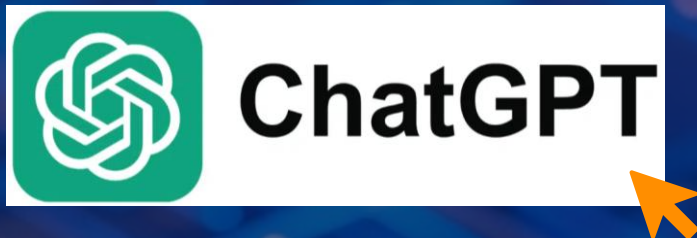
[Canva.com](https://www.canva.com)  
Free version offers  
tons of job  
flyer/poster  
templates, stock  
images, etc.

Other graphic/document  
design platforms (Microsoft  
Word, Google Docs, Adobe,  
etc.) also work





**Try a Little Artificial  
Intelligence**



...and many more!



**ChatGPT**

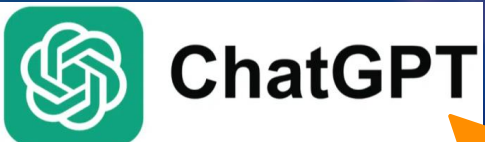


**Copilot**



**Gemini**

- Good for generating:**
- *Marketing language*
  - *Images (proceed with caution)*



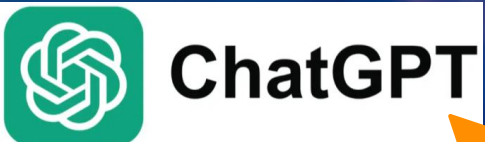
I need good marketing language for an entry-level job at a rural wastewater treatment plant

Here's a draft you can adapt — it's written to sound approachable, appealing to both locals and people considering a relocation to a smaller community, while still making the work feel important and stable:

### **Start a Career That Keeps Your Community Flowing**

Looking for a hands-on career with **great benefits, job stability, and room to grow?** Join our team as an **Entry-Level Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator** and be part of the essential work that **keeps our town healthy and our waterways clean.**

No prior wastewater experience? No problem — **we provide the training and certifications** you need to succeed. You'll learn valuable technical skills, work with modern equipment, and **gain a career path in one of the most stable industries in the country.**



I need good marketing language for an entry-level job at a rural wastewater treatment plant

# The more specific, the better!

Here's a draft you can adapt — it's written to sound reachable, appealing to both locals and people considering relocation to your community, while making the work feel important.

**Start a Career That Keeps Your Community Healthy**

Looking for a hands-on career with room to grow? Join our team as an **Entry-Level Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator** and be part of the essential work that **keeps our town healthy and our waterways clean.**

No prior wastewater experience? No problem — **we provide the training and certifications** you need to succeed. You'll learn valuable technical skills, work with modern equipment, and **gain a career path in one of the most stable industries in the country.**



**55% of millennials  
watch video several  
times a day**

**70% of Gen Z watch  
videos 3 hours/day**



**Use Videos!**

***1-3 minutes***

**NOW  
HIRING:**

**UTILITY  
TECHNICIAN  
TRAINEE**

**APPLY NOW**  
**PHOENIX.GOV/WATER/  
EMPLOYMENT**

**PHX**  
WATER  
SMART

**MAKE A  
LIVING.**

**MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE.**

[https://youtu.be/D1jW\\_3Adp-A?si=hU5WVzb1gz3RPS5R](https://youtu.be/D1jW_3Adp-A?si=hU5WVzb1gz3RPS5R)

**PHX**  
WATER  
SMART

**City of Phoenix Water Services, AZ**  
An example of what not to do....



# What do you hear?



Johnson County Wastewater · Follow

Johnson County Wastewater · Original audio

 We are hiring line repair and construction team members! If you are interested in playing an important role in maintaining your community's clean wa... [See more](#)



JOHNSON COUNTY KANSAS

Wastewater

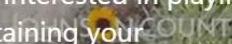




Johnson County Wastewater · Follow

Johnson County Wastewater · Original audio

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JOHNSON COUNTY KANSAS

Wastewater

# That's the sound of

WORK/LIFE BALANCE

A PERSON-CENTERED CULTURE

GREAT PAY AND BENEFITS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Johnson County Wastewater · Follow

Johnson County Wastewater · Original audio

 We are hiring line repair and construction team members! If you are interested in playing an important role in maintaining your community's clean wa... [See more](#)



JOHNSON COUNTY KANSAS

Wastewater



**Johnson County Wastewater, KS**  
(Not bad, but could be better)



<https://www.instagram.com/reel/D bD-dryTzWz/>



## **City of St. Joseph, MO**

Great example of **authenticity** and allowing prospective applicants to hear directly from your current staff

**Colleen Armstrong, Stormwater  
Quality Coordinator**





POV: Public Works got a  
disposable camera  
for the week

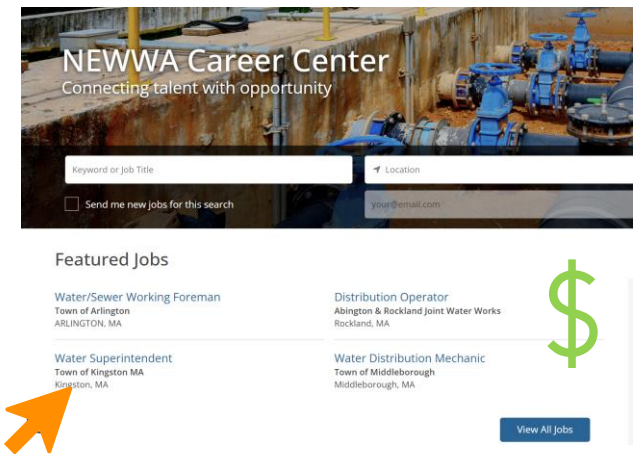


**Carrollton Public Works, TX**  
Great example of authenticity, **creativity**,  
and leveraging **online trends**



# **Navigating Job Portals & Postings**

# Industry-Specific Job Portals: Drinking Water & Wastewater



**NEWWA Career Center**  
Connecting talent with opportunity

Keyword or Job Title:  Location:

