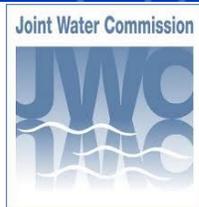


H2O Talks: Creating Opportunities in the Water Industry Workforce

Thursday May 2 – Utility Management



PNWS-AWWA
Water 2024
Spokane, WA • May 1-3



Willamette Water Supply
Our Reliable Water Future



Where did you travel to the conference from?

Nobody has responded yet.

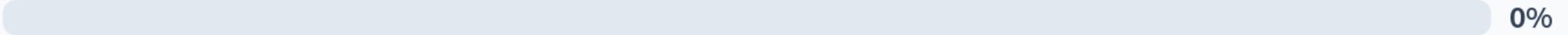
Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

Who is in the room? Which field do you work in?

Operations



Management



Engineering



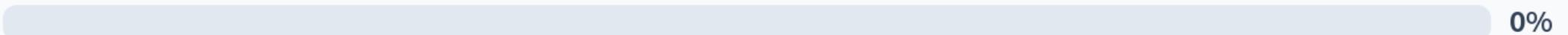
Customer Service



Finance



I'm a student



Other



If you are an operator, what level certification do you have?

Level 1



Level 2



Level 3

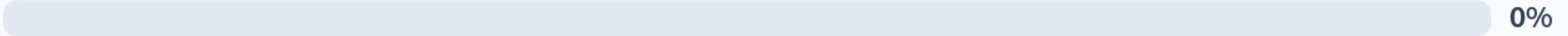


Level 4

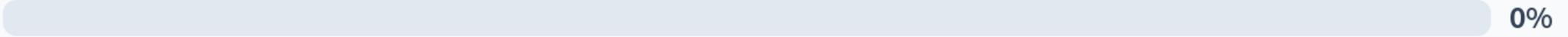


How many years have you been in the industry?

<1 year



1-5 years



5-10 years



10-20 years



>20 years



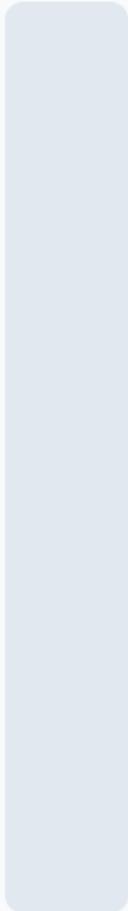
How did you get started in the water industry?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

Do you have open positions at your organization?

0%



Yes

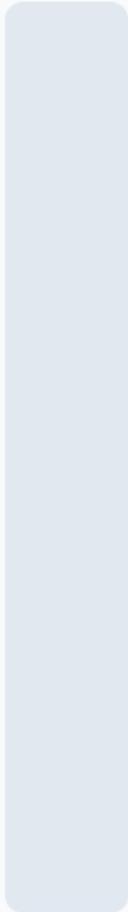
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No

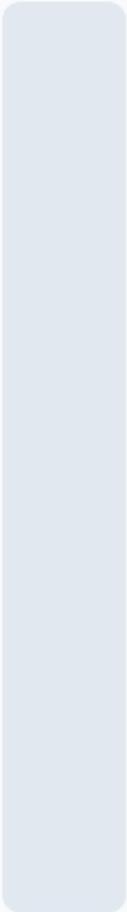
Do you have open operator position(s) at your utility?

0%



Yes

0%



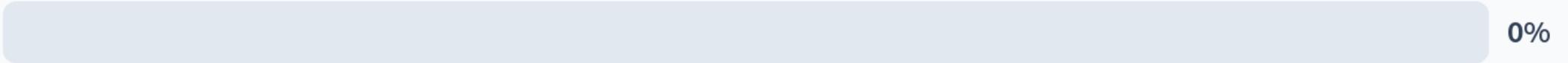
No

What level operator are you hiring?

Level 1



Level 2



Level 3



Level 4

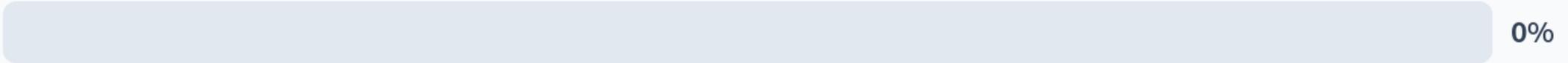


How long does it typically take to fill open operator position?

