PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLBOX
FOR PUBLIC WORKS AGENCIES

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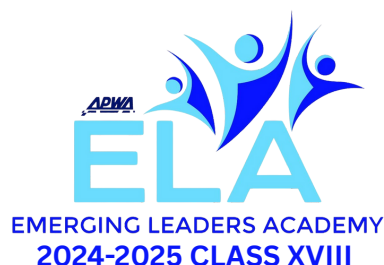
APWA

ELA
EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY
2024-2025 CLASS XVIII

ORANGE
IS THE NEW BLACK
PUBLIC WORKS

PUBLIC WORKS DIGITAL FOOTPRINT TOOLKIT

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit includes a reflection exercise, scoring assessment, and recommendations to improve a department or agency's public works branding across their digital platforms.

It is recommended that 3-5 individuals work through the reflection and assessment before discussing the recommendations as a group. However, if most of the department is familiar with the department's digital platforms, staff members could use these documents to discuss the recommendations as a roundtable exercise.

The reflection sheet is meant to introduce or remind someone of the extent of the department's digital footprint. This exercise will then help that individual with the scoring in the assessment. The assessment averages the individual scores on each item for comparison across the scoring categories of Strategy, Branding, Content, and Values. The department can then discuss the recommendations based on the identified strengths and weaknesses as well as overall scores to assist in improving their public works branding and digital platforms.

Digital Footprint Self-Reflection

		Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5
1	Do you have a Public Works Facebook account?					
2	Do you have a Public Works Instagram account?					
3	Do you have a Public Works LinkedIn account?					
4	Do you have a Public Works 'X' account?					
5	Is the Public Works information integrated into your organization's main account?					
6	Has content been posted on any platform in the last day referencing Public Works?					
7	Has content been posted on any platform in the last week referencing Public Works?					
8	Do you post on any platform on a routine basis that references Public Works?					
9	Is your social media content timely and relevant?					
10	Does your organization regularly provide project updates in regards to your Public Works team?					
11	Does your organization provide educational content related to Public Works?					
12	Are there visuals (photos, videos, infographics) used in posts?					
13	Do you highlight your operations team?					
14	Do your postings accurately portray the excitement of Public Works?					
15	Do you consistently use the same tone of voice?					
16	Do you use a Public Works specific logo used with posts?					
17	Do you use a city logo with Public Works posts?					
18	Do you use a specific color scheme consistently?					
19	Are your mission statement or values clearly defined and easily accessible?					
20	Do you have a Public Works page on your website?					
21	Is your Public Works information easy to find?					
22	Is information about on-going projects available, and are they up to date and relevant?					
23	Do you have information available about emergency/service disruptions as it relates to Public Works activities?					
24	Is information about Public Works services clearly outlined within your platforms?					
25	Does your Public Works page have information on what the department works on?					
26	Do you have information on how the public can get involved or learn more?					
27	Do you offer information explaining how to access a Public Works service?					
28	Can you tell that there are regular updates to your platform?					
29	Does some of the information need to be archived?					
30	Are multiple contact methods provided?					
31	Are contacts within Public Works easily accessible?					
32	Do you offer a way for the public to submit feedback?					
33	Do you broadcast public meeting announcements?					

Digital Footprint Assessment

Scoring portion	Category	Platform	Criteria	Scoring Guide	Person 1*	Person 2*	Person 3*	Person 4*	Person 5*	Average*
Scoring portion	Category 1 Strategy	Social Media	Social Media Strategy (Separate vs. Integrated)	1=No dedicated presence, unclear integration 3=Integrated but some PW focus 5=Dedicated PW account with clear focus						
		Social Media	Social Media Posting Frequency	1=Rare or no recent posts 3=Sporadic posting 5=Consistent daily/near-daily posting						
		Social Media	Social Media Content Variety & Relevance	1=Limited or irrelevant content 3=Some relevant content, but lacking variety 5=Diverse and relevant content (PSAs, updates, education, visuals)						
		Social Media	Social Media Engagement and Responsiveness	1 = No interaction (comments disabled) 3 = Some interaction (occasionally replies) 5 = High engagement (active commenting and responding to followers)						
	Category 2 Branding	Both	Visual Branding for Social Media and Website	1=No visual branding 3=Some branding elements present 5=Strong and consistent visual branding						
		Both	Brand Color Schemes	1 = None 3 = Basic colors (e.g., city's standard colors) 5 = Consistent and distinctive (unique to Public Works with recognizable branding)						
		Both	Brand Message & Tone	1 = Unclear, inconsistent, or unprofessional tone 3 = Generally professional but lacks consistency 5 = Clear, consistent, professional, and approachable tone that builds trust and positive perception						
		Both	Overall Platform Up to Date	1 = Clearly outdated information across platforms 3 = Some outdated information present 5 = All platforms consistently updated with current information						
	Category 3 Content	Website	Website Content and Relevance	1 = Very outdated 3 = Appears to have new content, but also hasn't been updated in the last year 5 = Obviously very current						
		Website	Overall Education of Public Works Role and Services	1 = Little to no educational content 3 = Some basic explanations 5 = Effectively educates the public on PW roles, services, and how to access them						
		Website	Accuracy and Accessibility of Contact information	1 = Difficult to find or inaccurate contact info 3 = Contact info present but limited or potentially outdated 5 = Easily accessible, accurate, and diverse contact methods						
		Website	Updates and Information About Ongoing Projects	1 = No information about ongoing projects and programs 3 = Some information and/or updates, but limited or not current 5 = Recent updates, project maps/trackers						
	Category 4 Values	Both	Proactive Communication & Transparency	1 = Lack of communication during key events 3 = Reactive communication 5 = Proactive and transparent communication builds trust and manages public perception effectively						
		Both	Humanization	1 = Impersonal and distant 3 = Limited personal connection 5 = Efforts to humanize the department build rapport and trust with the public						
		Both	Mission & Values Communication	1 = No clear communication of mission/values 3 = Mission/values present but not prominent 5 = Clearly articulated mission and values that guide communication and build brand understanding						
				Score	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Input your scores for each category. A category score or 4 or greater indicates you are utilizing these elements well while a score less than 3 indicates there is room for improvement. An overall score of 54 and higher indicates your digital platform is effective and robust while a score less than 42 could mean there is room to edit your footprint.

Please note, it is assumed that this is filled out in Excel so the scores will autopopulate.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Now that you have a digital footprint score, consider the following recommendations for each category and suggestions for how to improve your overall score. As these recommendations are not tailored to your agency specifically, please use them as general remedies that can help you start to improve your digital footprint across the platforms you use. An overall score greater than 54 generally indicates that your digital footprint has many effective branding elements, while a score less than 42 could mean that your digital footprint needs some changes to become more effective at sharing public works-related content. A score of 4 or higher in a particular category indicates that efforts in this area are going well, while a score less than 3 highlights an opportunity to target that area for improvement. If you scored somewhere in the middle, check the recommendations to see if you can tweak your current workflow to make your digital footprint and communications even more effective. Additionally, there are many reasons why cities might not be able to score highly on everything, including limited funding or staff, so please consider context as you view these recommendations and discuss ways that successful strategies can be scaled as needed.

Strategy

This section focuses on an organization's social media presence and strategy.

Create a Feed Specific to Public Works

Social media accounts that are separated from the parent city or organization allow for a more streamlined focus of information. Telling the story of public works can make a larger impact through these platforms when used correctly. Check with your city to ensure that a new account complies with their policies and is consistent with existing branding.

If you are not able to create and maintain a separate platform, consider scheduling a public works-related post on a regular basis. For example, once a week or month, highlight the Operations and Maintenance staff, promote a public works project win, or provide educational content that helps residents understand and appreciate what Public Works does.

Post Updates on a Consistent Basis

The most engaging organizations post at least once a week about something public works related.

Tell Your Story!

Don't get caught in the cycle of only sharing the same traffic updates and reminders. Post a variety of information.

- From trees, to drinking water, to potholes, to street improvements, to engineering, to utilities – public works has an immense amount of responsibility and a wide array of skills. Tell your story and the public profile of the department will grow.

Encourage Participation
To the public, not all posts are worthy of a comment. Too many of these unengaging posts discourage interaction. The most successful Public Works digital platforms allow for some feedback from the community.
- For example, one community shared a link to nominate a public servant on their platform, while another regularly responds to comments and questions from the public, allowing for a type of open communication.
    - Familiarize yourself with your department or city's policies on public engagement to ensure you are complying with existing public communication rules.

Branding
This section focuses on what your organization does to market itself and its work. The goal is to refine your branding so it becomes a recognizable identity, helping you build trust and credibility.

Create a Recognizable Brand!
A successful brand starts with a visual cue. Whether on a webpage or social media feed, branding should be consistent and trigger a mental connection between the organization and their content.
- If you do not have a feed for public works specifically, think about creating a ready-made template so that each time you post a public works project, the posts look uniform. This also saves times and enables more frequent posting.

Make it Flow – Add Consistent Color!
- Effective brands hold to a color scheme, either aligning with or complementing that of their parent city. The selected scheme can be used across all sorts of platforms and can be pulled into in-person events to establish a professional-looking and visually interesting presence.

Establish a Positive and Informed Voice
- Decide as a department what tone you want to convey and agree that all administrators of the platforms use consistent language that make the posts feel approachable and helpful. Posts and communications that seem like they were written by one person are more effective and help foster a more personal connection with the community.
    - Decide as a department when it is appropriate to use a more "fun" tone in a particular type of post and which posts should be presented with a strictly informative tone. Announcing or celebrating an event can be more jovial, but an announcement of traffic closures should probably be more informative and neutral.

Update Your Information
- It is frustrating to find information online that has not been updated for many years and may no longer be applicable.
    - Consider adding an archive link to websites or removing outdated information that undermines your organization's appearance of reliability.
    - It is better for a resident to land on a destination page that says "under construction" than to only find updates on projects that were completed ten years ago.
- If your department does not have a designated staff member to update your platforms, or that position is vacant, consider splitting the role into multiple tasks and assigning each of them to qualified individuals.

Content

This section focuses on what type of information is posted to your website and social media and how effective it is in communicating with the public.

Make the Content Relevant and Current

- Posting updates about current projects and initiatives helps residents build trust in local government. Residents who understand the benefits of local projects can help build civic pride in public works and support your future initiatives.

Educate Your Audience

- Typically, visitors to a website are looking for information. Increasing the educational value of your content can add to the overall usefulness of your digital platforms and foster awareness of why public works services are important.
  - o For example: Create a post with graphics or a video that explains how potholes are formed and different ways that roads are repaired.

Provide Contact Information

- It speaks volumes about an organization when you can contact someone easily; make sure contact details are updated and easily accessible, ideally accompanied by a photo. This helps to associate Public Works with real people who are working to improve quality of life for all.
  - o For example: Create a tab on your website that has all current contacts available for each division or team.

Show Residents What Public Works Is All About

- Part of any successful content strategy is sharing details about what your public works team does; tell your story and post regular project updates to maintain a sense of momentum and accomplishment.

Values

This section focuses on how you share your organization's story with your audience through social media and your website.

Use Clear, Open, and Proactive Communication

- Transparent communication can increase the level of trust between the department and residents. Create posts ahead of key events and highlight any important information like road closures. Consider adding a section on the front page of the website that has a list of upcoming events, closures, or other vital information.

Highlight Your Staff

- A post about city staff working (patching holes, reviewing plans, setting up traffic control, or clearing a sewer issue) can humanize your department to the public and can build a strong connection between the work and the service. Consider posting a video of staff explaining their work or a photo thanking them for their effort on something specific. This will help with increasing general civic pride for both residents and staff.

Publish Your Mission, Values, and Purpose

- Check if you have a mission statement or list of values on your website. Consider placing this information on the front page of your website so it is one of the first things a user sees.
  - o Many high scoring cities provide a statement on their front pages that includes language like "The department manages public infrastructure and essential services to enhance the mobility, safety, and health for residents, businesses, and visitors. We are responsible for maintaining the city's streets, sidewalks, traffic signals, and storm drain infrastructure."

Overall Score

If you've looked through each of the categories, below is a summarized of key items to keep in mind when strategizing about how to enhance your public works agency's digital footprint.

- Create a posting schedule that aligns with your department's budget and staff capacity.
- Share a variety of information such as project updates, staff shoutouts, and educational information about what your public works department accomplishes to get buy-in from the public.
- Consider using consistent graphics, colors, and logos when creating public posts.
- Set a positive, accessible, and informational tone across all platforms.
- Check that content is relevant and remove or archive outdated information.
- Ensure contact information is easily accessible.
- Publicize your mission and core values to establish a baseline of purpose that everyone can get behind.