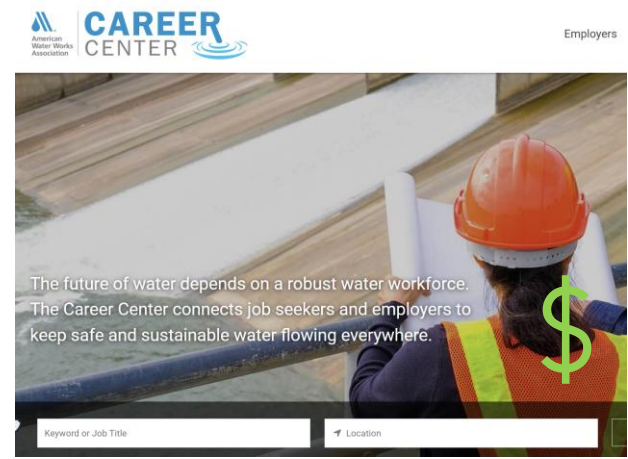
☐ Send me new jobs for this search

**Featured Jobs**

|                                                                   |                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Water/Sewer Working Foreman<br>Town of Arlington<br>ARLINGTON, MA | Distribution Operator<br>Abington & Rockland Joint Water Works<br>Rockland, MA |
| Water Superintendent<br>Town of Kingston MA<br>Kingston, MA       | Water Distribution Mechanic<br>Town of Middleborough<br>Middleborough, MA      |

[View All Jobs](#)

**\$**



**CAREER CENTER**  
Employers

The future of water depends on a robust water workforce. The Career Center connects job seekers and employers to keep safe and sustainable water flowing everywhere.

Keyword or Job Title:  Location:

**\$**



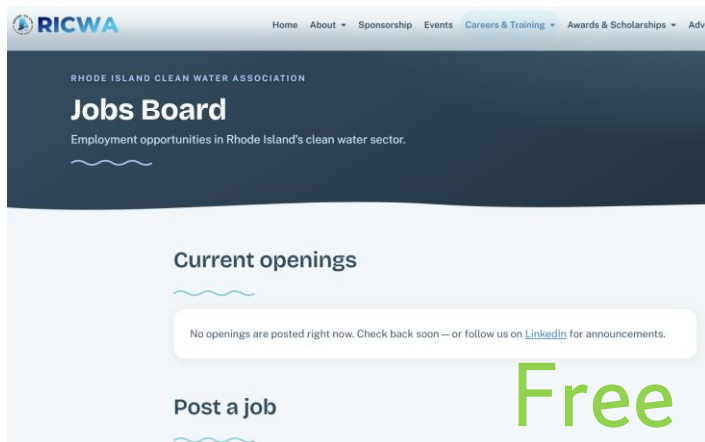
**wef Career Center**  
Employers Job Seekers Home

Career Connections Start Here

Keyword or Job Title:  Location:

☐ Send me new jobs for this search

**\$**



**RICWA**  
RHODE ISLAND CLEAN WATER ASSOCIATION

**Jobs Board**  
Employment opportunities in Rhode Island's clean water sector.

**Current openings**

No openings are posted right now. Check back soon — or follow us on [LinkedIn](#) for announcements.

**Post a job**

**Free**



**NEWEA**  
NEW ENGLAND WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION  
WORKING FOR WATER QUALITY

**Submit a Job**

**NEWEA Job Bank**

Just fill out the form below. **No need to sign in!**

**Free**



**NRWA**

Home Job Board Why Water? Recruitment Resources Login Post A

**Reimagine Your Future with Rural Water**

Search For Your New Job Today

Keywords:  **SEARCH JOBS**

**Free (login required)**

# Keep Using Traditional Job Boards

Traditional job boards still dominate (even for younger generations)

- Don't forget about student career platforms and engagement: *Handshake, career fairs, and university career centers*

indeed



glassdoor

***Handshake***

MONSTER



ZipRecruiter®

# Don't Overlook Social Media

Social media as a **search tool** is rapidly evolving

- *Treat social media as supplementary, especially when looking to build a pipeline of young talent*

