

Sustaining our Resilient Water Workforce

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Who we are...



Kimberly Kelsey – Principal Consultant, Parametrix



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Goals for today

- ✓ Talk about water workforce development as an industry
- ✓ Discuss opportunities to work together rather than compete for resources
- ✓ Explore innovative as well as traditional paths to promote water workforce sustainability



Water industry today

We are here to ensure that water, one of our most basic needs, is clean and available.

We have:

- Billions of dollars of water work in the Pacific Northwest
- A shortage of engineers to do the work + fewer applicants for open positions
- Fewer students joining water and environmental engineering programs

**The 2025 Report Card for
America's Infrastructure**



Actions to workforce sustainability

1. Focus on early STEAM education
2. Partner with higher education
3. Embrace a diverse workforce
4. Provide valuable mentoring
5. Focus on outreach



Action 1: Focus on early STEAM education



SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY
ENGINEERING
ART
MATH

Action 2: Partner with higher level education

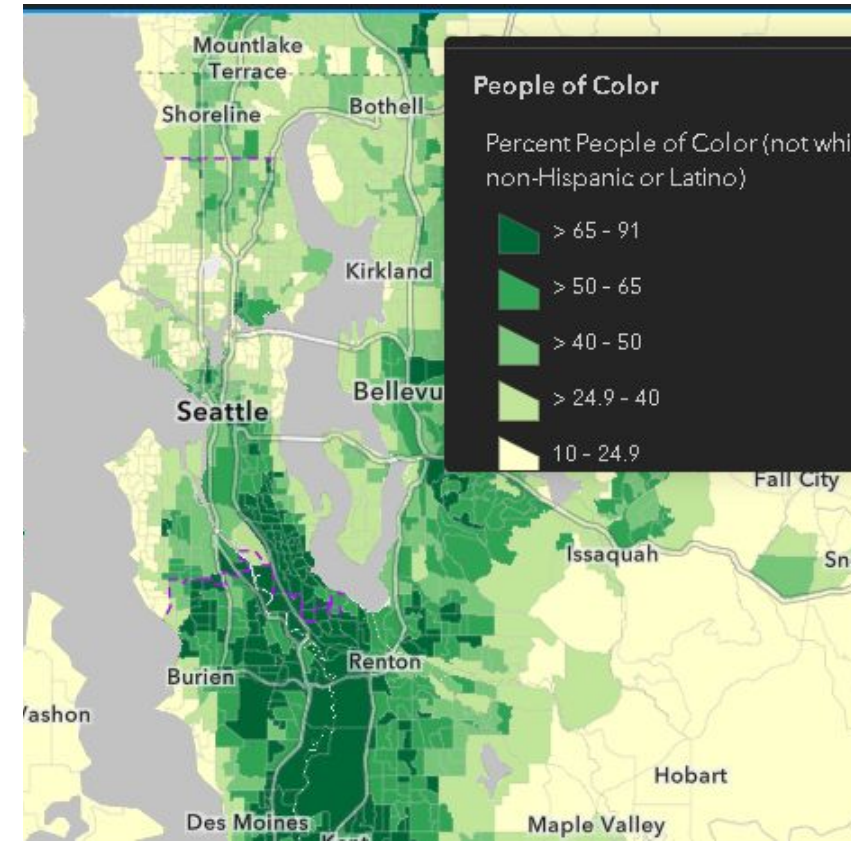
Direct engagement with local organizations and educational institutions can open doors to potential workforce and help garner interest

- Engage with local colleges
 - Career fairs
 - Internships (SPU Cohort Program)
 - Lunch & Learns
- Partner with local organizations
 - ASCE
 - Society of Women Engineers
- Encourage staff to participate and make funds available to resource the work