< 1 month



1-2 months



3-4 months



> 4 months



What's the first work you think of when you hear "water industry workforce"?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

Introducing our panel



Rebecca Geisen

Managing Director
Regional Water
Providers Consortium



Lyda Hakes

*Bull Run Supply &
Treatment Manager*
Portland Water Bureau



Chris Wilson

Division Manager
City of Hillsboro/
JWC/WWSS



Jacob Medel Soriano

Operator/Maintenance
City of Hillsboro/JWC

Who are we?

- Previously known as the Drinking water Regional Internship Program (DRIP)
 - » Rebranded as: Hired 2 Operate (H2O)
- Group of water utilities and other organizations in Oregon working together to grow the water operator workforce



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Special thank you to other folks who have been involved throughout the years!

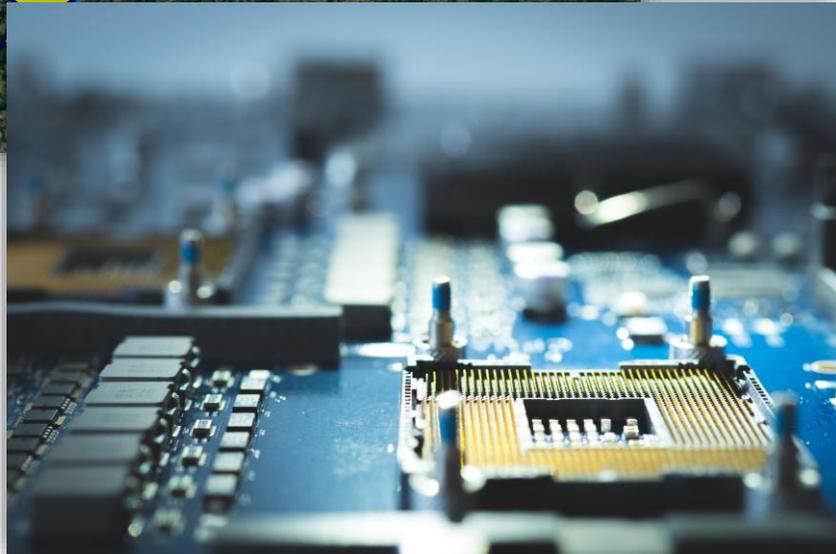
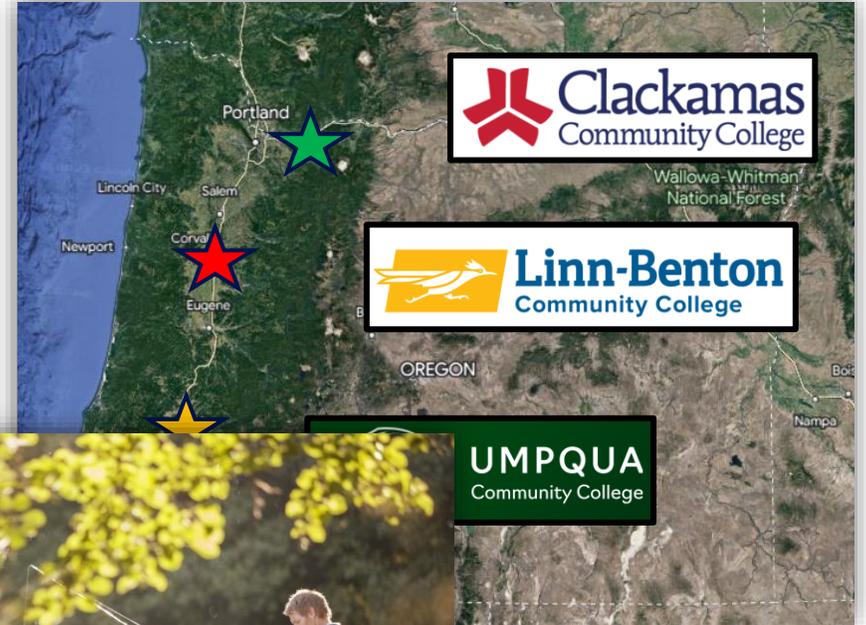
- **Andrew Sewall**, *City of Forest Grove*
- **Bret Bienerth**, *Lake Oswego – Tigard*
- **Chandra Hingston**, *City of Hillsboro*
- **David Schaffer**, *City of Troutdale*
- **Derek Robbins**, *City of Forest Grove*
- **Jude Grounds**, *Carollo Engineers*
- **Kim Gupta**, *Portland Water Bureau*
- **Lonny Sayles**, *Eugene Water & Electric Board*
- **Nicki Pozos**, *The Formation Lab*
- **Riley Berger**, *Regional Water Providers Consortium*
- **Sophia Hobet**, *City of Hillsboro*
- **Wade Hathhorn**, *Sunrise Water Authority*

Why did our group get together?