Linked 

 Instagram

 YouTube

 TikTok

 facebook

# Other Outreach Channels that Work



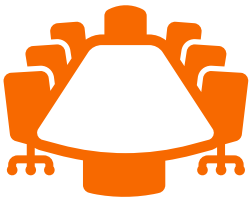
Community colleges,  
technical schools



Unions and labor  
groups



Community-based groups,  
local non-profits



Economic Development  
Organizations / Workforce  
Development Boards

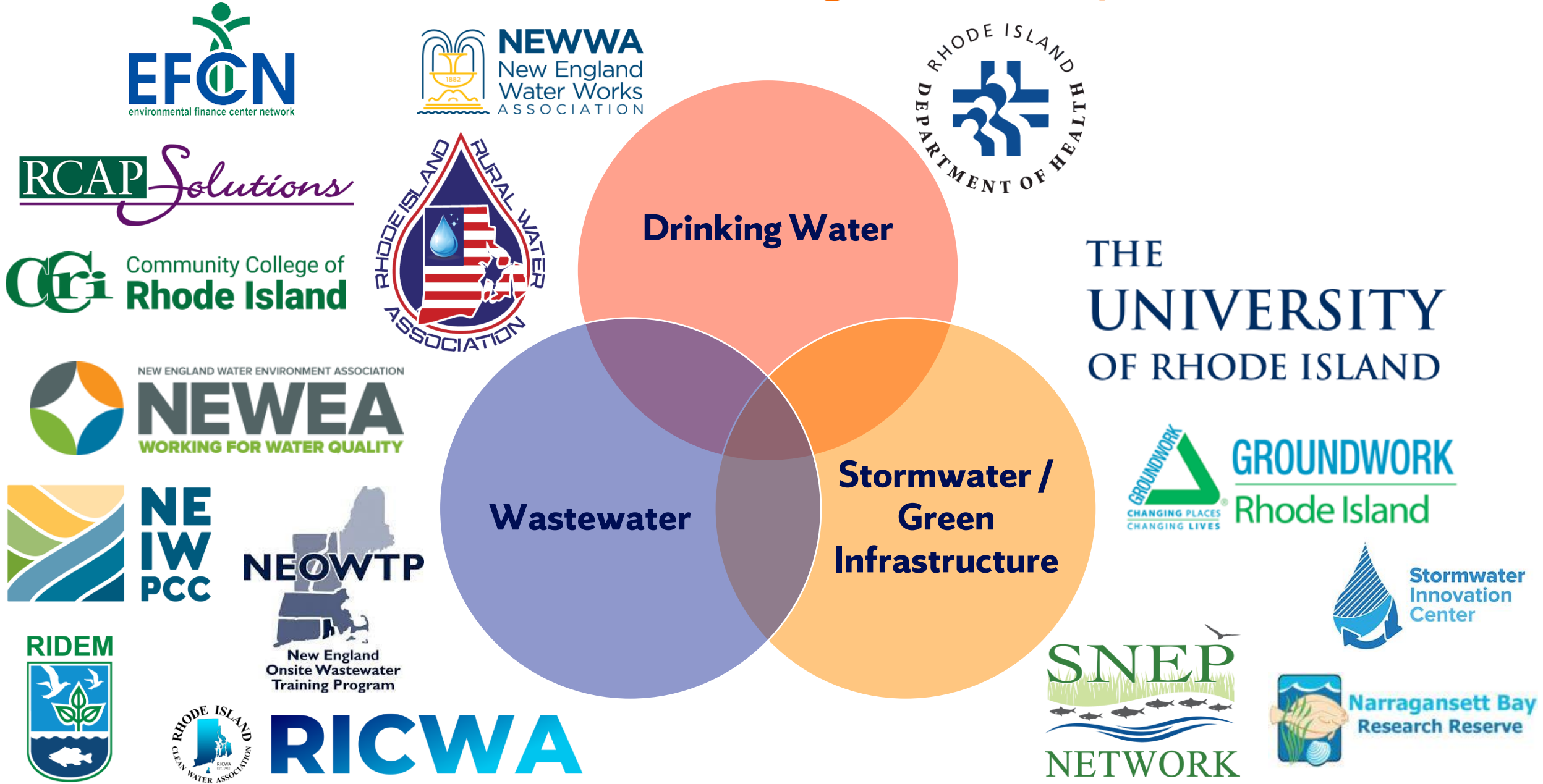


Industry/interest-specific online  
portals like [Josh's Water Jobs](#),  
[Idealist](#), or [Green Jobs Board](#)



Veteran  
organizations

# Resources for Training & Development





**GROUNDWORK**  
Rhode Island

About

Programs

Get Involved

Latest News

# Adult Job Training

**Have Questions?**

**Contact:** Stephanie  
Moniz, Training and  
Education Program  
Director

[smoniz@groundworkri.org](mailto:smoniz@groundworkri.org)

## Active Programs

- › Adult Job Training
- › GroundCorp Landscape
- › Green Team Youth
- › Green Space Projects
- › Harvest Cycle Compost

## Adult Job Training

Groundwork Rhode Island's Adult Job Training introduces local residents to career pathways in the environmental sector – particularly in the areas of brownfield remediation, lead abatement, wastewater treatment and stormwater management, tree work, and urban land restoration. The training offers many certifications that help participants become more competitive job

## Outcomes

Groundwork Rhode Island has been conducting Environmental Job Training since 2002. To date we have placed an average of 70% of training graduates in jobs ranging from temporary crew positions on remediation projects to full-time salaried positions with remediation contractors, Aerotek, T.F. Green Airport, Tremco Roofing, ReMix Organics, weatherization contractors, Thielsch Engineering, landscaping and tree care companies, and others.



**GROUNDWORK**  
Rhode Island



**RIRWA**

Rhode Island Rural Water Association

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# RIRWA Apprenticeship Program

Rhode Island Rural Water Association is proud to offer paid, two-year apprenticeships in both water and wastewater treatment. No Experience Needed! The water industry is in critical need of motivated individuals looking to serve their communities and help protect one of its most vital resources! Receive the education and on-the-job training needed to become a licensed operator.

## Minimum Requirements:

- Must be 18 years of age or older.
- Must have a high school diploma / GED.
- Must have a valid driver's license.



- Must have a valid driver's license.

Must have a high school diploma / GED.

# Making Your Work Visible

- Share to early and often to increase public support for:
  - Infrastructure upgrades
  - Public health
  - Compensation
  - Growth
- Leverage local nonprofits and schools
- Participate in community events
- Create online content
- Engage with young people and artists



**LIFESTYLE**

NYC sewage plant's strangely popular Valentine's Day tour goes virtual

# Plant the Seeds Early: Future Water Leaders

Get K-12+ students curious about water careers now

- Partner with **local schools** to host tours, classroom talks, and internships
- Visit the FWL **Educator's Resource Hub** for ready-to-go lesson plans, videos, and career materials



**Learn More:**  
[efcnetwork.org/resources/  
educators-resource-hub](https://efcnetwork.org/resources/educators-resource-hub)





# Future Water Leaders: Educators Resource Hub





About Us ▾ Training & Events Resources ▾ Our Initiatives Contact [Get Help](#) 



**Learning Objectives:**

1. Understanding the importance of water.
2. Human-water interactions: Water governance, structures, community, ethics, civic engagement
3. Understanding water systems: drinking water, stormwater, wastewater
4. Understanding the value of water workers
5. Career and educational pathways in the water industry: college, technical school, non-college careers
6. Connections within the water industry: professional associations, networking, collaboration
7. Connecting student to careers in the water industry
8. Fostering water leadership in students: students as teachers, community outreach and education, support for local utilities

Filter Results

Resource Type ▾

Audience ▾

Subject ▾

Learning Objective ▾

[Reset](#)

## Broad Street Mystery Game – The Importance of Public Water Services

The Broad Street Mystery was a true mystery that took place in London, England, in 1854. This interactive game allows you to find clues and solve the mystery.

## To Flush or Not to Flush?? Flushable Wipes Lesson

Toilet paper is designed to break down when it gets wet. "Flushable" wipes are small enough to fit in the toilet and resemble toilet paper but what happens

## Macroinvertebrates

Under the water of many lakes and streams is the amazing world of the macroinvertebrate (MAC-row-in-VERT-ih-brate). Macroinvertebrates are often called macros. They are invertebrates (animals without a