PUBLIC WORKS EDUCATION, OUTREACH, MARKETING, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLKIT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Public Works is more than infrastructure—it's the people in our communities, the places where we live, work, and play, and the presence we have in the built environment. The team created this Public Works Education, Outreach, Marketing, and Public Relations Toolkit to support public works agencies' efforts to build stronger community connections and increase public understanding of the essential work they do every day.

Whether you're just getting started with community engagement or working without a dedicated team, this toolkit is for you. It's packed with practical tools and ready-to-use guides to help make planning and delivering public engagement easier and more impactful.

Inside, you'll find:

- Education and outreach tools, which are perfect for hosting educational booths, tours, or town halls
- Marketing and public relations tools to promote events, programs, and services with confidence and consistency
- Curated online resources for continued learning, inspiration, and connection to best practices across the profession

This is a go-to resource for planning, promoting, and delivering meaningful public engagement for public works agencies of all sizes and levels of expertise. Whether you're stepping into this work for the first time or looking to sharpen your approach, this guide will help. By sharing your story and engaging the public you strengthen trust, increase awareness, and celebrate the people and places you support. This toolkit will also help with transparency, public service, and presence in the communities you serve.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This guide contains tools you can reference at any stage in planning Public Works education, outreach, marketing, and public relations. Whether you're organizing a community open house, hosting a Touch-A-Truck event, writing a press release, or creating a social media campaign, every chapter takes you step by step through the process from concept to realization. You can also use the additional resources in the final section to find out more about effective engagement methods, connect with national resources, or get inspiration from other organizations.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS

The tools in this section are designed to help staff plan, promote, and deliver impactful public-facing events. Whether hosting open houses, school visits, informational booths, or neighborhood question-and-answer sessions, these tools provide a consistent framework designed to take the guesswork out of event planning—helping staff deliver information in a way that is professional, consistent, and easy for the community to understand. With this resource in hand, team members at any level can confidently represent Public Works and build stronger connections with the people we serve—while reinforcing our commitment to transparency, partnership, and civic pride.

Overall Planning and Preparation Checklist
Define Your Event Goals

☐ Raise awareness about Public Works services

☐ Educate citizens on how they can engage (e.g., reporting potholes, recycling properly)

☐ Build trust and transparency

☐ Recruit participants for a Public Works Citizen Academy

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Identify Target Audiences

☐ General public

☐ Students/teachers

☐ Neighborhood associations

☐ Local elected officials

☐ Media outlets

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Key Event Deliverables

☐ Event Flyer

☐ Informational Brochure

☐ Social Media Posts

☐ Citizen Academy Curriculum

☐ Press Release

☐ Email Announcement

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Overall Design and Content Creation Checklist
Resources That Can Help You Create Your Content

Item	Free Template Resources	Notes
Flyer	**Canva** Search "Community Event Flyer" on www.canva.com	Customize with date/time, location, and a photo of your team or equipment.
Brochure or Pamphlet	**Canva** www.canva.com/z-fold-brochures/templates/	Use a trifold layout. Highlight services, contacts, and fun facts about Public Works.
Social Media Posts	**Canva** www.canva.com/social-graphics/templates/	Design square (Instagram) and landscape (Facebook) versions.
Citizen Academy Curriculum	**Microsoft Word** Search "Lesson Plan Templates"	Create a multi-week plan: field trips, hands-on demos, question-and-answer panels.
Emails	**Canva** www.canva.com/templates/s/email/ **Constant Contact, GovDelivery,** and other services provide templates and an easy way to send out mass emails when needed. www.constantcontact.com https://granicus.com/product/govdelivery/	Keep it short, punchy, and clear on how to register or participate.
Press Release	**PR Newswire, Muck Rack,** and other communication organizations provide free guidelines and templates for press releases. www.prnewswire.com/resources/articles/press-release-templates/ https://muckrack.com/blog/2023/02/01/press-release-checklist	Send to local newspapers, radio, and community Facebook groups.

Using Generative Artificial Intelligence Models for Content Creation
Generative artificial intelligence (AI) models have the ability to generate content, including flyers, brochures, pamphlets, social media posts, emails, and press releases. However, it would be best to consult with your organization's communication, legal, and/or administration staff to determine whether an AI model should be used for this purpose for your organization. Using a professional who has expertise in communication would likely be preferred over using an AI model, but some organizations may not have staff that can perform these functions.

Also, AI models can create images, graphics, verbiage, and other content that has inaccuracies, or information that is irrelevant. Careful and meticulous review of any AI-generated content is highly encouraged to prevent releasing inaccurate information to the public.

In addition, it is important to choose the right AI tool for the job. While many AI models are technically capable of performing tasks such as creating images, graphics, and verbiage, not all of them are specifically designed for that function and won't provide the best results.

AI tools such as Adobe's Firefly (firefly.adobe.com) and Canva AI (www.canva.com/ai-assistant/) work well for most of these uses. However, AI tools such as Adobe Firefly, PR Newswire's AI tool (www.prnewswire.com/ai-press-release), and Muck Rack PressPal (muckrack.com/presspal/) provide more specific AI generation for press releases.

For more information on AI in public works, we recommend *Does AI Have a Place in the Public Works Toolbox?* The resource is available to APWA members at: https://www.apwa.org/resource/does-ai-have-a-place-in-the-public-works-toolbox/.

New Planner Checklist – Things to Consider for Outreach Events

☐ Event Planning Timeline (start 2-3 months ahead)
☐ Contact List (media, community partners, schools)
☐ Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet
☐ Budget and Sponsorship Plan
☐ Swag/Giveaways (stickers, coloring books, safety vests for kids)
☐ Evaluation Forms (paper or Google Forms for feedback)
☐ Thank You Messages (volunteers, speakers, sponsors)

Workshop, Training, and Presentation Planning Checklists

The Workshop/Training/Presentation Checklist is a go-to tool to help staff plan and run smooth, effective learning sessions—whether it's an internal training, a public presentation, or a community workshop. It walks you through the key steps: setting clear goals, knowing your audience, organizing your content, prepping materials, and handling logistics.

This checklist helps make sure every session is:

- Focused and aligned with what the department needs
- Easy to follow and engaging for the audience
- Well organized and clearly communicated

By using a consistent process, presenters can feel confident that their sessions are informative, accessible, and polished—while still leaving room to adapt to different formats and styles. Whether you're putting together a staff training or planning an outreach event, this tool helps keep everyone on the same page and working toward the same high standard.

Event Details
Title of Lesson: [Engaging and clear. Ex: "Leading Through Change" or "Intro to Municipal Ordinances"]

Date/Time: [MM/DD/YYYY | Duration]

Facilitator(s): [Your name, co-presenters, organization]

Learning Objectives
By the end of this session, participants will be able to: [Action verb + measurable outcome].

Use Bloom's Taxonomy to assist with learning objectives. *Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Write Effective Learning Objectives* from the University of Arkansas provides additional information and resources for Bloom's Taxonomy at: https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Suggested Materials to Consider

☐ Handouts

☐ Slides/Projector

☐ Activity supplies

☐ QR codes or links

Agenda/Time Breakdown

Time	Activity	Notes
0:00–0:10	Welcome and Icebreaker	[Name game, poll, story, etc.]
0:10–0:25	Intro to Topic	[Key points, discussion starter]
0:25–0:45	Main Content/Lecture	[Video, slides, storytelling]
0:45–1:00	Group Activity/Role Play	[Instructions, materials]
1:00–1:15	Discussion and question and answer session	[Open floor or guided questions]
1:15–1:30	Summary and Takeaways	[Checklist, next steps]

Assessment/Evaluation Suggestions for Consideration

☐ Reflection prompts

☐ Quiz or discussion questions

☐ Post-survey or follow-up form

Suggested Follow-Up Resources for Consideration

☐ Downloadable materials or website links

☐ Recommended reading or videos

☐ Contact info or support offered

Booth Setup for Farmers Market or Education/Career Fairs Checklist

Participating in farmers markets and education or career fairs is a valuable way for Public Works to engage directly with the community, build public awareness, and promote trust. These events offer opportunities to educate residents about services, showcase current initiatives, and spark interest in Public Works careers.

Planning and Registration

☐ Identify and contact the main organizer of the event (Farmers Market or Fair)

☐ Register for the event and pay any entrance/booth fees, if required

☐ Confirm whether any City permits or insurance are needed to participate and obtain them in advance

☐ Request and note logistics details (location, setup time, booth size, parking, etc.)

Team and Staffing

☐ Assign at least 2 staff members ("social butterflies") who are outgoing and knowledgeable about Public Works

☐ Brief staff on talking points, educational goals, and community engagement expectations

Booth Equipment

☐ Foldable table (check size allowance from organizer)

☐ 2 chairs (or more, depending on team size and visitors)

☐ Canopy/tent (optional, but useful for outdoor events and sun/rain protection)

☐ Table covering or banner with city's Public Works branding

Educational and Promotional Materials

☐ Create and bring a display board showcasing Public Works initiatives, projects, or services

☐ Prepare brochures, flyers, or fact sheets about current programs or educational messages

☐ Include visual aids or interactive elements (e.g., before-and-after photos, QR codes, maps)

☐ Create hands on activity for kids (see below examples)

- How water moves from sky to river
- Craft specific to public works
- Demonstrate how toilet paper breaks down
- How to identify tree types
- Samples of different road pavement types

Giveaways and Branded Items ("Swag")

☐ Bring Public Works-branded items like pens, magnets, water bottles, tote bags, or safety coloring books

☐ Ensure materials are age-appropriate for the audience (students vs. general public)

☐ Use giveaways to spark conversation about services or initiatives

Day-Of Preparation

☐ Arrive early to set up booth and troubleshoot

☐ Confirm Wi-Fi or electrical access, if needed

☐ Prepare a sign-in sheet or QR code for email list signups or surveys

☐ Take photos of the booth and interactions (with consent) for social media or reporting

After the Event

☐ Break down and pack all booth items

☐ Thank the event organizer and request to be notified of future opportunities

☐ Conduct a quick staff debrief—what worked well, what can be improved

    o   Share highlights internally or on social media to celebrate outreach success

Touch-A-Truck Event Checklist

Touch-A-Truck events allow the public to get hands-on experience and learn about working equipment and trucks. It allows children and adults to learn about essential services and the people who provide them in their local areas. The event provides a fun and educational experience, while providing a sense of community and appreciation for public services.

Advertising

☐ Public post on social media, city website
☐ Place message boards/banners in high volume areas around town and the event location
☐ Mail out mailers or post cards to publicize and promote the event

Acquire Proper City permits

☐ Check to see with your local office if you are required to pull any special permit for the event

Internal/External Staff Efforts

☐ Have staff acquire a location for the event. If having it at the Public Works facility, make sure grounds are cleaned before event and adequate parking is available
☐ Have social media and communications promote the event
☐ Send out a sign-up sheet for the event so that you can gauge how many people to plan for
☐ Request equipment from all departments so that it is a well-rounded event. Make sure there are a variety of pieces (e.g. not all dump trucks).
☐ Reach out to other departments for participation (fire, police, conservation districts, local businesses that have equipment, etc.)
☐ Assign employees to work the event
☐ Assign a few people to be in charge of food. Have vendors or catering brought in.
☐ Assign a few people to be in charge of fun games or events for the children to keep them involved and welcomed
☐ Make sure the area and equipment are safe and secure for children to be walking around and on; the last thing you want is for someone to get hurt!

National Public Works Week (NPWW) Event Checklist

APWA NPWW is a chance to recognize the hard work of public works employees. Participating in NPWW can boost the morale among staff by publicly acknowledging their efforts, attract new talent by showcasing Public Works career opportunities, and encourage internal pride and community appreciation for behind-the-scenes operations.

Advertise

- ☐ On social media
- ☐ On city website
- ☐ Mailers
- ☐ Hand delivered notices
- ☐ Banners around town or in high-volume areas
- ☐ School bulletin boards

Acquire Proper City permits

- ☐ Check to see with your local office if you are required to pull any special permit for the event

Internal Staff Efforts

This can include human resources, communications, special events, and special projects staff. Members can also include other staff, council, or leading citizens of other committees.