Will need 20-25 new employees by 2027

Willamette Water Supply
Our Reliable Water Future



What are our main goals?



Create a regional pool of certified water operators through paid internships at water utilities



Highlight careers as a water operator through website

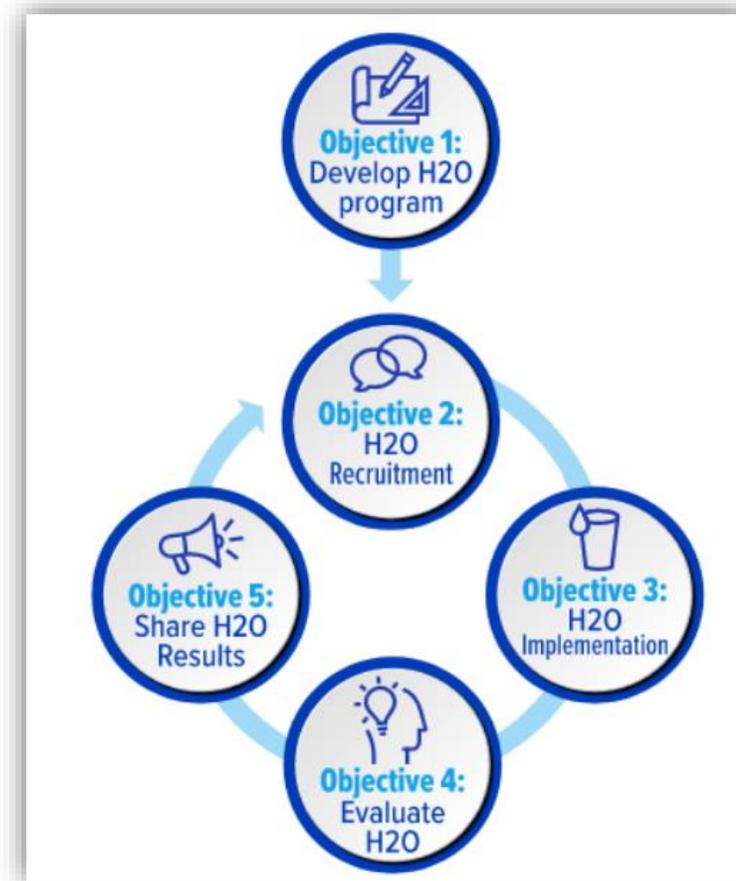
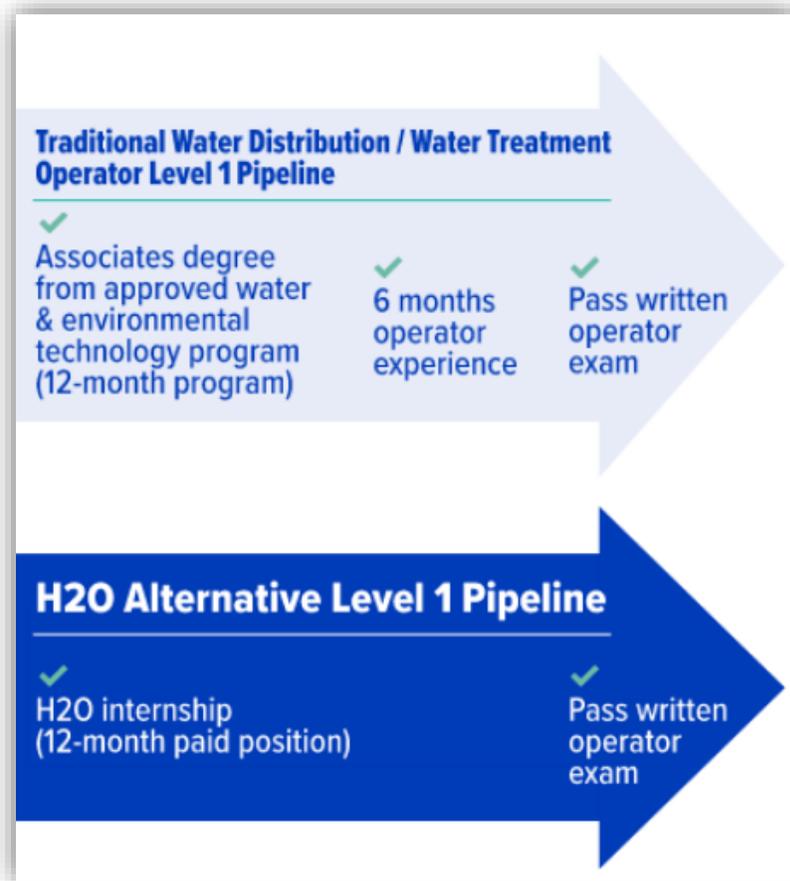