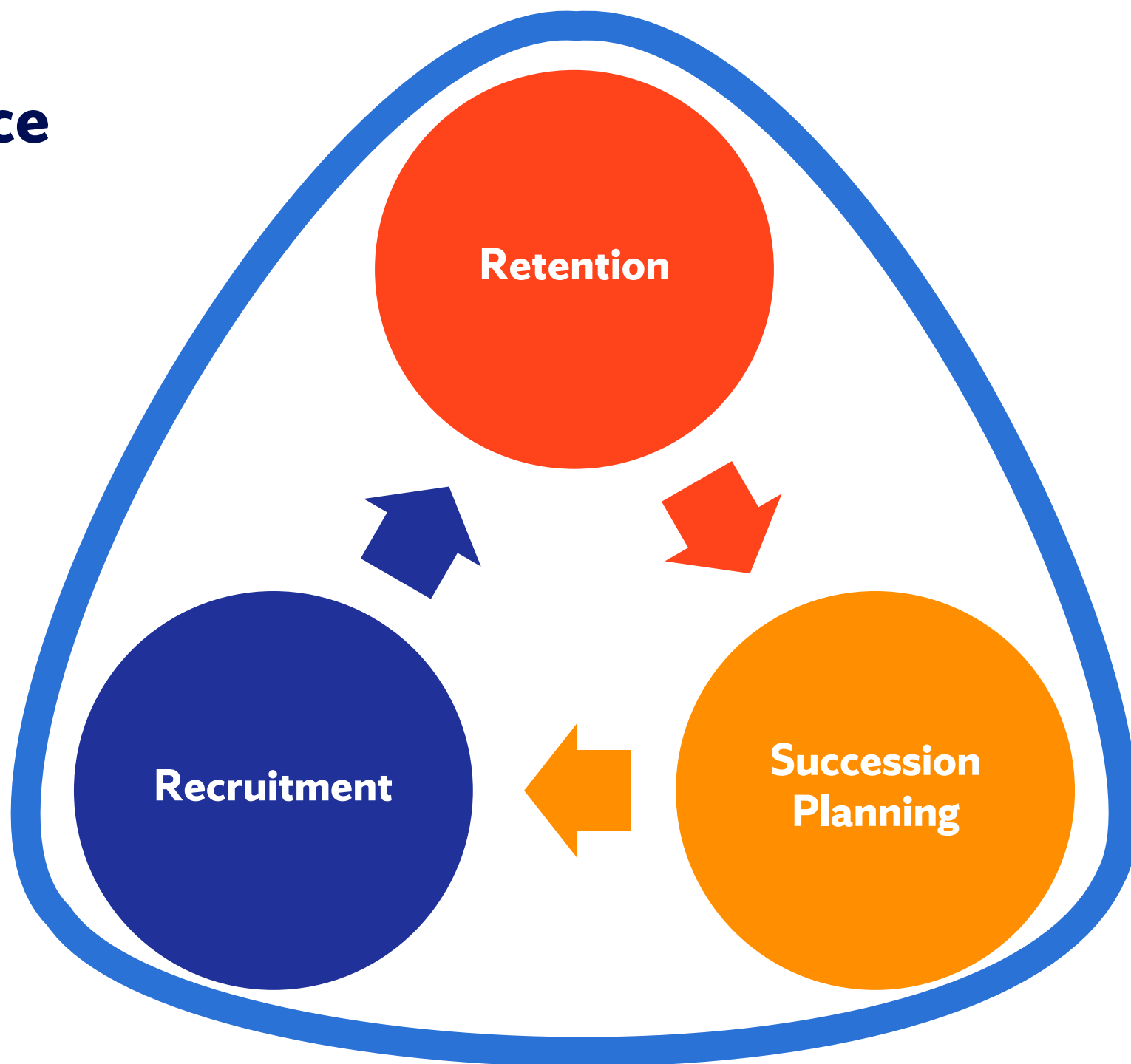
**Learn More:**

[efcnetwork.org/resources/  
educators-resource-hub](https://efcnetwork.org/resources/educators-resource-hub)

The background is a solid orange color. It features several faint, semi-transparent silhouettes of construction workers wearing hard hats. In the upper left corner, there is a circular icon containing a stylized handshake. The text "Communicating with Leadership" is centered in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font.

# Communicating with Leadership

# Workforce Planning



# Overview: Communicating with Leadership

- Leadership Buy-in
- Knowing Your Audience
- Making the Ask
- Leveraging Local Partnerships



An aerial photograph of a wastewater treatment plant, featuring several large circular aeration tanks with radial internal structures. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "Leadership Buy-in" is centered in white.

# Leadership Buy-in

# Why Leadership Buy-in Matters



Support, resources, funding



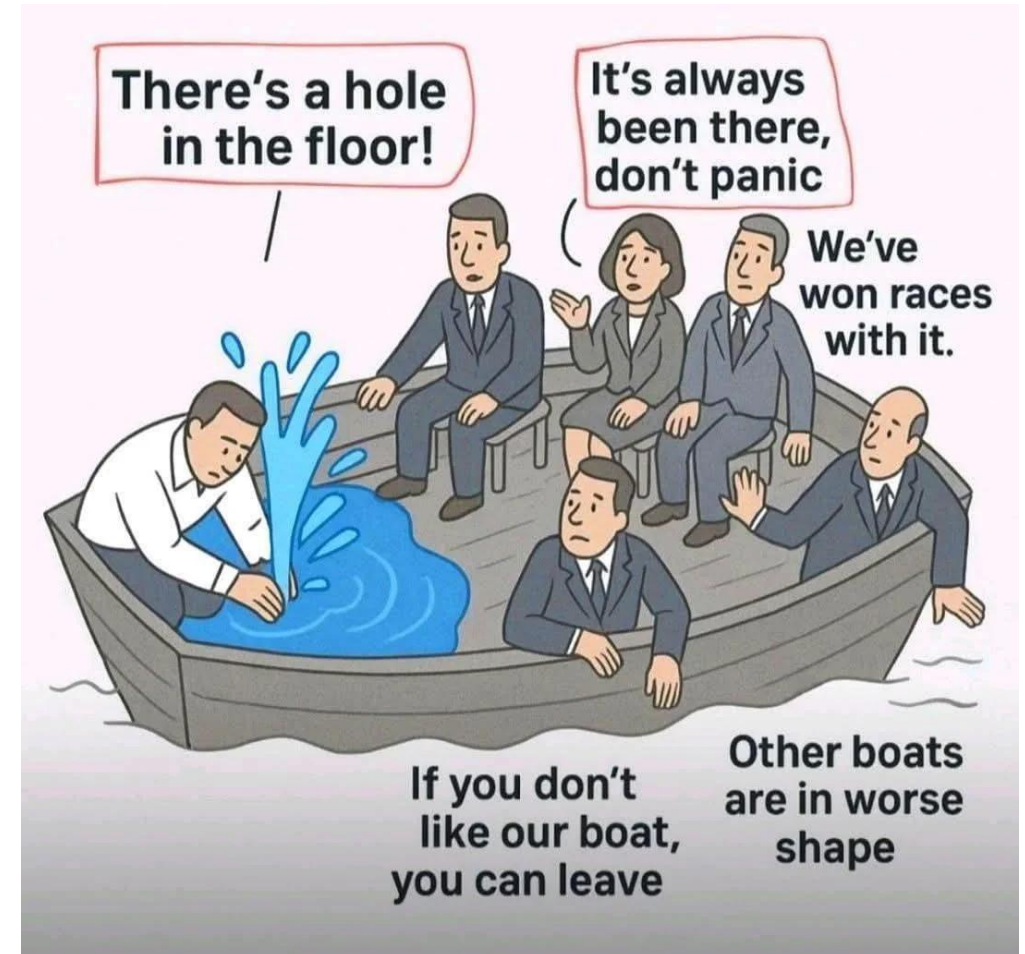
Permission to invest in training



Expectations and accountability



Buy-in from other employees





## Chat Prompt

***In the chat, answer:***

What are some barriers to workforce development that you've heard from people in your organization?