Suggested Committee Structure:

- ☐ Planning Committee: Oversees and manages all activities and events.
- ☐ Event Committees: One committee per event organizes and completes all tasks associated with the event.
    - o Touch-A-Truck Committee: Organizes all activities associated with the Touch-A-Truck events at the celebration.
    - o Contest Committee: Organizes all activities associated with contests that will be held at the celebration.
    - o Food Committee: Organizes all activities associated with eating and drinking at the celebration.
    - o Fun Committee: Organizes all activities associated with having fun at the celebration.
- ☐ Education Committee: Organizes all activities associated with the educational objectives of the celebration.
- ☐ Promotions Committee: Organizes all activities associated with the promotional objectives of the celebration.
    - o Silent Auction Committee: Organizes all activities associated with providing a silent auction to benefit a local non-profit organization at the celebration.
- ☐ Social Media Committee: Plans and organizes all social media posts.
- ☐ Volunteer Committee: Organizes and distributes all volunteers for the celebration.

Below is an in-depth view of each committees' tasks.

Planning Committee

☐ Oversee and help delegate tasks to completion for all committees a part of the celebration
☐ Determine a planning calendar

- o March
    - Schedule a kickoff meeting to organize your celebration. Invite individuals from all public works departments, the Chamber of Commerce, the Public Affairs office, community schools, and area businesses (vendor partners).
    - Discuss goals, set objectives, and define target audiences.
    - Determine the events and activities that will allow you to meet your objectives.
    - Select a chairperson for each committee; clarify and assign responsibilities.
    - Discuss how to capture information during your events. This will provide content for you to share online and with stakeholders and enable you to evaluate your success.
    - Determine an operating budget and share information with committees. Discuss if there are any opportunities to involve sponsors.
    - Develop a master calendar with milestones.
    - Develop a schedule of meetings to review progress with committee chairpersons.
    - Order your National Public Works Week posters.
- o April
    - Committees meet to organize and plan.
    - Committee chairpersons begin meeting with the Planning Committee chairperson to report progress and obtain support.
    - Begin your promotional efforts. If you intend to invite elected officials or local media to attend your NPWW events, begin drafting those invitations and set a date for them to go out.
    - Start teasing your events on social media.
- o May
    - Ramp up your communications efforts on your social media channels, and any other places where you can speak to the community at large.
    - Celebrate National Public Works Week!
    - Record the information necessary to evaluate your success and plan a meeting to bring your committee members together for a post-event download and to discuss what could be done differently next year.
- o June
    - Celebrate your success with committee members.
    - Send thank you notes to supporters, committee members, corporate or local sponsors, and volunteers.
    - Collect information from each chairperson about the success of their activity or event.
    - Put out a survey to residents to determine which events or attractions of the celebration they liked the most. Ask how they would like to see improvement for next year.
    - Post pictures and blurbs to social media to showcase the celebration.

Event Committee

☐ Oversee and help delegate tasks to completion for any events at the celebration

Touch-A-Truck Committee

☐ See "Checklist for Touch-A-Truck event within this toolkit.

☐ Select a location with high visibility (such as a parking lot, city park, city hall, or other public gathering place)

☐ Invite elected officials and local media to participate

☐ Host an Equipment "Roadeo" to test the skills necessary to operate a backhoe, garbage pickup, forklift, lawn tractor, etc.

☐ Highlight safety of the equipment

☐ Highlight cost-effective measures and unique features of the equipment

☐ Have representation from various departments to answer questions

Contest Committee

☐ Host student art contest with nearby/local schools with a construction theme, winner's art to be purchased or displayed for a year in City Hall

☐ Host baking contest with a construction theme, winner's baked good to be sold at next year's NPWW event, portion of proceeds donated to local food bank or charity

☐ Host a t-shirt design contest to encourage students to be creative while they learn about public works

Food Committee

☐ Obtain contracts and/or purchase orders for local restaurants, caterers, and/or food trucks for the celebration

Fun Committee

☐ Obtain lawn games

☐ Hire a local clown for face painting

☐ Obtain a bounce house for kids attending

☐ Obtain a slip-n-slide for kids attending

Promotions Committee

☐ Obtain media coverage and buy-in from local newspapers, radio stations, restaurants, food trucks, and local businesses

Silent Auction Committee

☐ Obtain donations for silent auction items from City staff, council, local restaurants and businesses, various sponsors, etc. with proceeds donated to local food bank or charity

Social Media Committee

☐ Follow APWA's NPWW Social Media Toolkit

☐ Remember to use #NPWW on social media posts, so other APWA accredited agencies can see all the fun your city is having

☐ Showcase a NPWW Proclamation at the celebration

☐ Invite residents to join the agency with "NPWW Spirit Week"

- o Monday – Monday is great for sharing department photos or for showcasing the breadth of your public works department.
- o Tuesday – (I <3 Public Works Because…) Tuesday's the time to let your staff and their hard work shine! Use our downloadable sign to highlight why your employees love public works.
- o Wednesday – (Whatcha Wearing?) Wednesday is all about what you wear when you do your job. Show off your waders, safety vest, or hard hat.
- o Thursday – (Throwback Thursday) Thursday's Spirit Day is a classic—Throwback Thursday! Public works departments have a long history, so scour your agency's archives and find something neat to share. Remember to use #NPWW and #TBT for this day.
- o Friday – We've got two Spirit Day activities to wrap up the week: Future Friday and Foundation Friday! For Future Friday we want to focus on what's coming next for your agency. Don't forget the #NPWW and #FutureFriday hashtags. Second, let's wrap up the week by giving back to the industry we love by supporting Foundation Friday! Make a donation to the APWA Foundation and share out using hashtag #FoundationFriday!

Volunteer Committee

☐ Google Form sign-up to be advertised

Quick Response (QR) Code Checklist

QR codes are utilized to store URLs and other information. The information in a QR code is accessed by utilizing the camera on a smartphone or tablet to scan the QR code and clicking the link that appears. QR codes can be used to share event details or RSVP pages for public meetings or clean-up days, feedback surveys after attending an event or visiting a facility, or digital sign-in forms for workshops or tours.

Plan the QR Code

☐ Define the purpose (e.g., link to website, contact info, form)

☐ Confirm what users should see or do after scanning

Create the QR Code

☐ Choose a QR code generator (free or paid)

☐ Input content (double-check for accuracy)

☐ Customize appearance if needed (colors, logo, frame)

☐ Select static or dynamic (choose dynamic if you want to track or edit later)

Test the QR Code

☐ Scan with multiple devices (iPhone, Android, tablet)

☐ Confirm the destination works and is mobile-friendly

☐ Print a test version if the QR code will be used in print

Use and Distribute

☐ Place the QR code where it is easy to see and scan (flyers, posters, social media)

☐ Include a brief call-to-action (e.g., "Scan for more info")

☐ Ensure proper size and clear contrast (especially in print)

Maintain and Monitor

☐ Test occasionally to ensure it still works

☐ Update destination if using a dynamic QR code

☐ Track usage (if analytics are enabled)

Mobile Application Checklist

A Public Works mobile application can be used to enhance community engagement, improve service delivery, and streamline communication between residents and the Public Works Department. This tool provides residents with easy access to essential services such as reporting infrastructure issues, viewing service schedules, receiving project and emergency updates, and accessing educational resources—all from their mobile devices.

Planning and Purpose

☐ Define the application's purpose (e.g., service requests, event information, public reporting, education)

☐ Identify target users (residents, contractors, internal staff)

☐ Determine which platforms to support (Android, iOS, or both)

Features to Include

☐ Report an issue (e.g., potholes, broken signs, trash pickup)

☐ Event and project notifications

☐ Service schedules (trash/recycling, street sweeping, etc.)

☐ Educational content

☐ Alerts and emergency updates

Development Process

☐ Work with internal information technology staff or vendor to design layout and user experience
  o Potential app hosts:
    ▪ Cvent (https://www.cvent.com/)
    ▪ InfoGrove (https://info-grove.com/)
    ▪ CityGov (https://citygovapp.com/)
    ▪ GoGov (https://www.gogovapps.com/local-government-mobile-app)

☐ Ensure integration with existing systems (e.g., work orders, Geographic Information System, Customer Relationship Management system)

☐ Include accessibility and multilingual options if possible

☐ Apply data security and privacy standards

Testing and Feedback

☐ Test app on various devices

☐ Check for ease of use and intuitive navigation

☐ Get feedback from internal staff and test users

☐ Fix bugs and refine before launch

Launch and Promotion

☐ Publish to app stores (e.g., Google Play, Apple App Store)

☐ Promote via website, newsletters, events, and signage

☐ Train staff on how to use and support the app

Ongoing Maintenance

☐ Monitor usage and feedback

☐ Release updates and new features as needed

☐ Address technical issues promptly

☐ Regularly update content and schedules

Geographic Information System (GIS) Interactive Maps and Databases Checklist

GIS databases provide interactive data sets for those individuals interested in learning more about the assets Public Works owns and maintains. These databases can be used to educate the public on what is happening under the road surface, what utilities may be within their property, and, in general, what is happening around their town. The below list includes recommended assets to include in these databases. We recommend creating a web page that includes various interactive maps or folding them into existing Public Works website pages.

Examples of GIS webpages: https://emap.rowlett.com/emap/, https://gisservices-dallasgis.opendata.arcgis.com/, https://www.uptexas.org/315/Interactive-Map

Municipal Assets

- [ ] *Parcels*
    - o Limits of private property
    - o Limits of public property
    - o Appraisal information
    - o Tax information

- [ ] *Railroads*

- [ ] *Streets*
    - o Separated out by road classification
    - o Jurisdiction (City, county, state, private)

- [ ] *Utilities*
    - o Stormwater/Drains
    - o Water
    - o Sanitary
    - o Trees

- [ ] *Floodplains*

- [ ] *City limits*

- [ ] *City projects*
    - o Different colors for different departments for easy reference

- [ ] *Sanitation*
    - o Pet waste stations
    - o Public restrooms
    - o Sanitation schedule

- [ ] *City districts*
    - o Neighborhoods
    - o Counties
    - o Zip codes
    - o Voting districts
    - o Zoning districts
    - o Council districts
    - o Future land use

- [ ] *City facilities*
    - o Parks
    - o Recreation centers
    - o Tennis courts
    - o Pickleball courts
    - o Basketball courts
    - o Baseball fields
    - o Soccer fields
    - o Cemetery plot maps
    - o Water hardness maps

Public Assets

- ☐ Benches
- ☐ Parking districts
- ☐ Shopping districts
- ☐ Offenders list
- ☐ Census tracts
- ☐ Future land use
- ☐ Special service areas

School Assets

- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Daycares
- ☐ Crosswalks
- ☐ ADA-compliant pathways
- ☐ School crossing guards

Public Transit Assets

- ☐ Bus routes
- ☐ Bus stops
- ☐ Bus stations
- ☐ Train routes
- ☐ Train stops
- ☐ Bike routes
- ☐ Bike racks

MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS

The tools in this section are designed to help staff with marketing and public relations, including creating marketing materials, writing press releases, planning or writing social media posts, and creating informational pamphlets. These resources supplement the Education and Outreach Tools in the previous section and work well together. For example, the previous set of tools includes planning information for a Touch-A-Truck event, and this section includes a guide on how to write a press release for an event.

Checklist for Marketing Materials

A well-structured marketing checklist can streamline your efforts to help you be more effective and efficient by ensuring important tasks aren't overlooked, clarify who is responsible for each task, and help keep your message consistent.

The Marketing Material Checklist is a handy guide to help staff create clear, engaging, and on-brand materials for events, programs, or services. It walks you through five key parts: crafting a catchy headline, writing a brief description, identifying the right audience, listing the benefits, and sharing the important details like how to join or learn more. Plus, it includes tips for adding visuals and contact info to keep things professional and easy to access.

Using this checklist helps make sure promotional materials:

- Speak directly to the right people
- Get the value across quickly and clearly
- Includes a "call to action"- a prompt or instruction that encourages your audience to take a specific, desired action.
- Keep a consistent look and feel across the department

It is designed to be quick and easy to use, whether you're making flyers, social media posts, email invites, or website blurbs—all while keeping the messaging sharp and on brand.

Use this checklist to clarify the intent of your marketing materials and identify important details.

Title/Header
[Catchy and specific. *Example: "Unleash Your Leadership Potential" or "Contractor Training: What You Need to Know."*]

What It Is
☐ One or two sentences clearly explaining the event, program, or service

Who It's For
☐ Briefly describe the ideal audience
  o Example: "Designed for city staff, local contractors, and public service leaders."

What You'll Gain/Why It Matters
(Bullet style is easy to scan.)