Grow awareness of water operator careers through outreach

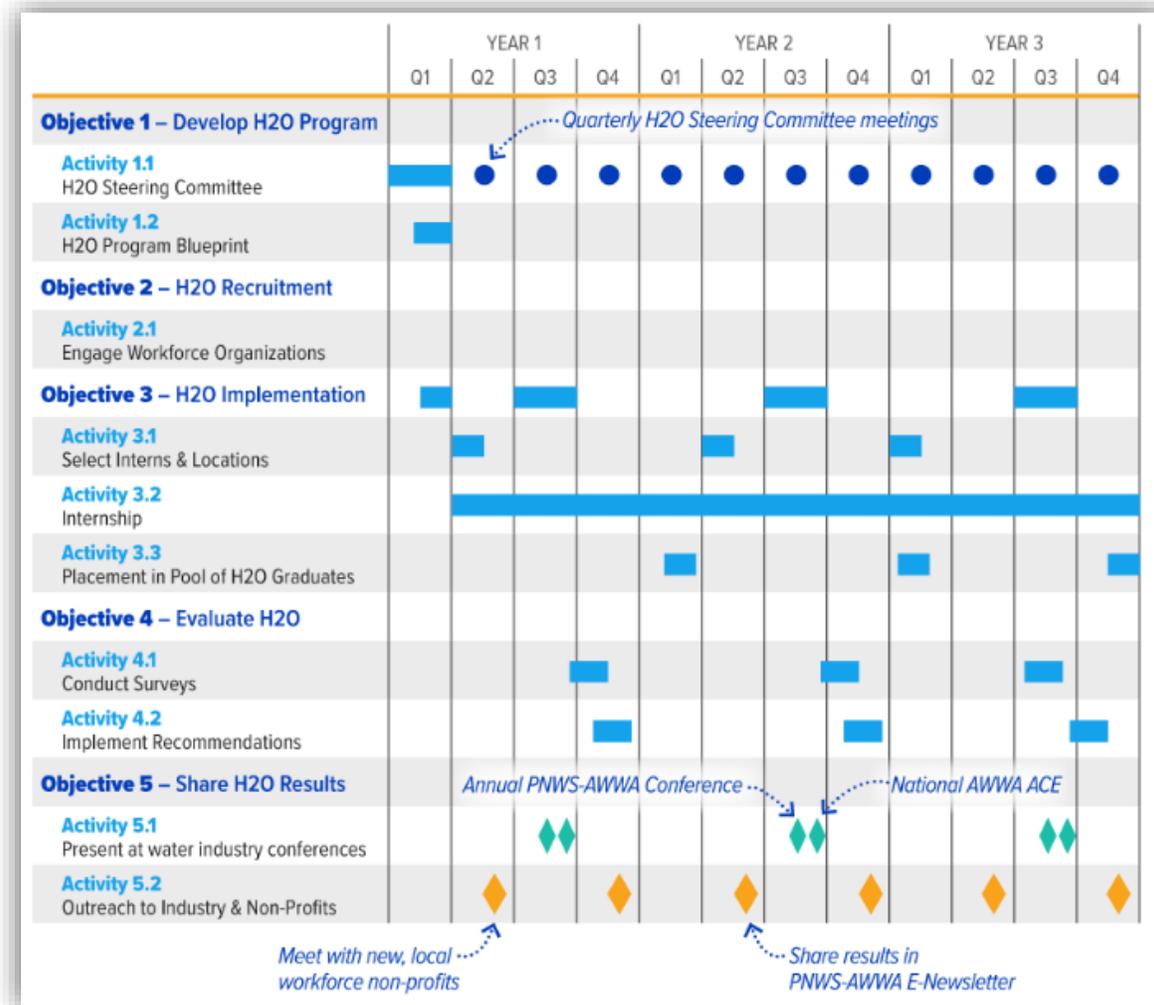
We applied for the EPA Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant



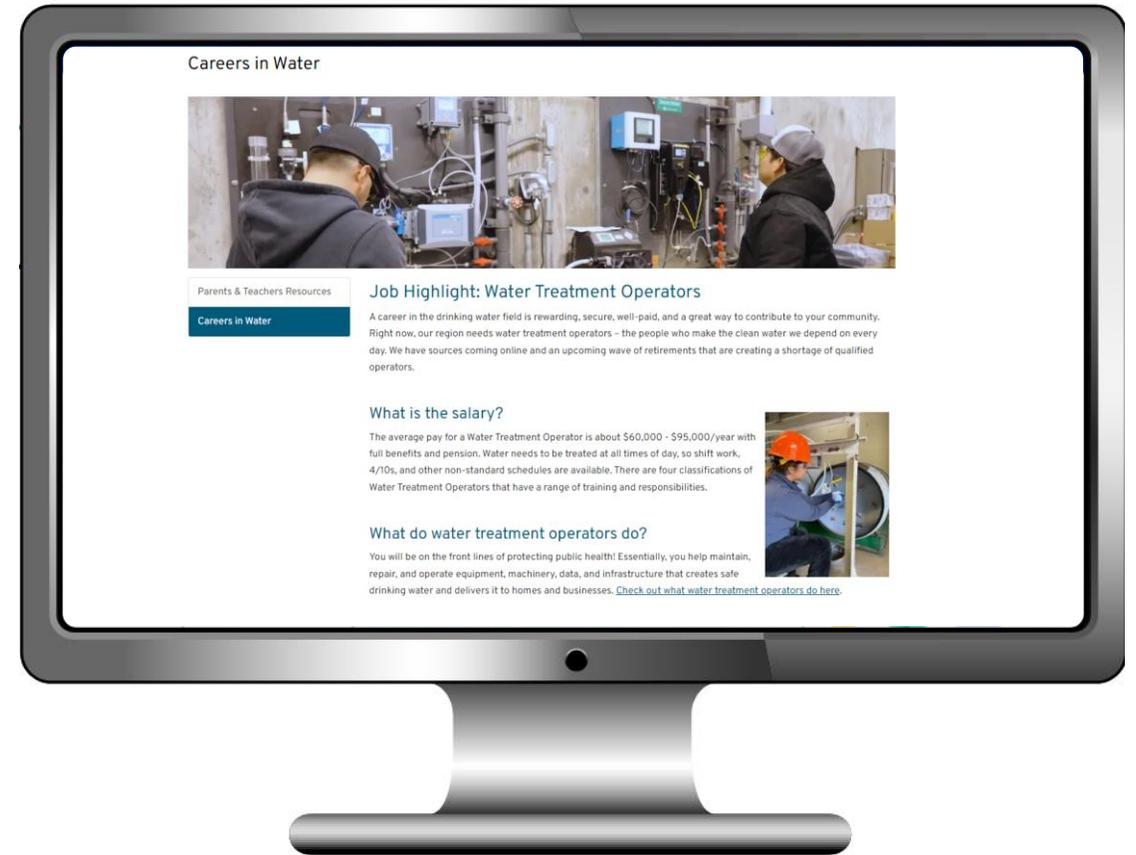
Our application introduced an alternative pathway to becoming a certified water operator



The timeline outlines our five objectives for the H2O Program



Website hosted by Regional Water Providers Consortium



regionalh2o.org/work-in-water

—
We talked about the water industry workforce with Oregon representatives' and senators' staff



Outreach to local schools and communities about water industry careers



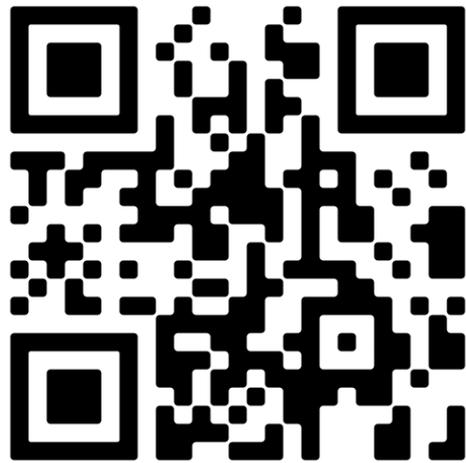
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How did you decide on a career in the water industry?

—

What is the OIT program
at Hillsboro?
Please tell us about your
success story.

—
Watch the City of Hillsboro's OIT Program video!



—

How do you recruit and retain water operators at your organization?

—

What challenges are your organizations facing in recruiting and retaining operators?

Where do you go when you are looking for a new job?