# Making the Case for Change

**What they think:**



**We've always  
done it this way**



**It was just fine  
when I started**

**What we want them to think:**



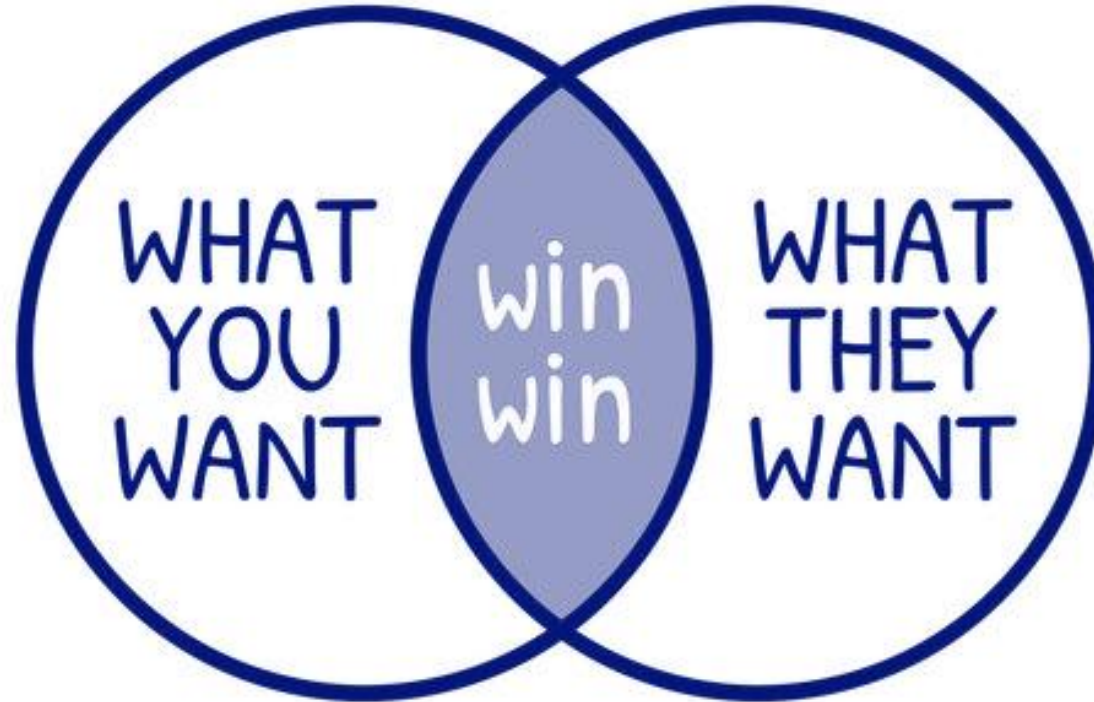
**We need to adapt  
for today and the  
future**



**We should give  
others the same  
opportunities**

# Reframing the Challenge

- Training and upskilling
- New experiences
- People to share your workload
- Good managers
- Job satisfaction



- Knowledgeable employees
- Readiness for future challenges
- Service continuity and reliability
- More tasks done in-house
- Lower turnover costs

# Check Your Alignment

**Before you start, ask yourself:**

- How do your decision-makers define success?
- What are their priorities?
- Is this the correct person to go to about this issue?

When you have been telling management about a problem for weeks and now you're just like



# The Art of Pre-suasion

## ***Start priming ahead of time***

- Tease that it's on your mind (after attending these trainings!)
- Get feedback from colleagues
- Mention what similar organizations are doing
- Highlight past successes

*"To persuade optimally...it's  
necessary to pre-suade optimally."*

- Robert Cialdini

An aerial photograph of a wastewater treatment plant, featuring several large circular aeration tanks with radial internal structures. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# Knowing Your Audience