☐ Benefit 1: _____

☐ Benefit 2: _____

☐ Benefit 3: _____

What is the Specific Action You Want from Your Audience

☐ Call to action: _____

How to Join/Register/Learn More

☐ Date and Time: _____

☐ Location - in-person/virtual: _____

☐ Link or QR code to sign up: _____

☐ Contact info for questions: _____

Suggested Visuals/Branding Elements for Consideration

☐ Space for your logo

☐ Use your brand colors and font

☐ Insert a quote, image, or testimonial

Checklist for Creating a Press Release for Outreach Events

Local media outlets can be a great resource for promoting events, sharing accomplishments, and highlighting important projects. Press releases are the primary way to get information out to the media, but they should also be posted to your organization's website and/or social media for maximum exposure. Since some media outlets will copy press releases verbatim, press releases typically must follow the AP Stylebook and be written using the "inverse pyramid" writing style, which includes writing the most important information first and less important information as you go further down the page.

It is also recommended to use active voice and future tense for this type of release. The information needs to be simple and straightforward. It is important to highlight important information using an objective, informative tone. Below is a series of steps to help you understand how to properly draft and format a press release. However, consulting the AP Stylebook and other resources will be highly beneficial.

☐ To help identify your organization, include or create your letterhead, which may include organization name, department name, logo, name, contact information, etc., at the top. (See the example press release.)

☐ Include a release date. Typically, this is justified left at the top in bold and all caps FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE and includes the date below it. For example:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 1, 2025

Another option is to have an "embargoed" press release where the information is released to the press early for a later date. However, this is not typical for public outreach events because the information typically needs to go out as soon as all of the information is finalized.

☐ Add a headline for the press release that clearly and concisely summarizes the event. This is for the type of reader that only reads headlines, so it's important that key information is included. This should also be centered and bolded on the page. For example:

Touch-A-Truck Event to be Held May 3

☐ Add a dateline for the press release that indicates the location. The AP Stylebook provides more guidelines on how this should be done, but typically it is in all caps and includes the full name of the city, a comma, the two-digit state abbreviation, and a dash. (See next step for an example.)

☐ Then, write a short introductory paragraph that describes the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the event. This paragraph should have all of the most important information because some readers may only read the first paragraph and skip the rest. For example:

SPRINGFIELD, AZ - The City of Springfield Public Works Department will host a Touch-A-Truck event on May 3 at the department's facility at 123 Fake Street at 9 a.m. The event will feature several vehicles from Public Works, Fire, and Police. The event will also include food, games, face painting, and more.

☐ Include additional paragraphs to provide more information, in descending order of importance, following the "inverse pyramid" style described on the previous page. Tailor the release to the target audience of the media outlets you are contacting. Avoid including industry jargon and be sure to define the meaning of any acronyms before using the acronyms. For example:

The vehicles for the event will include two backhoes, three dump trucks, one end loader, two firetrucks, one ambulance, and multiple police vehicles. The food is provided free of charge and will include hot dogs, hamburgers, and vegetarian meat options as well as chips, water, juice, and soda.

The event will allow children and adults to get hands-on experience with these vehicles and learn about essential services and the people who provide them.

[Additional paragraphs as needed]

☐ The final sentence should tell the reader who to contact with questions or to get more details. For example:

For more information on the event and to RSVP, visit www.springfieldaz.gov/touchatruck or call Fake Name at 555-555-555.

☐ Typically, the bottom of the press release would also include contact information. However, some exceptions are when the information is already included in the letterhead or if your organization prefers to include the contact information at the top between the letterhead and the FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE section. For example:

Contact:
Fake Name
Event Coordinator
City of Springfield, Arizona
Phone: 555-555-5555
Email: fakename@springfieldaz.gov

☐ Finally, end the press release using ###, centered at the bottom. Some organizations may prefer other endings such as XXX or -30-, but ### is standard. For example:

<div align="center">###</div>

The next page shows these examples as a single press release for easier review.
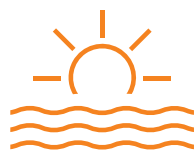
City of Springfield, Arizona

Touch-A-Truck Event to be Held May 3

SPRINGFIELD, AZ - The City of Springfield Public Works Department will host a Touch-A-Truck event on May 3 at the department's facility at 123 Fake Street at 9 a.m. The event will feature several vehicles from Public Works, Fire, and Police. The event will also include food, games, face painting, and more.

The vehicles for the event will include two backhoes, three dump trucks, one end loader, two firetrucks, one ambulance, and multiple police vehicles. The food is provided free of charge and will include hot dogs, hamburgers, and vegetarian meat options as well as chips, water, juice, and soda.

The event will allow children and adults to get hands-on experience with these vehicles and learn about essential services and the people who provide them.

[Additional paragraphs as needed]

For more information on the event and to RSVP, visit www.springfieldaz.gov/touchatruck or call Fake Name at 555-555-555.

Contact:
Fake Name
Event Coordinator
City of Springfield, Arizona
Phone: 555-555-5555
Email: fakename@springfieldaz.gov

###

Social Media Post and Post Planning Checklists

To improve consistency and clarity in public-facing communications, a Social Media Checklist and Post Planning Guide serve to help new and experienced staff create compelling and engaging social media posts. These tools aid in creating accurate, accessible, and audience-appropriate posts across platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn.

The Checklist guides users through key steps: defining the purpose, verifying information, tailoring content to the platform, applying accessibility standards, and coordinating with other departments. The Guide provides a reusable format to capture essential post details such as messaging, visuals, and scheduling.

Public Works Social Media Post Checklist
Use this checklist as a guide to help you create clear, compelling social media posts.

Define the Purpose

☐ Goal identified:
  ☐ Inform ☐ Engage ☐ Alert ☐ Promote ☐ Celebrate ☐ Recruit ☐ Other: _____

☐ Audience identified: _____

☐ Tied to campaign/project? ☐ Yes ☐ No

  If yes: _____

Craft Clear and Accurate Messaging

☐ Used plain, accessible language

☐ Included Who/What/When/Where/Why/How

☐ Verified facts with subject matter expert

☐ Included contact info or call to action

Use Compelling Visuals

☐ Image/graphic/video attached

☐ Visual is relevant, clear, and high quality

☐ Alternative text or image description added

☐ Branding is visible and appropriate

Consistency and Accessibility

☐ Consistent tone, format, and hashtags

☐ Alternative text or captions added

☐ Mobile-friendly layout

☐ Spell check and link check completed

Tailor to the Platform

Facebook

☐ Hook or headline included

☐ Clear and brief paragraph(s)

☐ Link or "call to action" visible early

☐ Comment settings checked

Instagram

☐ Visual is sized correctly

☐ Caption is concise and engaging

☐ Hashtags added

☐ Location and "call to action" added

Coordinate Internally

☐ Checked for conflicts with other departments

☐ Message aligns with city goals

Schedule and Monitor

☐ Post released/scheduled for future release

☐ Monitoring plan in place for questions/comments

☐ Engagement plan confirmed (who will respond)

Track Results

☐ Analytics checked after 24–48 hours

☐ Engagement recorded (likes, shares, comments)

☐ Lessons logged for future improvement

Final Check Before Posting

☐ Is this useful to the community?

☐ Does it reflect positively on the department?

☐ Would I share this post as a resident?

X (Twitter)

☐ Message under 280 characters or thread started

☐ Hashtags and tags added

☐ Link to more info included

LinkedIn

☐ Professional tone and format

☐ Focused on milestones, jobs, or team wins

☐ Tags and links added

Social Media Post Planning Guide
Use this guide to streamline the post creation, review, and approval process. It should be especially useful for agencies that don't have established Social Media policies.

Date of Post: _____

Author/Account Manager: _____

Platform(s): ☐ Facebook ☐ Instagram ☐ X/Twitter ☐ LinkedIn ☐ Other: _____

Purpose, Audience, and Message

☐ Post Goal: _____

☐ Target Audience: _____

☐ Tied to Event/Campaign: _____

☐ Draft Caption/Message: _____

Key Details to Include

☐ Who: _____

☐ What: _____

☐ When: _____

☐ Where: _____

☐ Why/How: _____

☐ Contact/Call to Action: _____

Visual Content

☐ Image ☐ Video ☐ Graphic

☐ Filename/Link: _____

☐ Alternative Text: _____

☐ Caption/Credit: _____

Internal Notes

☐ Subject Matter Expert Contact: _____

☐ Verified By: _____

☐ Scheduled Time: _____

☐ Comments Enabled? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Monitoring Plan: _____

Sample Social Media Posts for Outreach Events (Generated by ChatGPT)

🚧 Save the Date! 🚧

We're opening the doors and bringing the big trucks! Join us for our Public Works Community Outreach Event — a behind-the-scenes look at the people, equipment, and services that keep our city running smoothly.

📅 [Insert Date]

📍 [Insert Location]

🕐 [Insert Time]

Fun, free, and family-friendly!

#PublicWorksProud #CommunityFirst #BehindTheScenesPW

_____

🌞 People. Purpose. Presence. 🌞

Public Works is more than pipes and pavement—it's about the people who serve with purpose and show up every day to keep our community moving.

Join us for a behind-the-scenes look at the work we do and the people who do it.

📅 [Insert Date]

📍 [Insert Location]

🕐 [Insert Time]

#PublicWorksWeek2025 #PeoplePurposePresence #CityNameStrong

_____

💧 Meet the people behind the purpose!

Join us at the Public Works Community Outreach Event and connect with the folks who keep our streets clear, water clean, and city safe.

✔️ Equipment demos

✔️ Question and answer session with experts

✔️ Fun for the whole family

📅 [Insert Date]

📍 [Insert Location]

🕐 [Insert Time]

#PeoplePurposePresence #CityInMotion #CityNamesPublicWorks

Checklist for Social Media Presence

Social media is a valuable tool for public works departments to enhance civic engagement, communicate information effectively, and build a positive community image. With technology today we have many ways to get information out to the public in a quick manner, with many alerts that come right to your cell phone.

Social media platforms

☐ LinkedIn

☐ TikTok

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

☐ Twitter/X

☐ BlueSky

Monthly newsletters

☐ Project updates

☐ City council updates

☐ City council agendas and minutes

☐ Seasonal events

☐ Surveys/questionnaires

Department-Specific Monthly Newsletters

Parks and Recreation

☐ Seasonal programming

- o Spring
  - Sports tournaments
  - "Seed to Plant" growing workshop
- o Summer
  - Fishing tournaments
  - Field Day at the Park
  - "Seed to Plant" growing workshop
- o Fall
  - Sports tournaments
  - "Seed to Plant" growing workshop
- o Winter
  - Snow related competitions: biggest snowball, biggest snowman, etc.
  - "Seed to Plant" growing workshop

☐ Park openings/closures/ maintenance

☐ Alert citizens on all social media platforms of park openings, closures, and maintenance so they can plan and stay up to date with work being performed. By doing this, it will help with all the calls that come in on a daily basis for updates to projects.
  o Post current and future projects to the community. Get them involved and excited
  o Put out polls and suggestions so that they can feel a sense of ownership to what is being done

☐ "Day in the life" videos of parks staff (field staff, superintendent, office staff, etc.)
  o Promote your team and give the public a look into what is actually being done on a day to day
  o Allows the public to put a face with a name
  o Shows what goes into making the parks beautiful

Engineering

☐ Current and Future Projects
  o Post current and future projects so that everyone can stay up to date and know what is going on in the community.
  o Allows for people to plan ahead if they know a road or certain route is going to be closed or under construction for an amount of time.
  o Put out polls and suggestions so that they can feel a sense of ownership to what is being done.
  o Post updates on current projects. Ahead of schedule or delays due to weather etc.
☐ "Day in the life" videos of engineering staff (city engineer, engineers, administration, etc.)
  o Promote your team and give the public a look into what is actually being done on a day-to –day basis.
  o Allows the public to "put a face to a name."

Public Works

☐ Current and Future Projects
  o Post current and future projects so that everyone can stay up to date and know what is going on in the community.
  o Allows for people to plan ahead if they know a road or certain route is going to be closed or under construction for an amount of time.
  o Put out polls and suggestions so that they can feel a sense of ownership to what is being done.
  o Post updates on current projects. Ahead of schedule or delays due to weather etc.

☐ "Day in the life" videos of field staff (superintendent, streets crew, utility crew, etc.)

  o Promote your team and give the public a look into what is actually being done on a day-to –day basis.
  o Allows the public to "put a face to a name."

Informational Pamphlet Checklist

This guide walks you through the basics of creating an effective informational pamphlet—whether it's a handout for a community event, a flyer for City Hall, or a takeaway for a school tour.

From defining your audience to organizing content and choosing visuals, this guide helps you cover all the essentials without feeling overwhelmed. It is designed to help you create materials that are easy to read, visually appealing, and focused on what people really want to know. Use it as a quality check before printing or sharing—because a well-crafted pamphlet can go a long way in helping the public understand and appreciate the work we do.