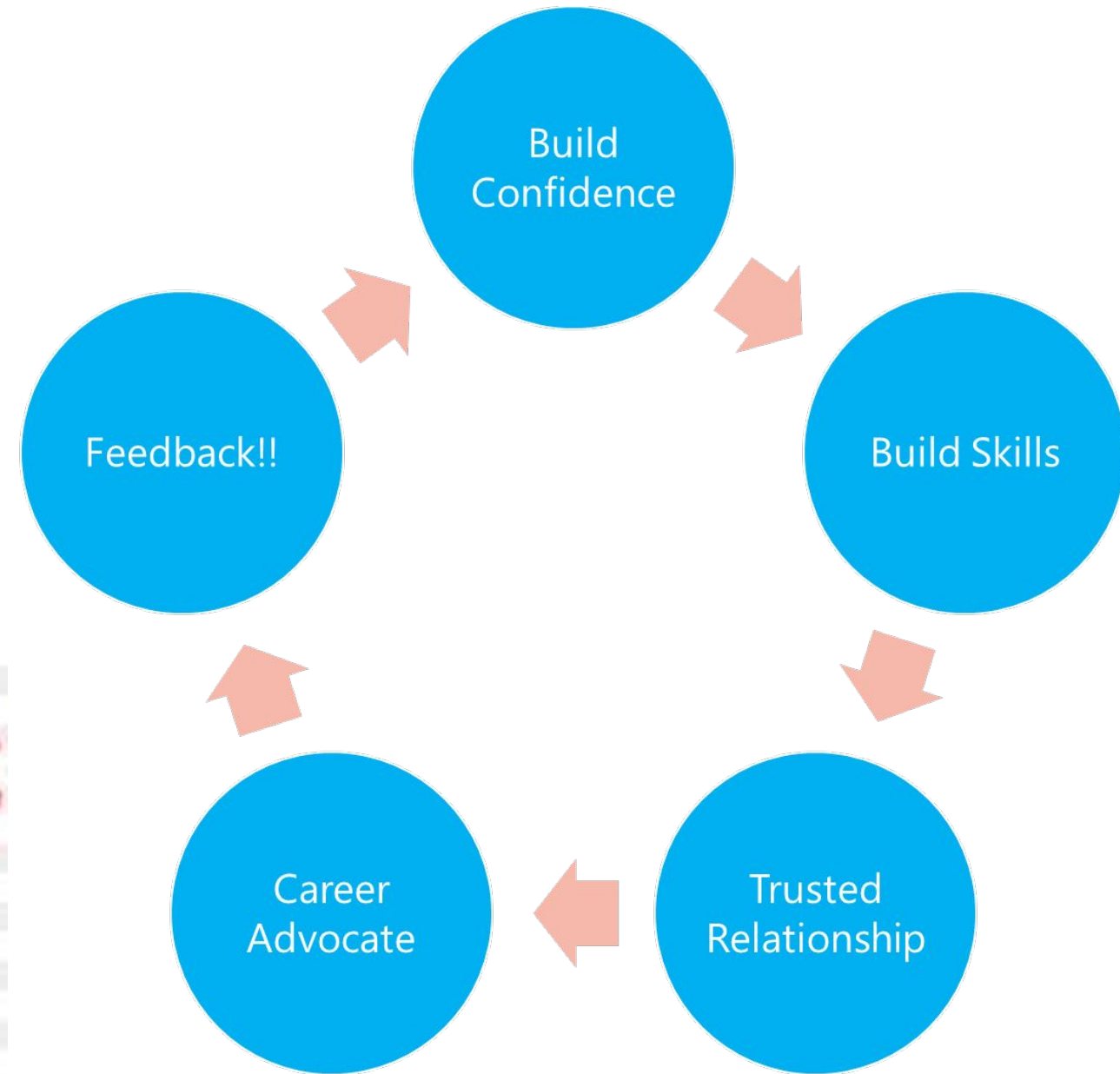
Action 3: Embrace a diverse workforce

Embracing workforce diversity can lead to a larger talent pool and greater innovation in the workplace

- Rethink hiring practices
 - Is an engineering degree required?
 - Work backwards when developing interview questions. What skills can be learned on the job vs. what is required?
- SPU Guidelines for hiring panel diversity
 - No more than 67% of the panel should be one gender or race
 - Ensure a blend of panelists who can assess soft skills as well as technical skills
- King County Implicit Bias video:
<https://your.kingcounty.gov/employees/HRD/CounteractingBiasInHiringKC/>