LinkedIn

0%

Organization's website

0%

Indeed, Monster Jobs, or other website

0%

Word of mouth

0%

Career fair

0%

Other

0%

—

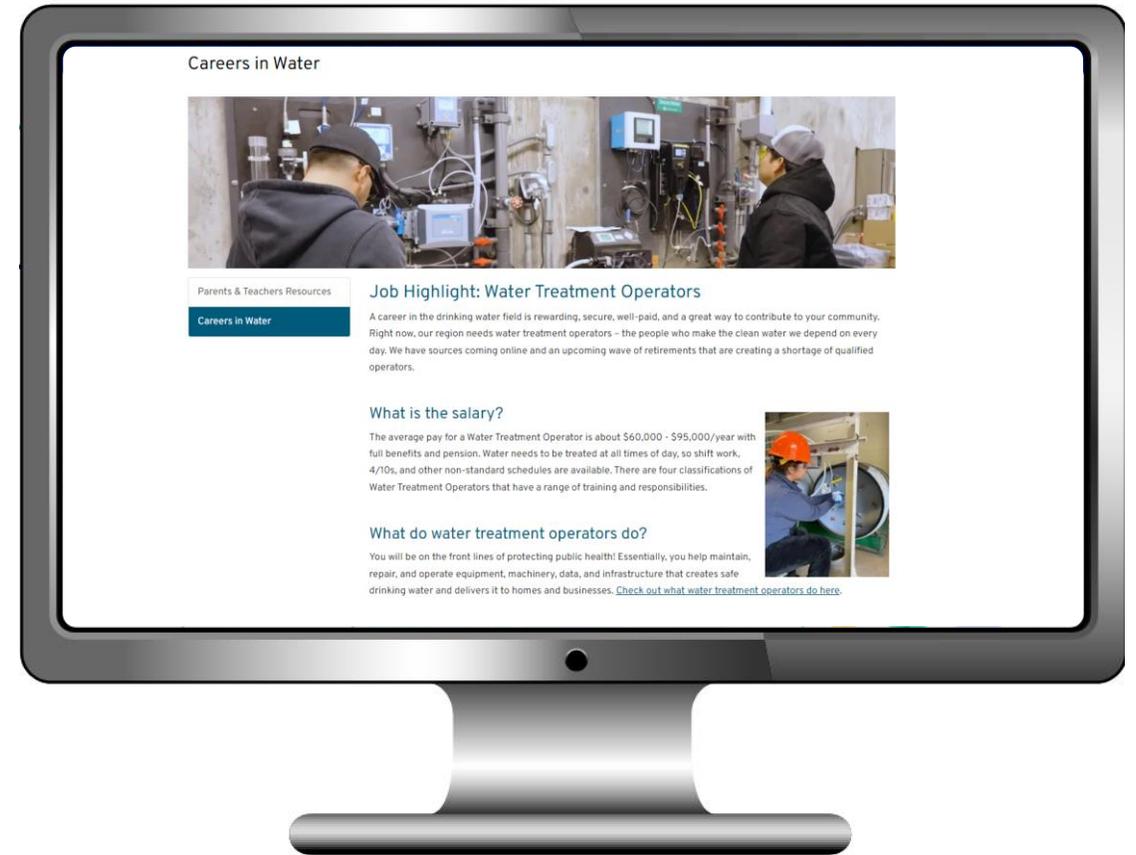
Why do you see as barriers to entering the water industry?

—

What outreach does your organization do?

Regional Water Providers Consortium

- Hosts water operator webpage!
- Co-sponsor of Children's Clean Water Festival
- List of resources for consortium members



regionalh2o.org/work-in-water

Portland Water Bureau

- Outreach with Women in Trades
- Table at community events
- Participate in capstone course at PSU devoted to Portland's water
- Bull Run Watershed Tour for schools and the public
- School visits



City of Hillsboro/JWC



What types of outreach have been successful for your organization?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

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What opportunities do we have for training and certification across organizations?

City of Hillsboro Cross Training Policy



Cross Training Policy
Water Department – Division Wide
Effective Date: February 1, 2024

Summary:

The purpose of this policy is to clearly outline guidelines and expectations for employees who express interest in cross-training between divisions of the Water Department. Cross-training opportunities are available to employees exploring career changes (up to three months), and to employees interested in educational opportunities to expand their knowledge of department workings (about one week). Water Department employees are required to adhere to this policy and any additional requirements set forth by the appropriate Division Manager(s) and/or Water Department Director.

In support of the Department goals to increase the water industry workforce, specifically in Water Treatment and Distribution, the Department will allow cross-training between divisions, considered on a case-by-case basis, following the guidelines below. The Water Director may also assign employees mandatory cross-training that is separate from, and not covered by, this policy.