Informational Pamphlet Guide

Use this guide as a planning resource for creating an informational pamphlet.

Headline - Big and Bold
(e.g., Public Works: Building the Foundation of Our City, Know Your Role - Contractor Licensing Basics)

Panel 1 – Introduction
☐ Short paragraph or mission statement *(i.e., What is this about? Why should I care?)*

_____

_____

_____

Panel 2 – Key Information/Statistics/Basics (Use sections or bold headers)

☐ [Who we serve]

☐ [What we do]

☐ [Top 3 things to know]

☐ [Common FAQs]

Panel 3 – How to Take Action (Information to Include)

☐ [Call to action: "Join us," "Sign up today," "Know your rights"]

☐ [Contact info]

☐ [Website or QR code]

☐ [Social media handles]

BONUS TIP: Include a testimonial or quote! *(e.g., "I never realized how many services Public Works provides until I saw this!" – Resident, Rapid City)*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This tool includes a list of additional helpful tools and resources found in the course of our research. These include resources from the American Public Works Association (APWA), Institute for Local Government, Institute for Water Resources, International City/County Management Association, Practical Engineering, U.S. Department of Transportation, and University of Kansas.

American Public Works Association

Tools to Enhance the Employee Experience

Tools to enhance the employee experience help foster engagement, productivity, and retention by supporting key areas such as communication, recognition, wellness, and development. Platforms like Slack and Zoom streamline collaboration, while tools such as Bonusly and Culture Amp boost recognition and engagement. Learning platforms like LinkedIn Learning and performance tools like Lattice support growth, and wellness apps like Headspace promote mental well-being. HR systems like BambooHR simplify onboarding and self-service, while survey tools like Qualtrics gather valuable employee feedback. Together, these tools create a more connected, supported, and satisfied workforce.

Public Works in Public Service!

Public Works in Public Service is more than a career—it is a calling to make a lasting impact. With competitive wages, healthcare, retirement plans, paid education, and advancement opportunities, public works offers rewarding and stable employment. Professionals in this field are the backbone of community well-being, responding to emergencies, improving public health and safety, and maintaining critical infrastructure. Whether in transportation, engineering, water management, or emergency services, public works careers provide personal fulfillment, on-the-job training, and the chance to contribute meaningfully to society. It's purposeful work that shapes communities and enhances everyday life. Link: https://www.apwa.org/wp-content/uploads/Public-Works-in-Public-Service-v2.pdf

What is Public Works?

Public works is the backbone of every community—an essential network of infrastructure, policies, management practices, and dedicated professionals that sustains the health, safety, and quality of life for all citizens. From clean water systems and reliable transportation to emergency response and public space maintenance, public works is present in every corner of our daily lives. The APWA champions this vital profession, uniting over 32,000 members across North America from both public and private sectors. These professionals—ranging from city engineers and fleet managers to consultants and contractors—plan, build, maintain, and restore critical services and infrastructure that communities depend on. Link: https://www.apwa.org/wp-content/uploads/Public-Works-Trifold-March-2025.pdf

Institute for Local Government

Beyond the Usuals: Ideas to Encourage Broader Public Engagement in Community Decision Making

The tool encourages public agencies to set specific goals for reaching underrepresented communities, maintain ongoing communication, express appreciation to participants, and continuously evaluate and improve engagement efforts. Ultimately, "Beyond the Usuals" empowers local governments to foster inclusive, informed, and impactful public participation—ensuring that decision-making reflects the full diversity and needs of the community. Link: https://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/beyond_the_usuals_8_15.pdf

Planning Public Engagement: Key Questions for Local Officials
Effective public engagement is a cornerstone of good governance, enhancing decision-making, strengthening community trust, and encouraging civic participation. When local agencies engage the public successfully, they benefit from residents' input, values, and ideas, while also building support for decisions and reinforcing confidence in government. However, to achieve these outcomes, thoughtful planning is essential. A successful public engagement strategy requires deliberate consideration of several key questions. By asking the right questions and planning carefully, local officials can foster more meaningful, inclusive, and effective public engagement—creating better outcomes for their communities. Link: https://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ilg_key_public_engagement_questions_for_local_officials_march_2015.pdf?1497552335

Principles of Local Government Public Engagement
The Institute for Local Government's Public Engagement Principles provide a practical and ethical framework to help local agencies—such as cities, counties, and school districts—design and implement effective public engagement processes. Grounded in inclusivity, transparency, and authenticity, these ten principles serve as benchmarks for trusted and high-quality civic participation. They emphasize collaborative planning, broad and informed participation, accessibility, and meaningful use of public input. By following these principles, local officials can build public trust, ensure community voices are genuinely considered in decision-making, and continuously improve engagement efforts through evaluation and feedback. Link: https://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/principles_of_public_engagement_jan_2015.pdf

Institute for Water Resources
Best Practices for Virtual Engagement
This 87-page document from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a specific focus on engaging with the public in virtual spaces as the world has shifted to having more virtual meetings and engagement. Virtual engagement can provide opportunities for public engagement for those who otherwise may not be able to attend a public meeting or engage with agencies in person. The subjects covered by this document include foundations of successful engagement; criteria for determining what type of engagement is helpful for specific situations; best practices for planning virtual engagements; considerations for socially vulnerable populations; and collaborative technology tools. Link: https://planning.erdc.dren.mil/toolbox/library/Misc/2023-R-01_BestPracticesforVirtualEngagement.pdf

International City/County Management Association
Seven-Step Guide to Community Engagement
This helpful article from ICMA presents effective community engagement as a seven-step process that starts with identifying the topic and team and ends with identifying evaluation criteria. This would especially be helpful for a community that needs a baseline understanding of community engagement. According to the guide, it includes "the seven basic steps for county departments and/or teams to take when working to connect, communicate and collaborate with citizens in efforts to enhance county planning and decision making." Link:
https://icma.org/sites/default/files/Community%20Engagement%20Guide.pdf

Practical Engineering
Practical Engineering is a YouTube channel with educational videos on a multitude of topics that are relevant to public works, hosted by civil engineer Grady Hillhouse. While not comprehensive, this list provides a variety of videos that public works agencies could use. We recommend reaching out to the channel owner to use his content. Link: https://practical.engineering/

Streets
- The World's Most Recycled Material https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKFaC5RYbEM
- How Do Potholes Work? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRuarpWsKHY
- What is Concrete? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOHURuAf5iY
- Why Concrete Needs Reinforcement https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZINeaDjisY
- What's that Infrastructure? (Ep. 1 - Transportation Infrastructure) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oA2-80lY5rE
- What's that Infrastructure? (Ep. 2 - More Transportation Infrastructure) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-uvoaTQH5U

Sanitary Sewer
- How Sewers Work (feat. Fake Poop) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpHOkHxpTvQ
- How Do We Pump Sewage? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHAsuPVBwYM
- What's That Infrastructure? (Ep. 4 - Subsurface Utilities) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-ufxlcjMyk

Stormwater
- Where Does Stormwater Go? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdcXmerZWDc
- What's That Infrastructure? (Ep. 4 - Subsurface Utilities) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-ufxlcjMyk
- What Is a Culvert? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15XJDmawbYU
- The 100 Year Flood Is Not What You Think It Is (Maybe) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EACkiMRT0pc
- Why Engineers Invent Floods https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VN81jvRD_rU

Water
- How Do Spillways Work? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjapgTd-QUg
- How Water Towers Work https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZwfcMSDBHs

US Department of Transportation
Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-making
The US Department of Transportation released this document in October 2022 to assist agencies with public engagement for transportation projects, especially as it relates to decision-making process and project lifecycle. It provides information for all modes of transportation and is meant for people working in various capacities. It includes strategies to effectively engage broad groups of community members and is adaptable and scalable. Link: https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2022-10/Promising%20Practices%20for%20Meaningful%20Public%20Involvement%20in%20Transportation%20Decision-making.pdf

University of Kansas
Community Tool Box
The Community Tool Box from University of Kansas is a comprehensive resource for community-building skills that includes information about community assessment, promoting interest and participation, leadership and management, analyzing community problems, social marketing, and other topics that would be helpful for any community looking to increase public engagement. Link: https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents

Suggested Educational Activities by Topic

This section is your go-to menu of ideas to help bring Public Works to life for your audience. Whether you are planning a hands-on workshop, a school visit, or a booth at a community event, these topic-based suggestions offer creative, approachable ways to explain what we do. Each category—like Streets and Traffic, Water Services, Solid Waste and Recycling, and more—includes activity ideas that can be tailored to different age groups and learning styles. Think stormwater demonstrations, traffic signal boards, or interactive recycling games.

These are not one-size-fits-all—they're jumping-off points to help you create fun, memorable experiences that connect people to the essential services we provide every day. Feel free to adapt the activities based on your audience, available time, team size, or local priorities. The goal is to make Public Works relatable, engaging, and easy to understand—no matter who you are talking to.

Overview of Public Works Department
- Tour of Public Works HQ
- Meet key staff
- Overview of departments: Streets, Water, Engineering, Solid Waste, Traffic, etc.
- Icebreaker activity: "What do you think Public Works does?"
- Distribute program binders/swag

Streets and Traffic Operations
- Snow and ice removal prep demonstration
- Pothole patching and pavement condition 101
- Signal timing and traffic flow
- Interactive: Try a snowplow simulator or street sweeper demonstration
- Question and answer session with Streets Division

Water, Sewer and Stormwater Services
- Tour of water treatment facility, pump station, wastewater treatment facility, etc.
- Water testing demonstration
- Storm drain and flood management overview
- How residents can prevent clogs/backups

Solid Waste and Recycling
- Tour of Landfill, Recycling Center, or Transfer Station
- Interactive: Recycling sorting activity
- Discussion on landfill life expectancy and community impact
- Question and answer session with Solid Waste Division

Engineering and Capital Projects
- Learn how road, sidewalk, and utility projects are planned
- Intro to GIS mapping and project visualization tools
- Guest speaker: City Engineer
- Activity: Review a sample capital improvement plan

Emergency Response and Winter Prep
- Discuss Public Works' role in emergencies: snowstorms, floods, disasters
- Winter readiness: how residents and crews prepare
- Ride-along photos, behind-the-scenes stories
- Final session prep: Ask participants to share what they've learned

Graduation and Celebration
- Certificates, refreshments, photo wall
- Invite Mayor/City Council member for brief remarks
- Survey: What worked? What to improve?
- Alumni sign-up and public recognition (social media shout-out, newsletter, etc.)

Potential Supporting Documents
- Participant contact form
- Photo release
- Attendance tracker
- Evaluation survey
- Session-specific handouts/slides
- Suggested reading or city resources

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT VISUAL TOOLKIT

Mobile Applications

Mobile apps and mobile-optimized versions of city websites are highly recommended tools for effective public outreach, as they allow residents to access important information and services on the go. These platforms can house features such as project updates, service request portals, utility bill payments, GIS maps, and educational content—all in one centralized, easy-to-navigate interface. By offering a mobile app or responsive website, agencies meet residents where they are: on their smartphones. This convenience encourages greater engagement, faster reporting of service issues, and increased transparency. Mobile tools can also push notifications about construction alerts, water outages, or public meetings, keeping the community informed in real time. Cities that prioritize mobile access signal a commitment to accessibility and modern communication, which ultimately strengthens public trust and streamlines civic participation.