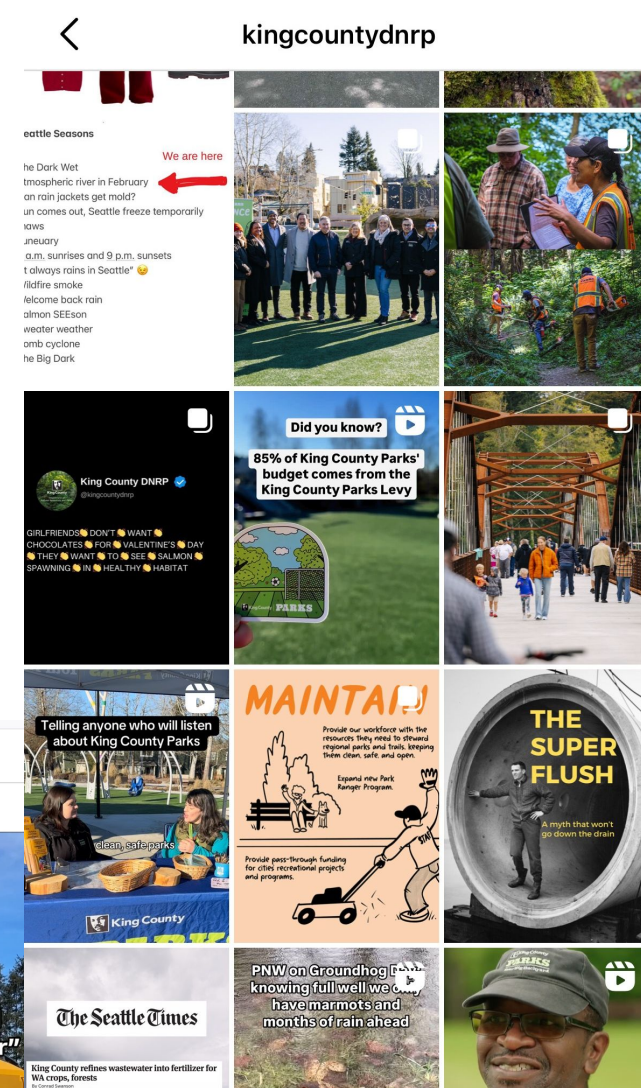
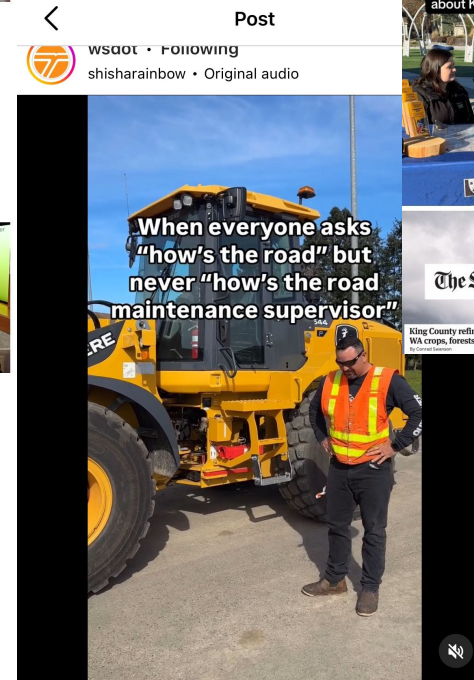
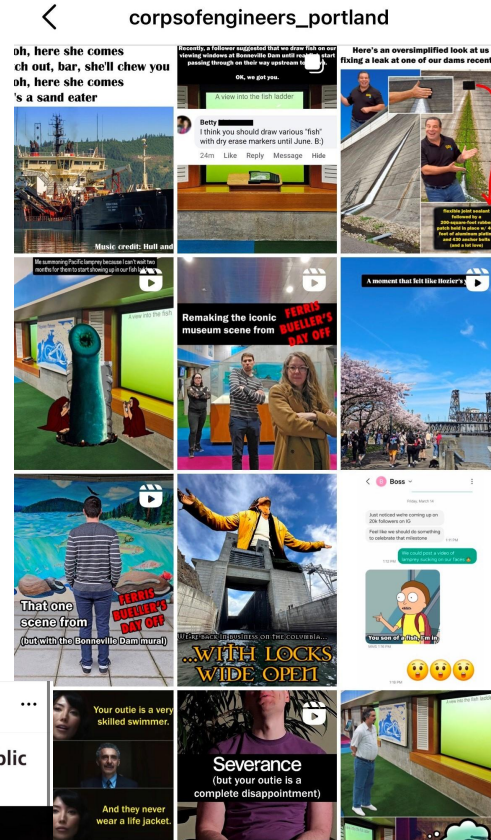


Action 4: Provide valuable mentoring



- Relatable way to bring interest to our field and reach a broader audience
- Opportunity to share public information and PSA's but also offer a glimpse at what work people do
- Opportunity to show off wins and overall impact of water work in the region

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Questions + Discussion