Cross Training Request Process:

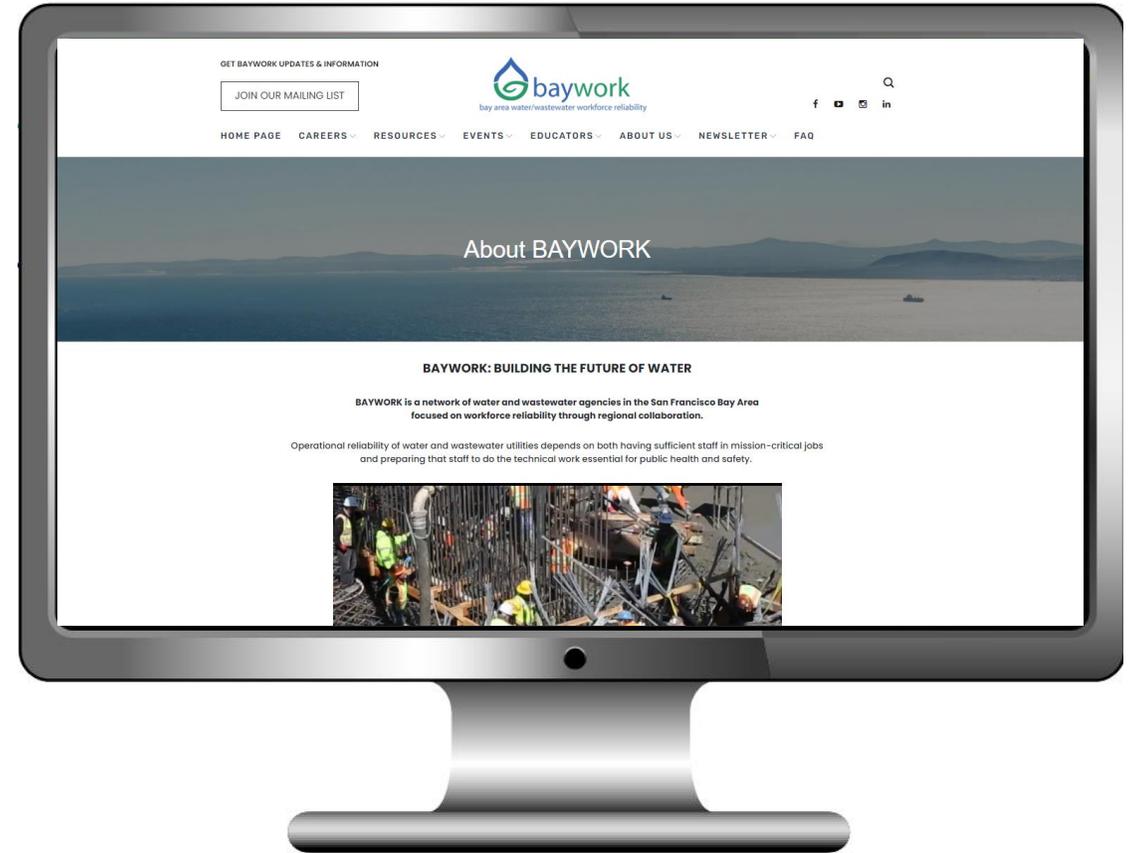
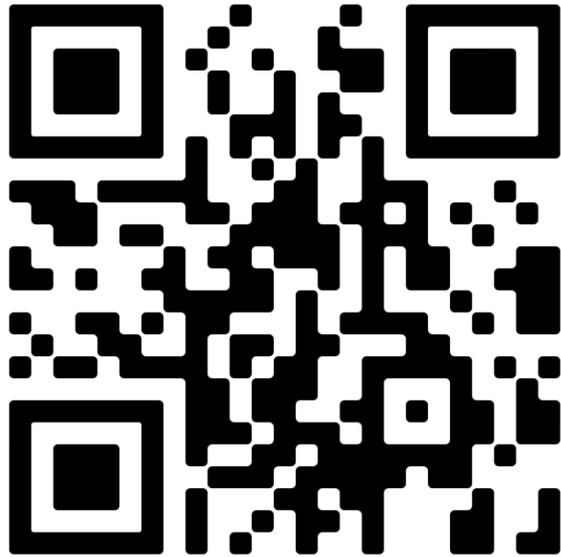
- 1) Employee submits request to direct supervisor for cross-training opportunity.
- 2) Supervisor acknowledges receipt of request as soon as reasonable, and then consults with their Division Manager (DM) regarding employee's workload, schedule, etc. to assess initial feasibility of request.
- 3) If initial approval is granted within Division, the employee's DM will consult with DM from cross-training division to determine availability of training position*. The DMs will coordinate to determine feasibility, potential schedule, and areas of interest. DMs will also work with Supervisor and Employee as needed.
- 4) Once a cross-training plan is developed, the DMs will provide it to the Water Department Director and request final approval.