This type of engagement works well for all sized cities.

| Engagement for the public | Educational effectiveness | Cost | Potential funding options | Internal staff effort | Overall perception to the public |
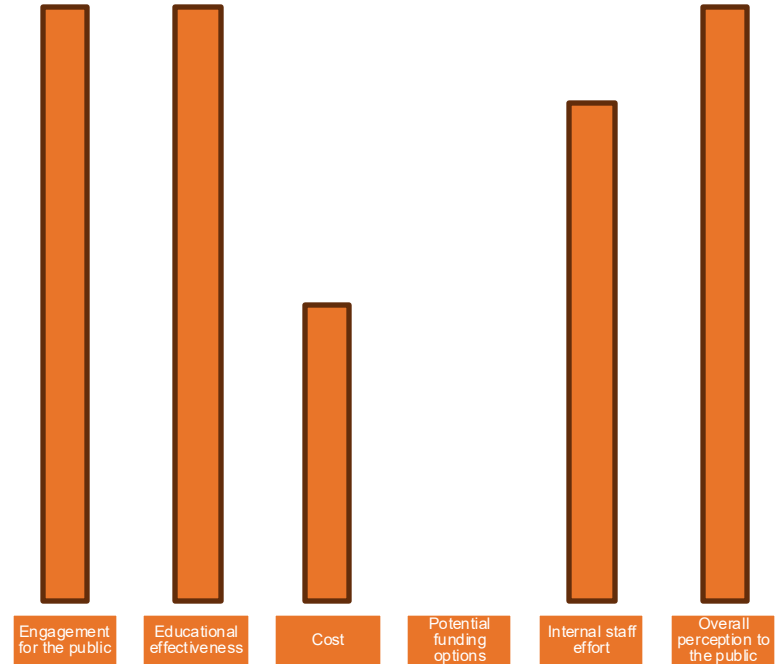
Mobile Applications Checklist

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┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│  Define the App's   │ ──►  │     Determine       │ ──►  │   Develop the App   │
│   Purpose and       │      │ Features to Include │      │                     │
│ Identify Target     │      │                     │      │                     │
│     Users           │      │                     │      │                     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
                                                                     │
                                                                     ▼
┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│     Ongoing         │ ◄──  │    Launch and       │ ◄──  │   Test and Make     │
│   Maintenance       │      │  Promote the App    │      │   Improvements      │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
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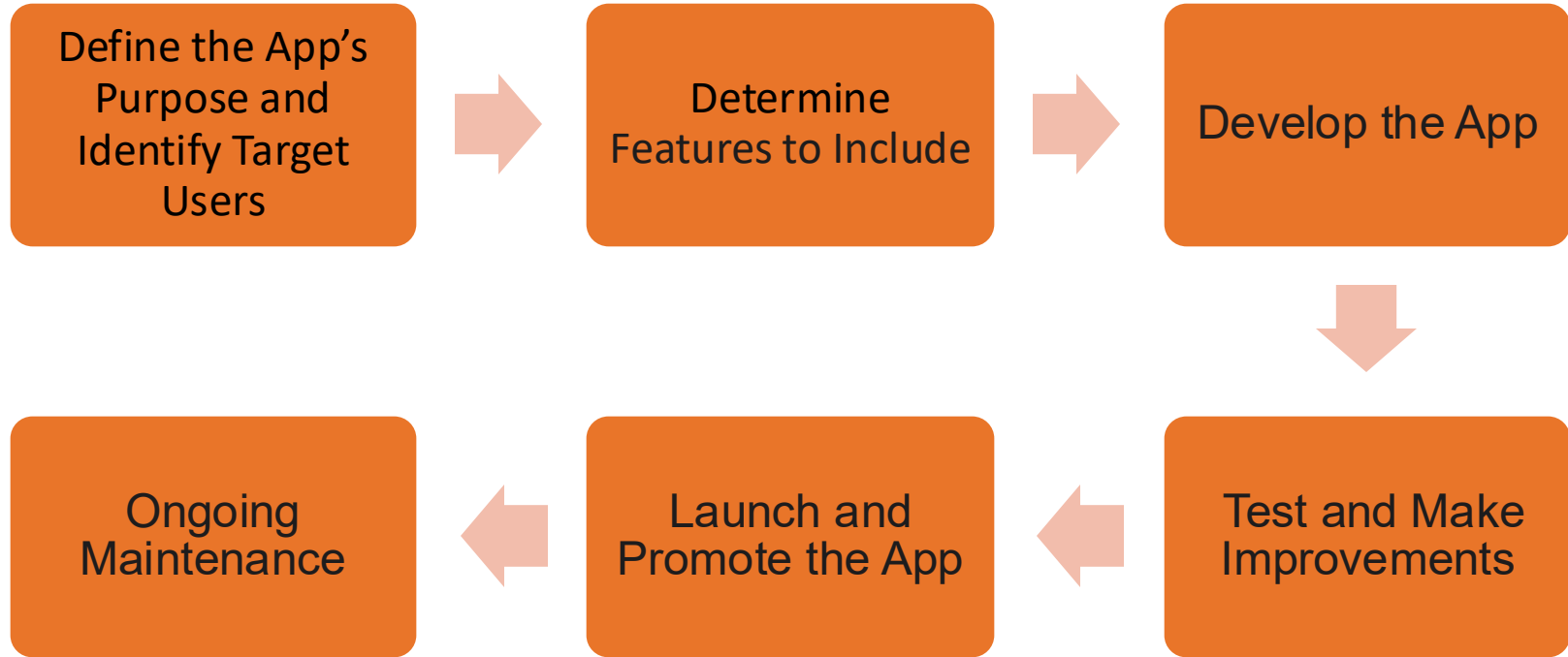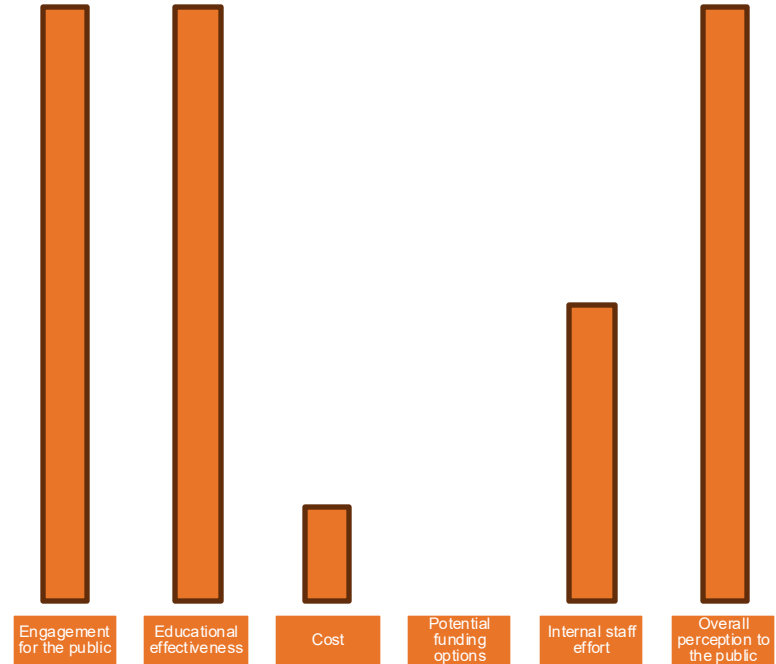
QR codes

QR codes are a simple yet powerful tool recommended for enhancing public outreach, especially when paired with physical infrastructure or printed materials. By placing QR codes on utility covers, equipment, signage, or informational flyers, agencies can instantly connect residents to videos, tutorials, maps, or service updates with a quick scan from a smartphone. For example, a QR code inside a water meter lid can link to a video explaining how to shut off the water supply, or a code on a trash cart can direct users to a "Where does my trash go?" explainer. This approach supports just-in-time learning, allowing the public to access relevant, digestible information exactly when and where they need it. QR codes are low-cost, easy to implement, and ideal for promoting digital engagement in both urban and small city settings. Their flexibility and accessibility make them an increasingly popular outreach tool for tech-forward and resource-conscious public agencies alike.

This type of engagement works well for all sized cities.

| Engagement for the public | Educational effectiveness | Cost | Potential funding options | Internal staff effort | Overall perception to the public |

QR Codes Checklist

Plan the QR Code → Create the QR Code → Test the QR Code

Test the QR Code ↓

Use and Distribute → Maintain and Monitor
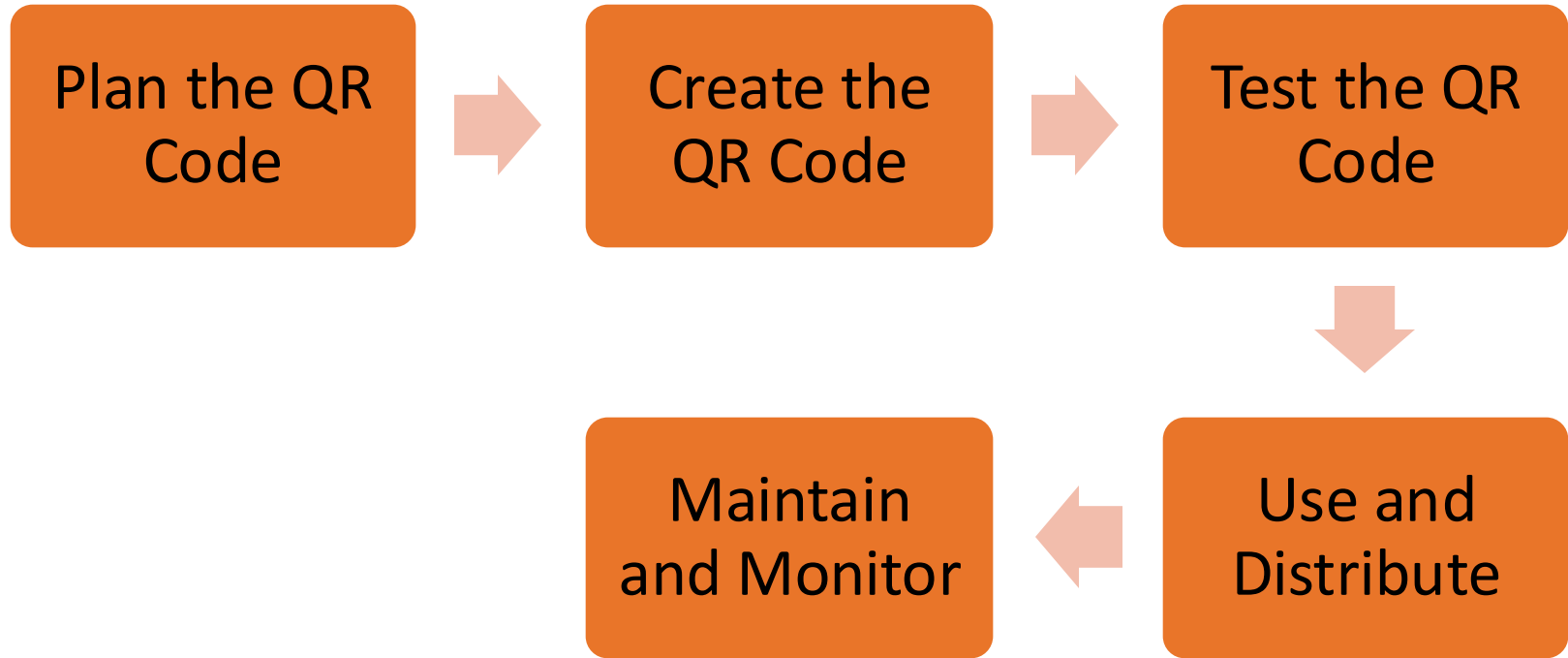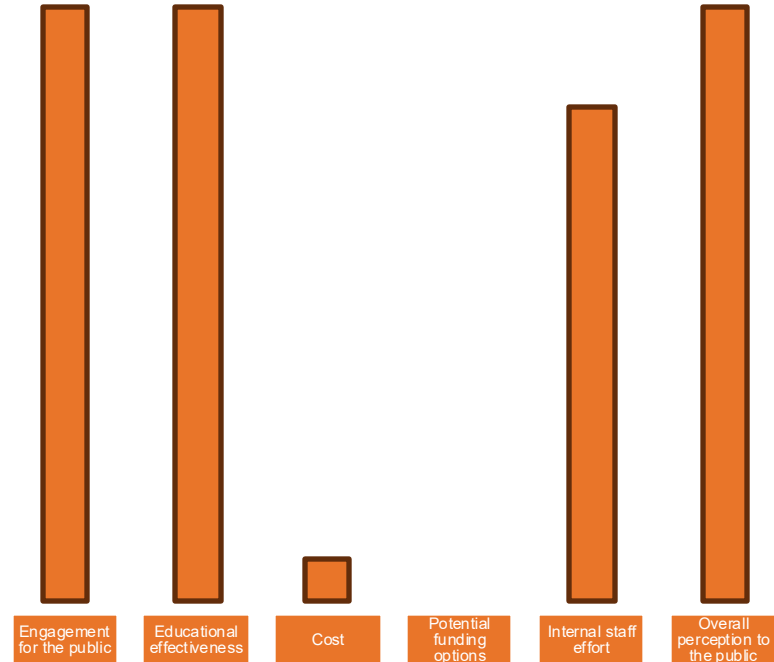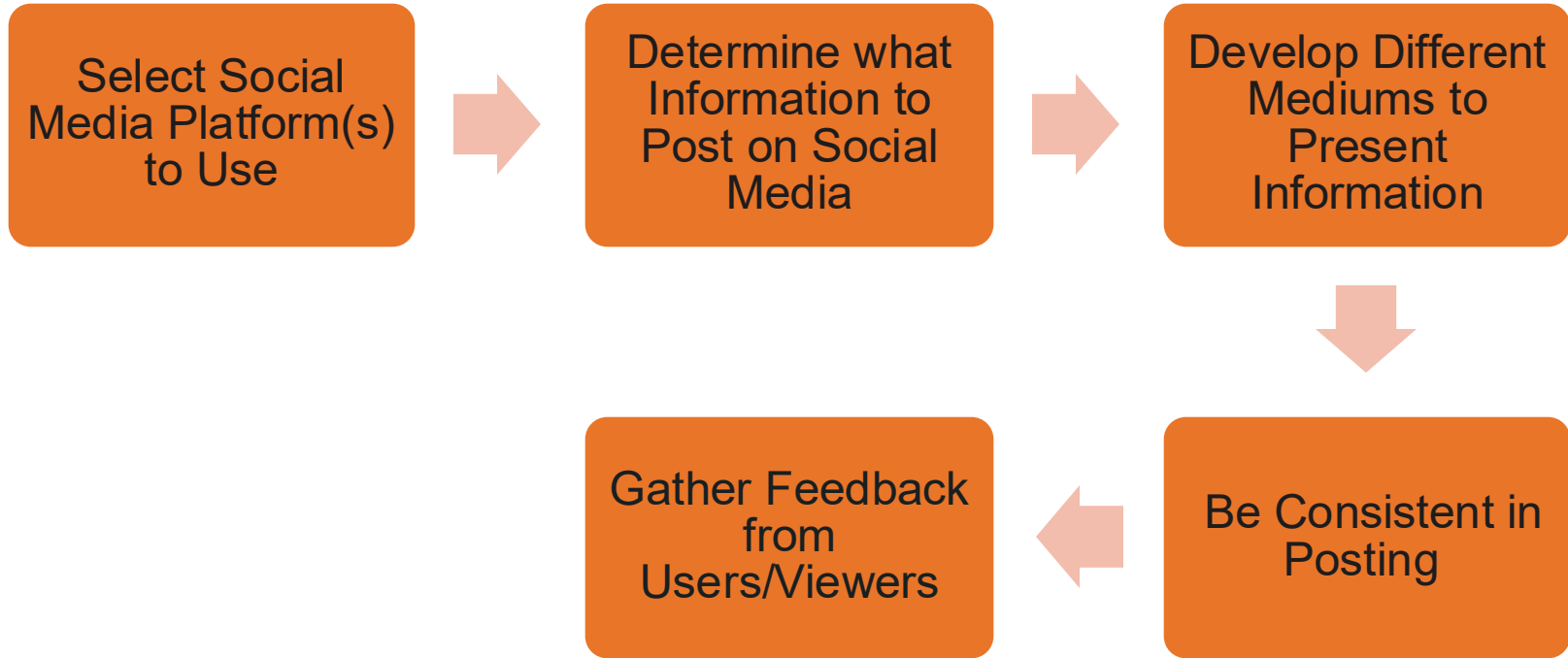
Social Media Presence