# Core Utility Decision-Makers

## Technical Staff

**Decision Influence:**  
Process and operational challenges

**Primary Concerns:**  
Reliability, maintenance, preparedness, and safety

## Financial Leadership

**Decision Influence:**  
Resource allocation and procurement

**Primary Concerns:**  
Capital costs, funding, and affordability

## Executive Leadership

**Decision Influence:**  
Strategic priorities and final decisions

**Primary Concerns:**  
Public perception, compliance, and managing risk

## Governance Bodies

**Decision Influence:**  
Approvals and policy changes

**Primary Concerns:**  
Fiscal responsibility, public opinion, and community development

# Core Utility Decision-Makers

**When identifying an audience to make your ask to, be specific!**

**Rarely will you need to reach everyone all at once.**

Technical Staff

Decision Influence:  
Process and operational challenges

Primary Concerns:  
Reliability, maintenance, preparedness, and safety

Financial Leadership

Decision Influence:  
Resource allocation and procurement

Primary Concerns:  
Capital costs, funding, and affordability

Executive Leadership

Decision Influence:  
Strategic priorities and final decisions

Primary Concerns:  
Public perception, compliance, and managing risk

Governance Bodies

Decision Influence:  
Approvals and policy changes

Primary Concerns:  
Fiscal responsibility and community development

# Assess Values and Communication Style

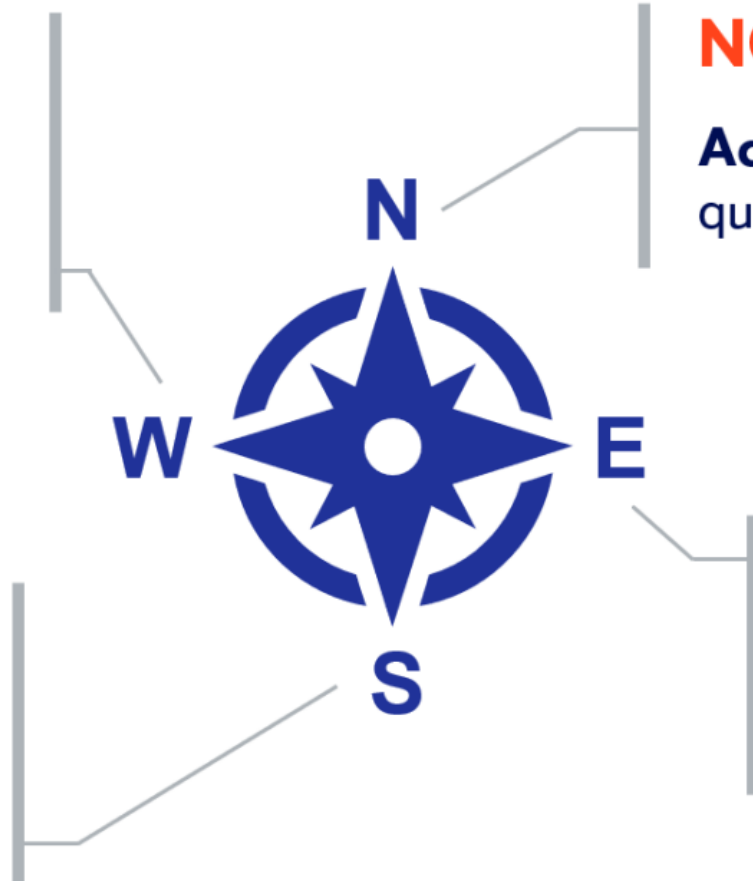
- What is most important to them?
- What are their biggest constraints?
- When is a good time to bring this up?
- Do they respond best to data, stories, peer pressure?



**Remember the Personality Compass!**

**WEST**  
**Paying attention to detail** — likes to know the who, what, when, where and why before acting

**SOUTH**  
**Caring** — considers everyone's feelings; makes sure voices are heard before acting



**NORTH**  
**Acting** — “Let’s do it”; likes to act quickly, try things, plunge in

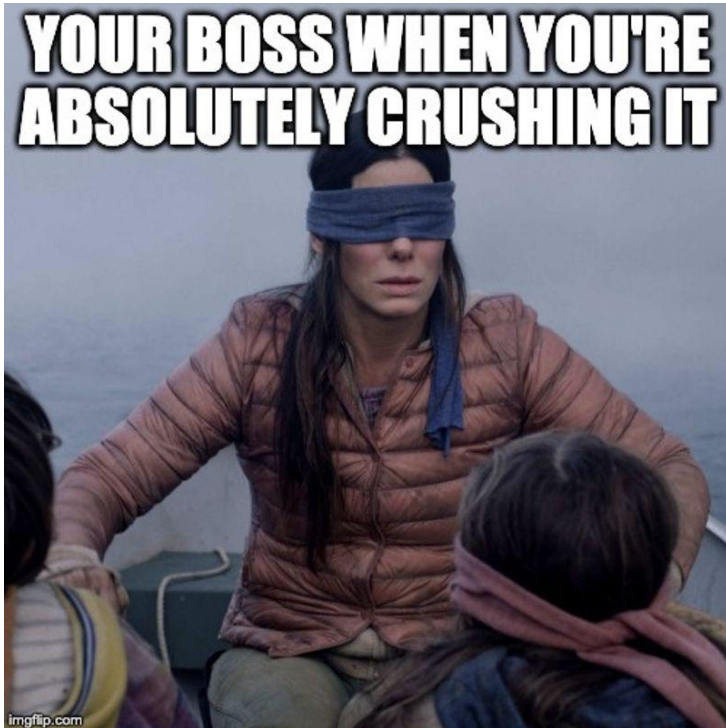
**EAST**  
**Speculating** — Likes to look at the big picture and the possibilities before acting

# When Engaging Financial Leadership...

- Present thorough cost analysis
- Show familiarity with public sector purchasing rules
- Explain ways to limit impacts on customer rates
- Identify opportunities for grants or cost-sharing with partners



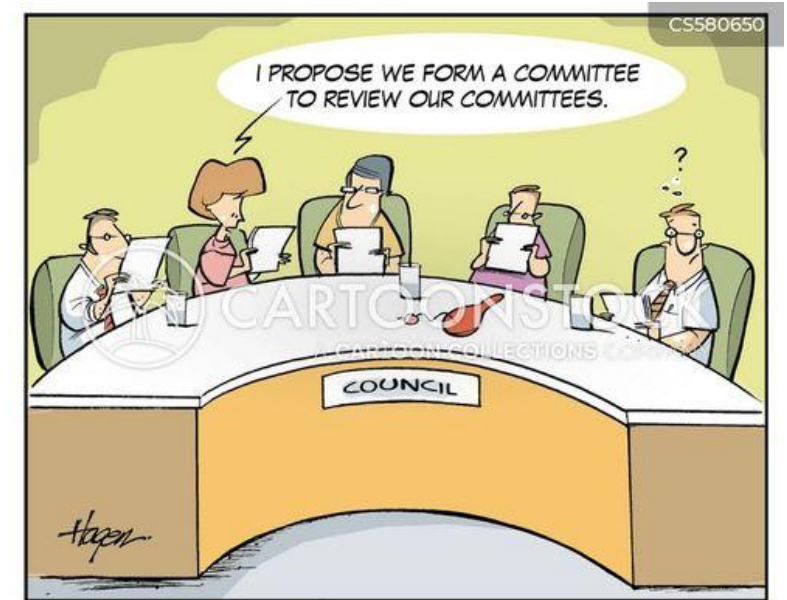
# When Engaging Executive Leadership...



- Connect to your utility's long-term goals
- Highlight any benefits to your operations or ratepayers
- Acknowledge limitations in resources and capacity for implementation
- Share success stories from similar organizations

# When Engaging Governance Bodies...

- Summarize benefits in **clear, plain language**
- Highlight positive impacts for the community
- Show fiscal responsibility and overall value
- Address potential economic benefits, such as job creation or development

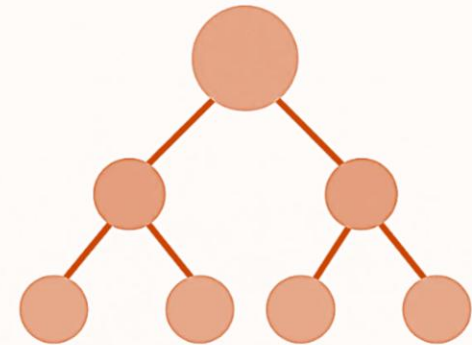


**Remember: Board and council decisions often weigh public perception and broader community priorities over technical or financial factors.**

# If you're unsure who to target, consider: Decision Network Mapping

1. Familiarize yourself with the key players
2. Analyze past decisions
3. Identify relationship dynamics
4. Create influence maps
5. Develop custom engagement plans

## What is a decision tree?



A decision tree is a flowchart-like structure used for making decisions, where each node represents a decision or a test on an attribute.

