

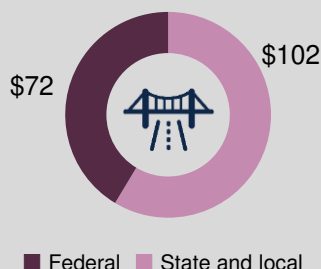


The Role of Public Works

As custodians of America's Infrastructure - High-quality, modern, well-maintained infrastructure is the backbone of any successful society. Public Works Professionals (PWP) are responsible for designing, implementing, operating, and maintaining all types of infrastructure worth trillions of dollars. Transportation, water supply and treatment, flood control, fleets and facilities, and communication infrastructure are the underpinnings of our national security, our quality of life, and our economic competitiveness in the world. **Most infrastructure is funded, built and maintained by state and local governments.**

Public sector capital investment, 2017

BILLIONS OF US DOLLARS



Emergency response professionals – PWP's are first responders and lead efforts to plan, mitigate, respond to, and recover from natural disasters. This includes witnessing first hand the losses due to these events and the economic toll on our communities. Equally important, PWP's understand the importance of building infrastructure that is resilient and able to withstand the increasing challenges of climate change and severe weather.

Leaders in developing sustainable solutions – PWP's are responsible for transportation systems, government buildings, and utility operations – all known emitters of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). For APWA, leveraging innovation and research to mitigate negative impacts from climate change is paramount to protecting the nation's critical infrastructure.



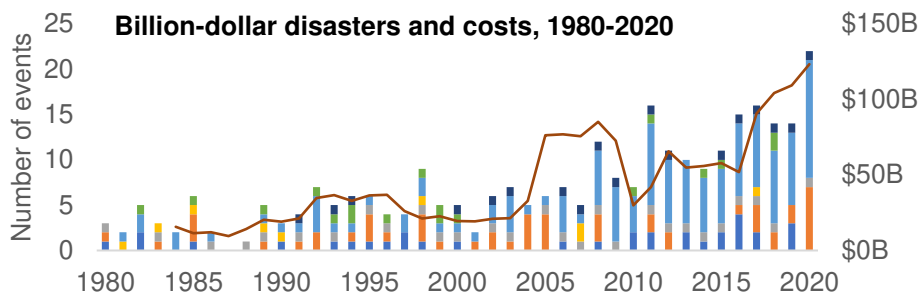
Build for Sustainability and Resiliency



PWPs consider problems and solutions holistically - evaluating economic viability, environmental impacts, and life cycle costs. **It is important that solutions address current challenges and advance the quality of life for all, and for future generations.** APWA is supportive of the use of tools such as the "Envision Rating Tool" being used for evaluating infrastructure solutions focusing on sustainability.



While there will always be disasters, preventive measures go further to protect our assets and provide the greatest return on investment. The public and private businesses depend on PWP's to provide clean water, efficient transportation networks, flood prevention, and other key infrastructure elements. APWA's *Emergency Management* policy supports ways to incentivize pre-disaster mitigation and incorporate resiliency strategies.



"The history of billion-dollar disasters in the United States each year from 1980 to 2020, showing event type (colors), frequency (left-hand vertical axis), and cost (right-hand vertical axis). NOAA Climate.gov image, based on NCEI data." [2020 U.S. billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in historical context | NOAA Climate.gov](#)

¹ Precautionary approach to future risks

¹ The ability to recover quickly from [climate disasters]

Policymaker Primers supplement APWA's official Public Policy Priorities, providing additional information and context for issues that do not strictly fall into the categories of transportation, water resiliency, or emergency management.



Public Works as First Responders



PWP's serve as first responders to natural disasters and lead efforts to plan, mitigate, respond to, and recover from natural disasters. PWP's witness firsthand the losses due to these events and the human and economic toll on our communities.



As with other first responders, APWA's *Emergency Management* policy supports investment, tools, and resources to satisfy the public works mission to build stronger and more resilient communities.



Public Works as Leaders in Mitigating Climate Change



PWPs plan and design communities, transportation systems, water quality measures, and green space in a manner that reduces traffic, pollution, and GHGs.



APWA's *Water Resiliency* policy calls for designing and operating water and wastewater to minimize energy consumption and harmful emissions.



In alignment with APWA *Water Resiliency* policy, PWPs seek to design, operate, and manage municipal waste and landfills in a manner to maximize natural resource conservation, reduce, reuse, and recycle materials, and minimize the release of methane gases and other GHGs.

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The American Public Works Association (APWA) represents over 30,000 public works professionals across North America, dedicated to providing essential, high-quality equitable and sustainable services to millions of people in rural and urban communities, both small and large.

APWA members serve in both the public and private sectors, providing expertise to the local, state, and federal government levels. Working in the public interest, our members plan, design, build, operate and maintain, and oversee America's vast infrastructure networks essential to our nation's economy, environment, safety, and way of life.

APWA collaborates with all levels of government and supports federal investment in our shared infrastructure. APWA is opposed to unfunded mandates and any effort to impede the appropriate use of public right-of-way, and strongly encourages industry to partner with public works, and all state and local government entities.

APWA supports federal investment and support for professional development training initiatives, including investment in apprenticeships, grants, career and technical education programs, to assist with the growth and utilization of innovative activities related to having a diverse, high-quality public works workforce.

It is important that federal regulations do not become onerous and burdensome to localities in their use of advancing technologies.

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