A strong social media presence is widely recommended as an essential tool for effective public outreach. Social platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, and Nextdoor allow public agencies to distribute timely information, educate the community, and build trust through consistent, transparent communication. These tools offer low-cost, high-impact engagement by reaching residents where they already spend time—on their phones and devices. Posts can highlight ongoing projects, showcase behind-the-scenes operations, share educational videos or infographics, and respond directly to questions or concerns. When used strategically, social media humanizes public works, builds visibility, and invites the community to participate in civic life. It's especially powerful when paired with visuals, storytelling, and interactive content like polls or live videos. For small cities and large agencies alike, social media is no longer optional—it's a critical component of modern public engagement.

This type of engagement works well for all sized cities.

Bar chart categories: Engagement for the public | Educational effectiveness | Cost | Potential funding options | Internal staff effort | Overall perception to the public

Social Media Presence Checklist

```
Select Social Media Platform(s) to Use  →  Determine what Information to Post on Social Media  →  Develop Different Mediums to Present Information
                                                                                                          ↓
Gather Feedback from Users/Viewers  ←  Be Consistent in Posting
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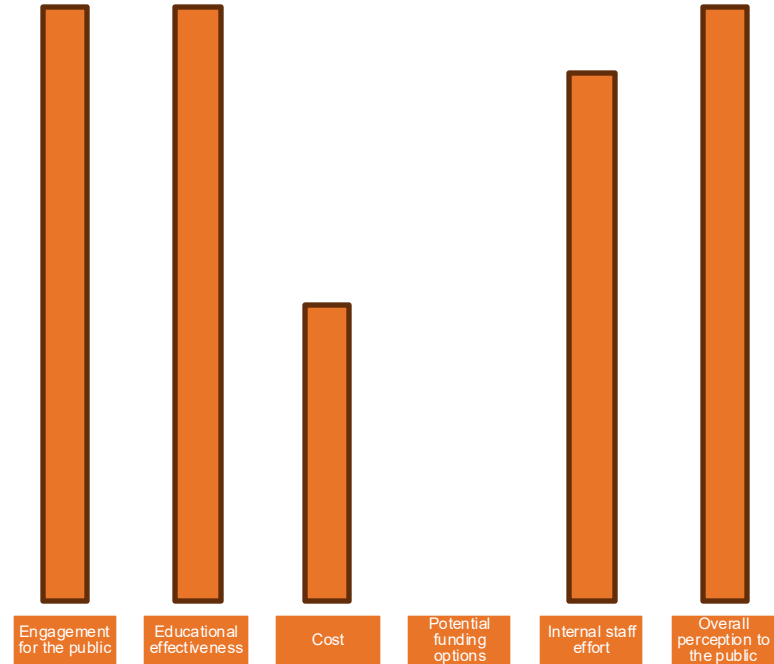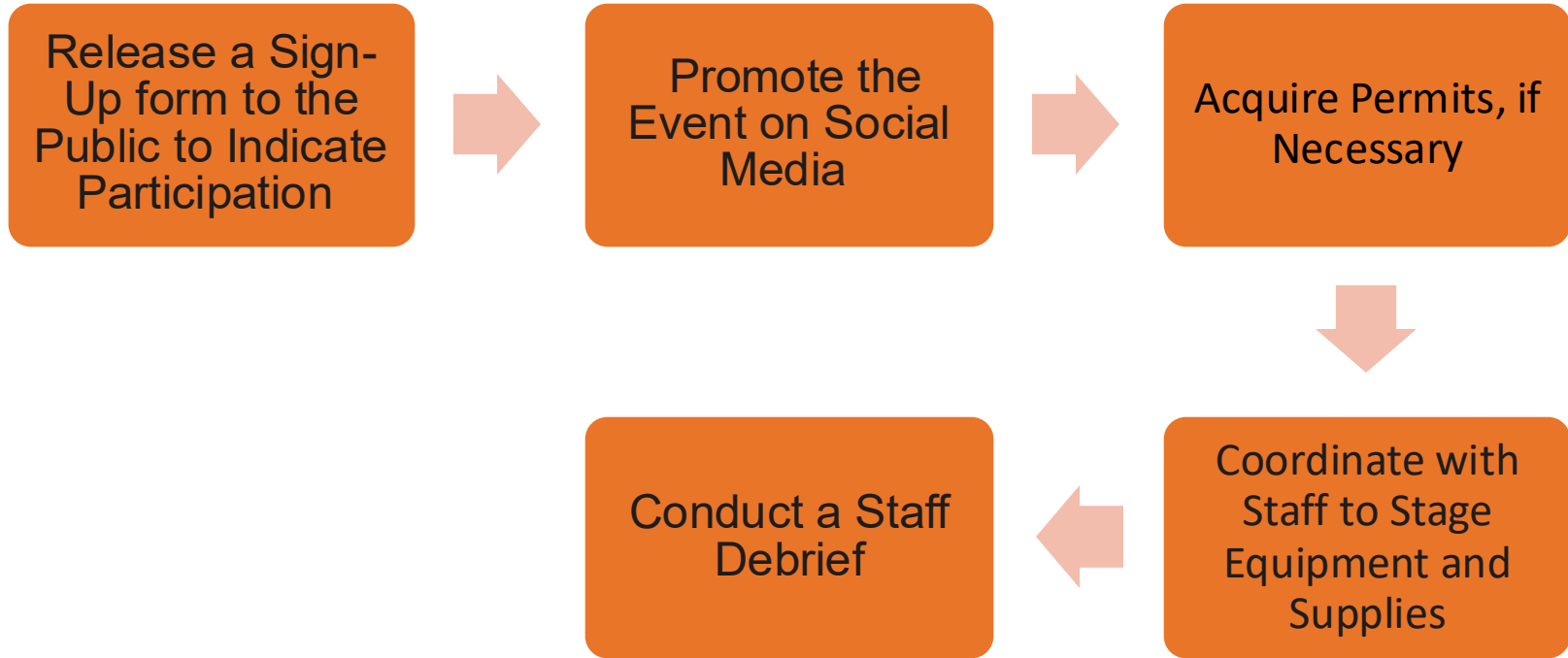
Touch-A-Truck events

Touch-A-Truck events are widely recommended as one of the most effective and engaging forms of community outreach in the public works sector. These events allow children and families to interact with the vehicles and equipment that power essential city services—such as dump trucks, sewer vacs, fire engines, and utility vehicles—creating a memorable, hands-on experience that sparks curiosity and appreciation. By allowing the public to climb inside vehicles, meet equipment operators, and ask questions, agencies humanize their workforce and showcase the complexity and value of their operations in a fun, approachable way. Touch-a-Truck events also serve as a gateway to broader education, allowing agencies to distribute safety tips, explain service processes, and promote local careers in public works. Their visual and interactive nature makes them highly shareable on social media, extending their reach even beyond the attendees. These events foster positive perception, especially among younger generations, making them an excellent investment in both public relations and long-term civic engagement. These types of events work well for all sized cities.
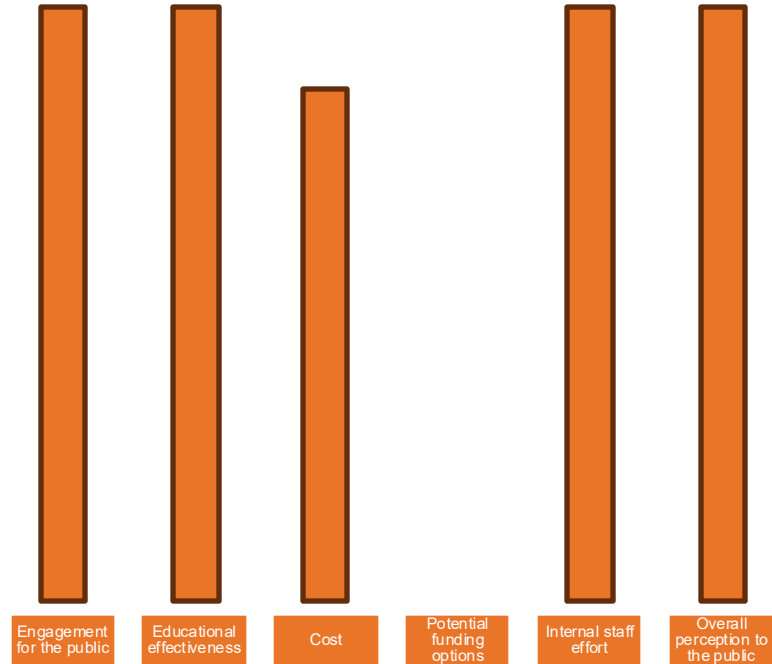
Touch-A-Truck Checklist

Release a Sign-Up form to the Public to Indicate Participation → Promote the Event on Social Media → Acquire Permits, if Necessary

↓

Conduct a Staff Debrief ← Coordinate with Staff to Stage Equipment and Supplies
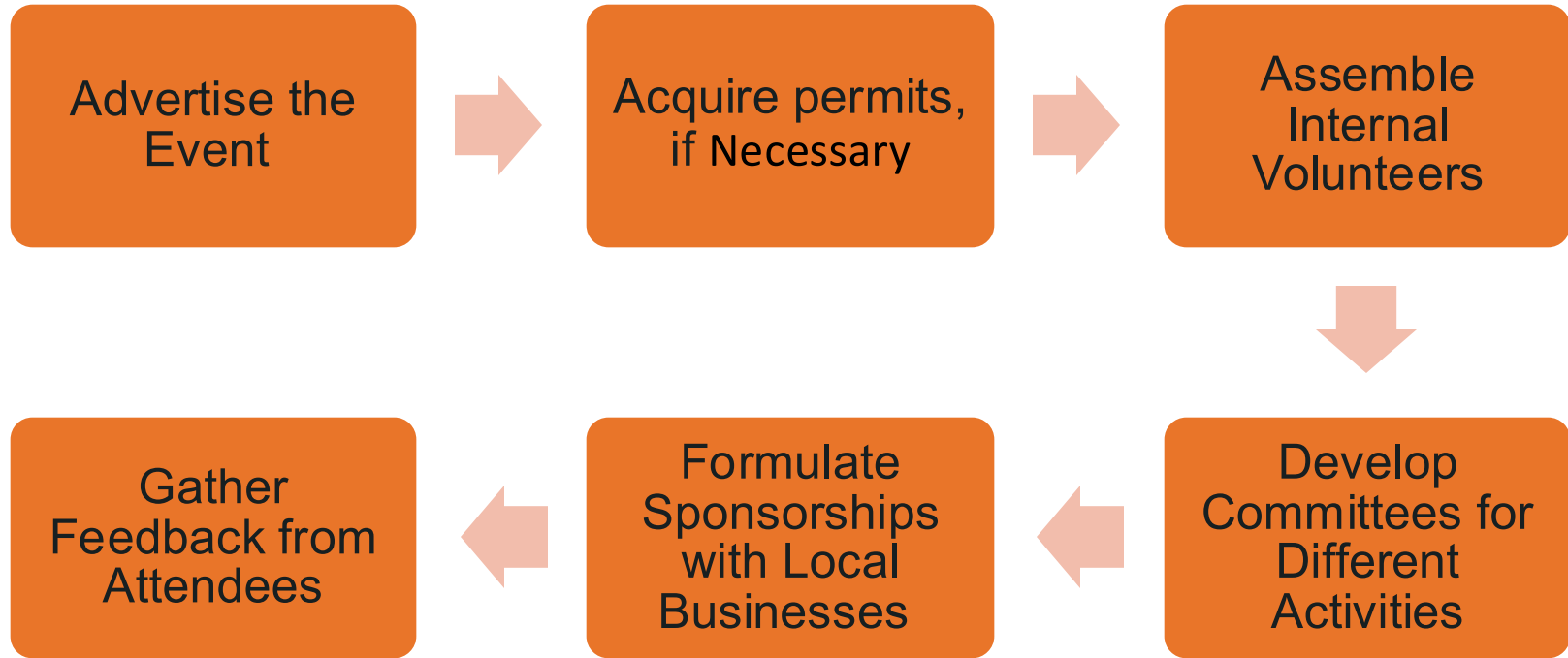
National Public Works Week (NPWW) Events

Hosting events during National Public Works Week (NPWW) is a highly recommended outreach strategy for public agencies seeking to boost visibility, educate residents, and celebrate the essential services public works provides. Recognized nationally and supported by the American Public Works Association (APWA), NPWW offers a built-in opportunity to engage the community through interactive, family-friendly events like Touch-a-Truck, facility tours, public works "field days," and art or essay contests. These events help demystify the work of city crews and infrastructure teams by allowing residents—especially children—to see equipment up close, meet staff, and learn about how things like water, sanitation, and roads are maintained. NPWW also fosters internal morale by giving staff a platform to showcase their work and be recognized publicly. Whether a small breakfast for employees or a large-scale community celebration, NPWW events provide a positive, visible, and educational platform to deepen public appreciation and understanding of local infrastructure systems.

