



Massachusetts Municipal Association

MMA BEST PRACTICES SERIES

Recommendations for Effective Local Government Administration and Management from MMA Policy Committees

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MMA Policy Committee on Public Works, Transportation and Public Utilities **Best Practice Recommendation: Promote the Public Works Profession**

BEST PRACTICE: Work with municipal public works-related departments to promote the public works profession, invest in professional development for department staff, and attract qualified candidates to available positions.

Municipal public works professionals provide critical services to residents, businesses and visitors and improve the quality of life within our communities. They pave and plow roadways, oversee water and sewer plants, are facilities managers, and act as first responders, among many other responsibilities. But municipalities compete with private sector engineering and consulting firms to attract public works professionals to join their ranks, often for lower pay and with fewer upfront professional benefits. Municipal officials can take several proactive steps alongside their public works-related departments to better promote the public works profession, invest in professional development for current department staff, and attract qualified candidates to join the municipal workforce.

The following are recommended practices for promotion of the public works profession:

- As professional associations facilitate leadership development, continuing education and training, and networking, encourage public works, highway, water and sewer, and other relevant departments and staff to become involved with professional associations such as the American Public Works Association, the New England chapter of the APWA, the Massachusetts Water Works Association and the Massachusetts Coalition for Water Resources Stewardship.
- Where relevant, encourage municipal public works staff to participate in activities of the Massachusetts Highway Association and regional/county highway associations. Encourage municipal public works staff to attend the annual New England Public Works Expo, sponsored by the Massachusetts Highway Association, for professional development and networking purposes.
- Publicize a promotional campaign – or create a new one – that showcases the services that municipal public works professionals provide for their communities. Promotional campaigns can be shared through municipal websites, social media and other digital and print materials. (For example, see the New England APWA's "Public Works Makes It Happen" video.)

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- Seek opportunities to educate and promote the public works profession among younger generations by speaking to students at elementary, middle and high schools, vocational schools and area colleges. Children often know more about the police and fire professions than they do about public works. Speak with children about road maintenance, drinking water and sewer infrastructure, and other age-appropriate concepts. With older students, there is an opportunity to connect classroom learning to career applications by offering hands-on projects, job shadowing or internships with municipal departments.

Resources:

- American Public Works Association: www.apwa.net
- American Public Works Association New England Chapter: newengland.apwa.net
- Massachusetts Water Works Association: mwwa.memberclicks.net
- Massachusetts Coalition for Water Resources Stewardship: mcwrs.org
- Massachusetts Highway Association: <http://masshwy.org>