An aerial photograph of a wastewater treatment plant, featuring several large circular aeration tanks with radial internal structures. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The title "Making the Ask" is centered in white text.

# Making the Ask

# SCQA: The Key to a Persuasive Pitch



## Situation

Describes the current context or state of affairs.



## Complication

Outlines a problem or issue that has arisen within this situation.



## Question

Poses a relevant inquiry or identifies a gap that requires addressing.



## Answer

Proposes a solution or response to the question.

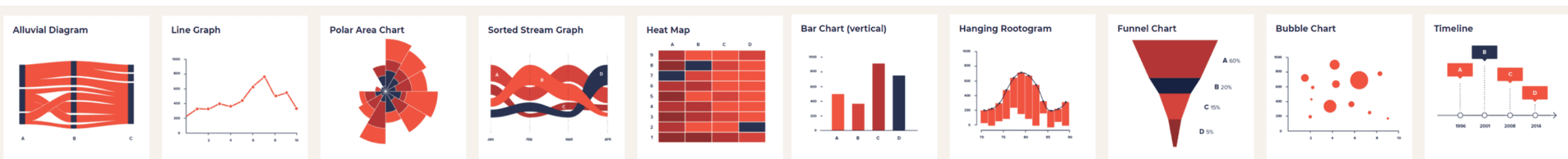


# Presenting Data

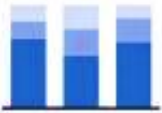
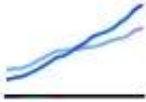
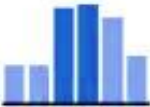
**Start by asking yourself:**  
What story should this data tell?

- Understand audience expertise
- Choose the right visuals
- Avoid misleading data
- Keep it clear, simple, and focused

- Use colors and highlight important data points or trends
- Note data sources, assumptions, and anomalies



Choose the right chart for the data that you aim to visualize  
Consider the insights that you want to show to help you decide

| Comparison type | Suitable chart                                                                               |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                       |  | Insights                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Compositions    |  Pie        |  100% stacked column |  100% stacked area |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share of...</li> <li>• Percentage of...</li> <li>• Contributes to...</li> </ul>                         |
| Comparisons     |  Column     |  Bar                 |  Waterfall         |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• smaller or larger than...</li> <li>• highest or lowest...</li> <li>• first, second, third...</li> </ul> |
| Trends          |  Line       |  Stacked Area        |                                                                                                       |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes...</li> <li>• Increase or decrease...</li> <li>• Fluctuations...</li> </ul>                     |
| Distributions   |  Histogram |  Scatter            |                                                                                                       |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration at...</li> <li>• Normally distributed...</li> </ul>                                       |
| Relationships   |  Scatter  |  Bubbles           |                                                                                                       |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is related to...</li> <li>• grows or reduces with...</li> <li>• changes when...</li> </ul>              |

# Communicating Workforce Needs

## Be Specific

- What time, money, and/or resources are you asking for?
- How can you check progress and maintain accountability?

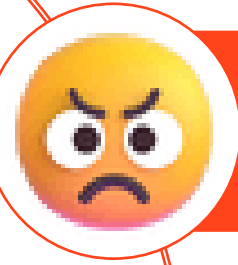
## Be Flexible

- Have a variety of options and ideas
- Ask for their input too - they should know what skills are needed

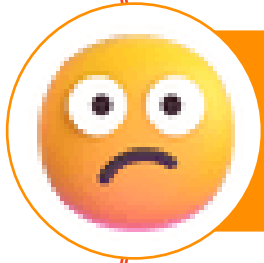
## Be Concise

- Outline a simple plan that already does much of the work for them
- Write it down!

# What to do if the response is...



Repeat that you want a win-win and aren't trying to criticize or overstep



Suggest an initial step or trial period to test the waters



Hear them out, reassess your pitch, and see if they have any ideas

How it feels to speak during a work meeting when you're under 30

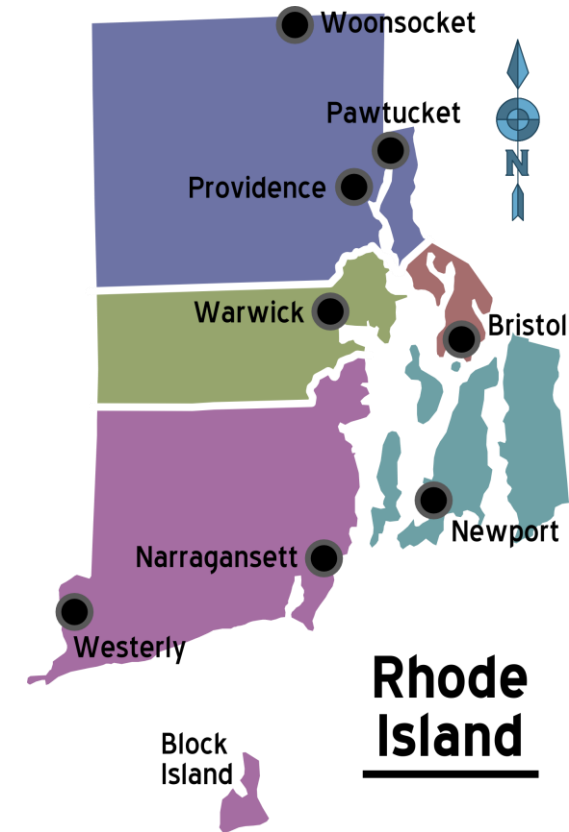


An aerial photograph of a wastewater treatment plant, featuring several large circular aeration tanks with radial internal structures. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The title text is centered over the middle of the image.