*If a cross-training opportunity is not currently available due to timing or current workload in either Division, the Supervisor and DM(s) may explore options for future accommodation.

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What are other examples of regional collaboration for the water industry workforce?

BAYWORK: network of water and wastewater agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area focused on workforce reliability through regional collaboration.



baywork.org

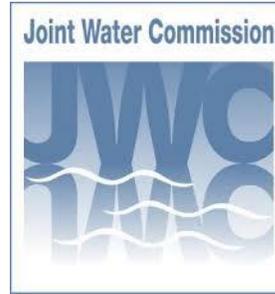
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How can we collaborate regionally for workforce development?

—

What social media does your organization use?

Find us on social media!



@CityofHillsboro



@JWCWater



@WillametteWater



@CityofHillsboro



@JWCWater



@CityofHillsboro



@JWCWater



Hillsboro-Oregon.gov



JWCWater.org



Ourreliablewater.org

Find us on social media!



@PortlandWaterBureau



@PortlandWaterBureau



@PortlandWater



portlandoregon.gov/water



@RegionalH2O



@RegionalH2O



@conserveh2org



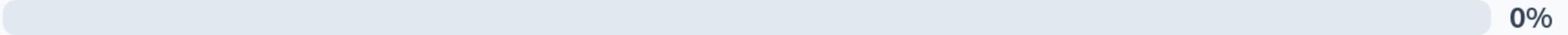
regionalh2o.org

What social media does your organization use?

Facebook



Instagram



Tiktok



LinkedIn



X

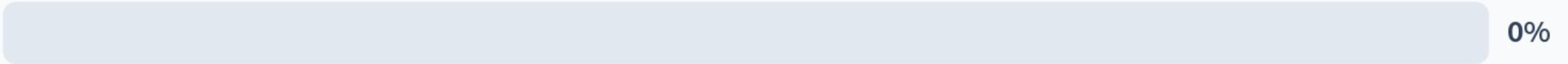


Other



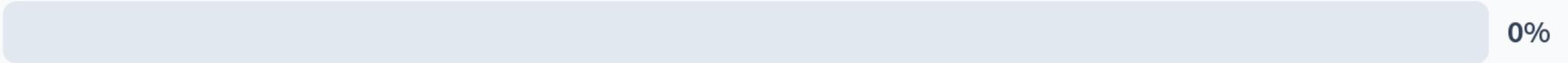
Has social media engagement been successful for your organization?

Yes



0%

No



0%

Not sure



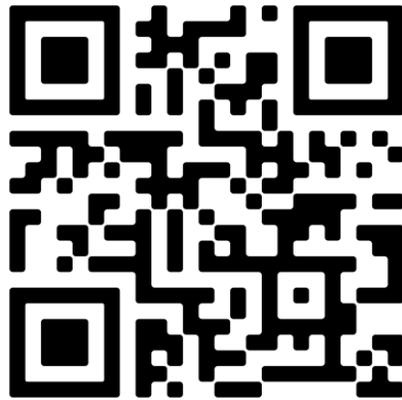
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What other resources are available?

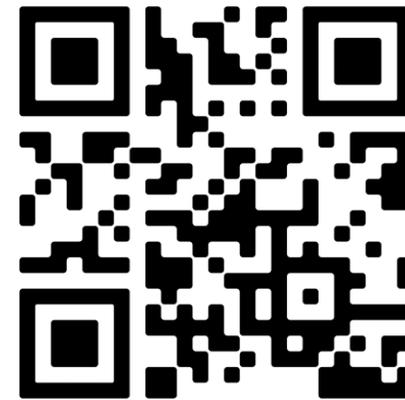
Resources from AWWA

Water Equation: provides funding for workforce advancement, scholarships, students, young professionals, and Community Engineering Corps



awwa.org/water-equation

Work for Water: partnership between AWWA and WEF



workforwater.org

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Where do we go from here?

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Thank you to our panel!!

- **Rebecca Geisen**, *Regional Water Providers Consortium*
» Rebecca.Geisen@portlandoregon.gov
- **Lyda Hakes**, *Portland Water Bureau*
» Lyda.Hakes@portlandoregon.gov
- **Chris Wilson**, *City of Hillsboro/JWC/WWSS*
» Chris.Wilson@hillsboro-oregon.gov
- **Jacob Medel Soriano**, *City of Hillsboro*
» Jacob.MedelSoriano@hillsboro-oregon.gov
- **Natalie Reilly**, *Carollo Engineers*
» nreilly@carollo.com