These types of events work well for all sized cities.

| Engagement for the public | Educational effectiveness | Cost | Potential funding options | Internal staff effort | Overall perception to the public |

National Public Works Week (NPWW) Event Checklist

Advertise the Event → Acquire permits, if Necessary → Assemble Internal Volunteers → Develop Committees for Different Activities → Formulate Sponsorships with Local Businesses → Gather Feedback from Attendees
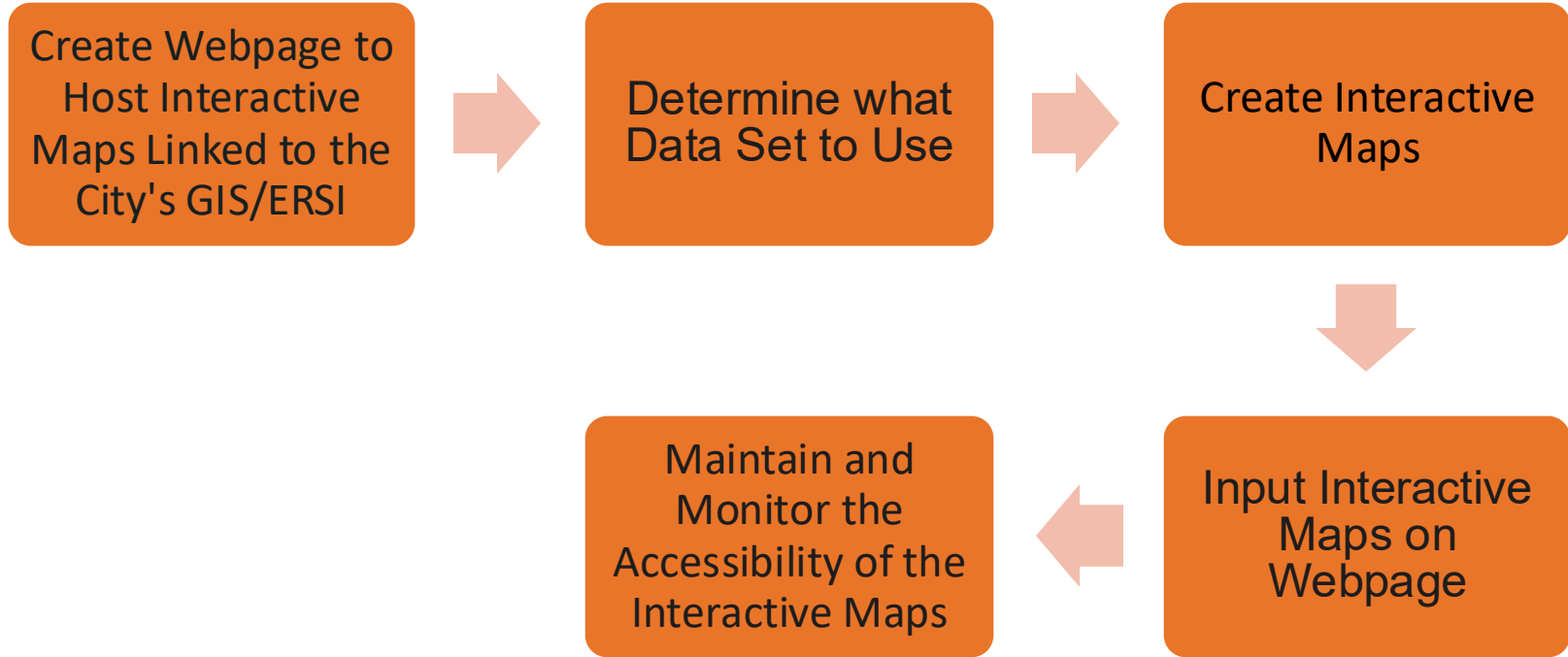
GIS Tools

Geographic Information System (GIS) tools are increasingly recommended for effective public outreach because they make complex infrastructure data accessible, visual, and engaging for residents. By using interactive maps, dashboards, and spatial data visualizations, agencies can show real-time project updates, service boundaries, public amenities, and planned improvements in a user-friendly format. GIS tools empower citizens to explore what's happening in their neighborhoods—from road construction timelines to stormwater improvements—without needing technical knowledge. This transparency not only builds trust but also reduces call volume by answering common questions proactively. Cities like Rowlett, Texas, use GIS platforms to showcase public assets and enhance service visibility, while others use QR code integration or mobile apps to link physical infrastructure directly to digital information. GIS technology turns data into dialogue, making it a vital tool for modern public engagement and informed decision-making.

This type of outreach works well for all sized cities, but especially medium- and large-sized cities.

Engagement for the public	Educational effectiveness	Cost	Potential funding options	Internal staff effort	Overall perception to the public

GIS Tools Checklist

Create Webpage to Host Interactive Maps Linked to the City's GIS/ERSI

→

Determine what Data Set to Use

→

Create Interactive Maps

↓

Maintain and Monitor the Accessibility of the Interactive Maps

←

Input Interactive Maps on Webpage
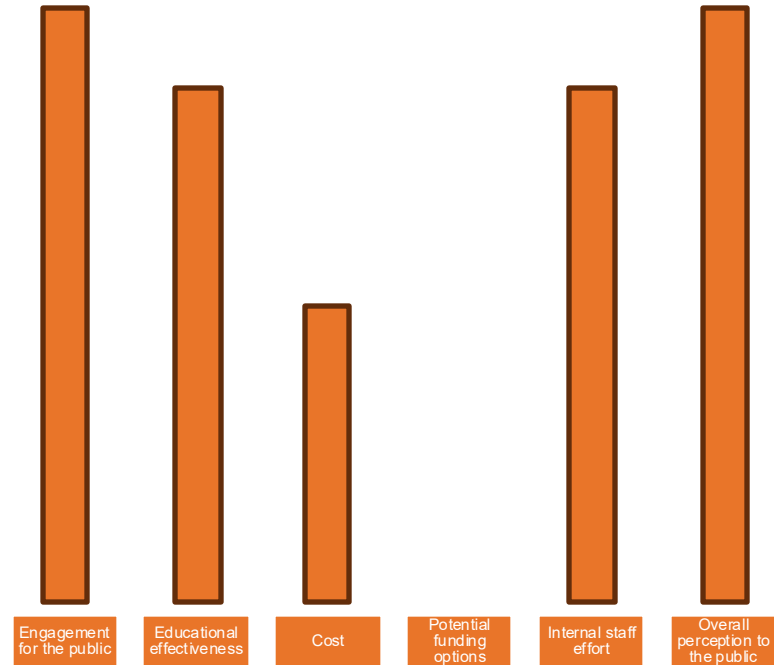
Citizen's Academy

A Public Works Citizen Academy is a community engagement initiative to educate residents about the functions, responsibilities, and challenges faced by a public works department. The program is used to promote transparency, build public trust, and inspire civic participation by providing a behind-the-scenes look at how critical infrastructure and services are managed and maintained. The academy offers several community benefits, including helping residents better understand how tax dollars are spent and how projects are prioritized, enhancing public perception of public works staff and services, and encouraging civic engagement, with many participants going on to serve as advocates or volunteers.

These academies work best for medium-sized cities.

| Engagement for the public | Educational effectiveness | Cost | Potential funding options | Internal staff effort | Overall perception to the public |
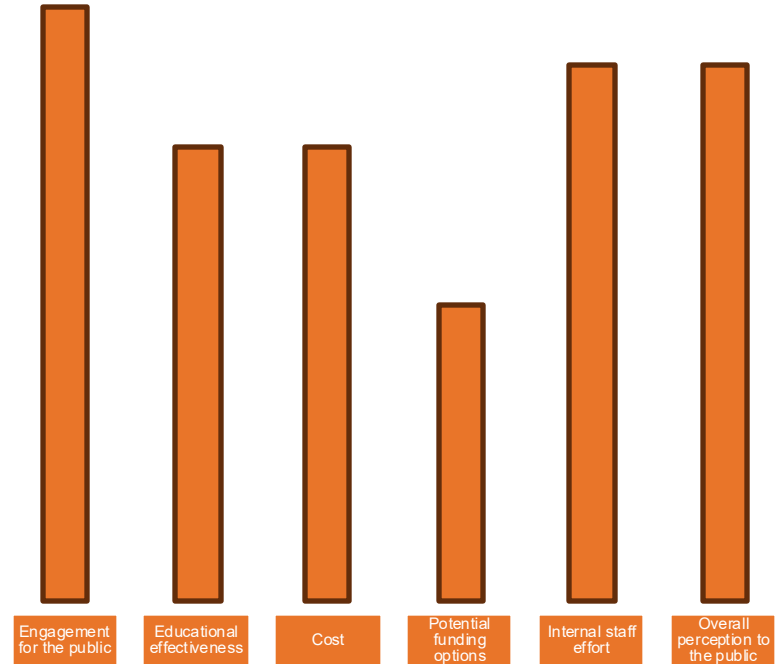
Citizen's Academy Checklist

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┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│  Advertise the Event │ ──►  │  Assemble academy    │ ──►  │  Coordinate with     │
│  through social media,│     │  class topic and     │      │  internal            │
│  City webpage, flyers │      │  schedule            │      │  staff/departments   │
│  and local newspapers│      │                      │      │  on class topic and  │
│                      │      │                      │      │  class location      │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
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Advertise the Event through social media, City webpage, flyers and local newspapers → Assemble academy class topic and schedule → Coordinate with internal staff/departments on class topic and class location

Gather Feedback from Attendees ← Track public questions during presentation and engagement activities ← Develop class presentation and engagement activities with public