# Leveraging Local Partnerships

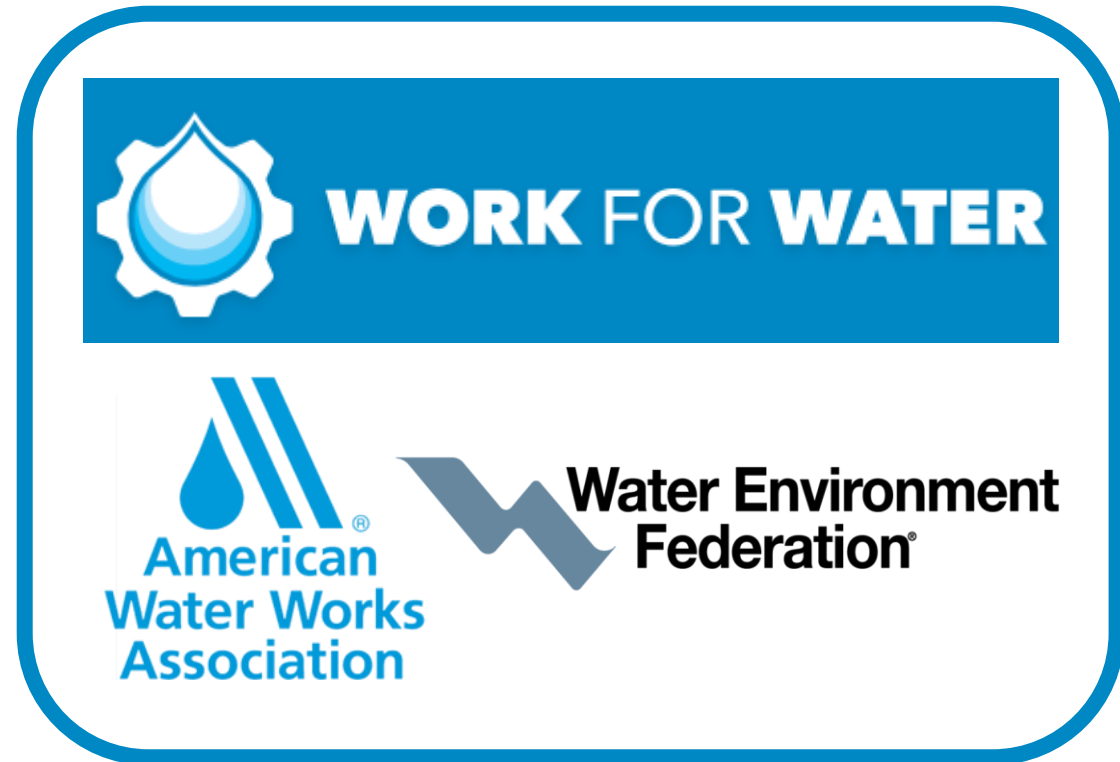
# Don't Overlook Regional Collaboration

- Similar needs
- Similar benefits
- Similar demographics
- *Different town identities*
- *Different budgets*



# National Resources

## To Help Make Your Case For Workforce Investments



**US Water  
Alliance**



**Water  
Infrastructure  
Sector Workforce**

# Other Potential Partners



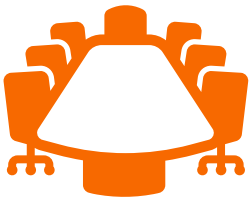
Community colleges,  
technical schools



Unions and labor  
groups



Community-based groups,  
local non-profits



Economic Development  
Organizations / Workforce  
Development Boards



Industry/interest-specific online  
portals like *Josh's Water Jobs* or  
*Idealist*



Veteran  
organizations



# Open Discussion

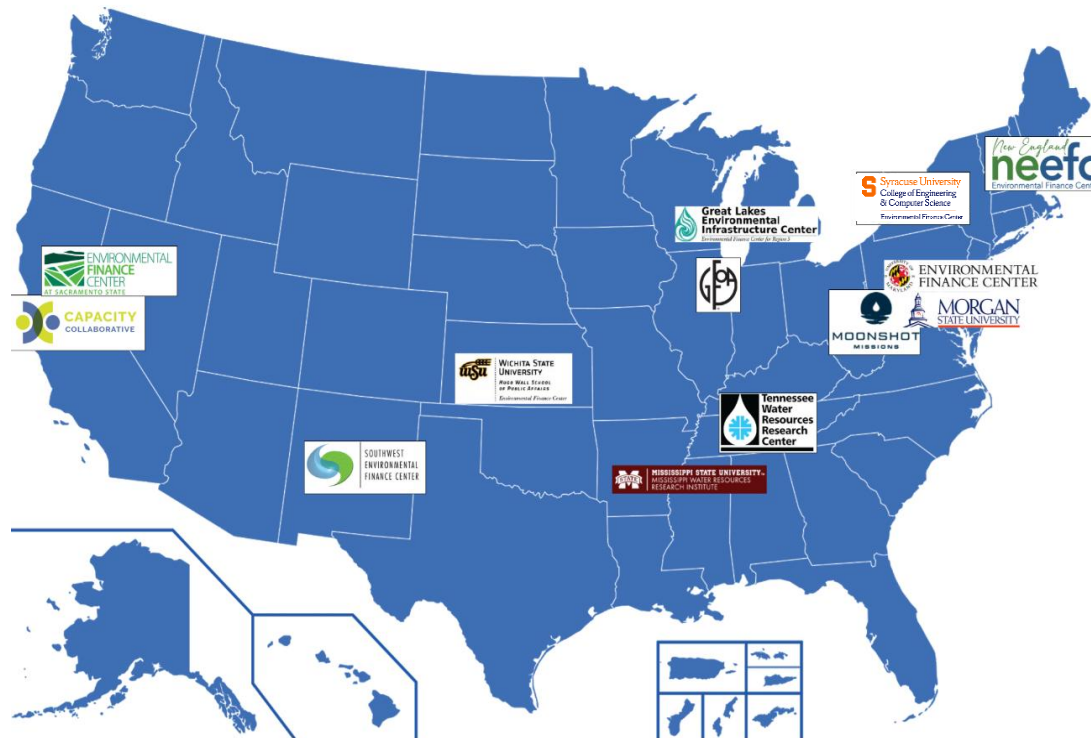
Think of a workforce initiative that you feel would benefit your organization:

1. What is preventing it from happening?
2. Has there been, or do you anticipate, pushback from leadership?



# Get Free Help From the EFCN Team!

- Our team of providers have **expertise** across *engineering, community engagement, funding & finance, and more!*



Scan the QR code or visit:  
[efcnetwork.org/get-help](https://efcnetwork.org/get-help)

*Upcoming RI Online Training:*

# Capital Improvement Plan Workshop



**September 23, 2026**



**10 AM - 3 PM Eastern Time**



SOUTHWEST  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
FINANCE CENTER



*TCH approval pending*

Scan to register



<https://efcnetwork.org/event/ri-online-training-capital-improvement-plan-workshop/>

[efc.syr.edu](https://efc.syr.edu)

# Questions?

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# Thank You!

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