



# GIRLS IN PUBLIC WORKS DAY

## TOOLBOX

Girls in Public Works Day is designed to introduce middle school and high school girls to public works professions. This is a one-day event that typically involves presentations, workshops, and hands-on activities showcasing the broad range of opportunities within public works, such as engineering, transportation, and environmental management.

### Benefits Of Coordinating Girls In Public Works Day

#### Inspiration and exposure

- Job shadowing allows students to observe the day-to-day activities of public works professionals, providing a realistic understanding of different roles and responsibilities.

#### Networking

- Job shadowing allows girls to connect with professionals in public works, establishing valuable networks and potential mentoring relationships.

#### Applied public works learning

- The experience can help girls see how their academic knowledge applies to real-world situations, enhancing their motivation to pursue STEM fields.

#### Breaking down misconceptions

- Public works is often not traditionally seen as a career option for women, so a job shadow day can help dispel stereotypes and showcase the vast range of opportunities available.

#### Empowerment

- By providing a positive and empowering experience, job shadowing can help shape the next generation of public works professionals.

### Preparation Tips

Remember, partnering with middle and high schools for career-related events requires advanced planning. Six to eight months is generally how long it will take to develop a plan, prepare the partners and participants involved, and deliver a quality event. The best time of year to plan a career day or career job shadowing day is during the spring (late March to early May) or early fall (late September to late October). It's important to talk to the school counselor or lead staff about the best time of year for the students. Students tend to have more availability during these months and there's a better chance of curriculum alignment. The event can be strategically planned to align with curriculum content, reinforcing learning and making the material more engaging. Here are some important tips to get you started:

#### 1. Secure local public works department commitment and find an on-site champion.

Reach out to potential hosts and confirm their desire to participate. APWA accredited public works departments are great hosts! Develop a clear plan and ensure the host understands their role and what the students want to learn about.

A well-thought plan should include the date and time, meeting space, and guest speakers as well as information about parental involvement, career exploration stations, transportation, food and beverage offerings, and community involvement.

Here is a sample email to send to your local public works department:

*Dear Our City Public Works,*

*We hope this message finds you well. We are writing to request your support and participation in an upcoming on-site Girls in Public Works Day—Opening Doors to New Possibilities. The event is designed to provide exposure and real-world career opportunities to female students who would like to learn more about traditionally male-dominated fields, specifically public works.*

*By providing exposure to these careers, we aim to build confidence by matching up students to women in public works and give them an opportunity to meet a role model and engage in real-world activities. This full-day career activity would take place on-site at the Our City Public Works Department. The coordination of the students, transportation, and event activities will be a collaboration between (Insert Chapter Here), the local school district, and Our City Public Works Department.*

*We would be honored to have your participation in this year's Girls in Public Works Day. Please let us know if you would like to be involved and we will schedule a time to discuss further.*

*Warm regards,  
Engineer Emma*

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## 2. Identify the educational partner and define goals together.

To effectively identify an educational partner for a Girls in Public Works event, focus on aligning your resources and expertise with the schools' needs and priorities. Targeting local schools with a robust Career Technical Education (CTE) program works best. Schools with CTE programs are often eager to collaborate with industry partners to provide students with real-world experiences.

Utilize your own network of contacts within the community, including chambers of commerce, workforce development boards, and other organizations.

Work with the teacher or counselor to identify what would be best for the students to learn. What kinds of experiences do they find useful? Ensure the shadowing aligns with their expectations.

## 3. Recruit students.

It's important to take active steps to recruit the students for the event. Not all students are familiar with public works. Many won't even know what public works departments do! Face-to-face recruitment may be necessary to engage the students and get the participation that you want for the event. Have a recruitment event at the school—see if you can set up a table in the cafeteria or meet students in the classroom. Bring public works career information and APWA swag if you have it. Talk about how much fun they will have the day of the event. Students love a good meal, so remember to let them know lunch and transportation will be provided. Here are some good recruitment materials to provide the students and pique interest in the activity:

[Public Works in Public Service Brochure](#)

[Public Works Career Clusters Map](#)

## 4. Gather information.

Once you've identified who will participate in the event, have the students research their local public works department's website to gain an overview of the different services it provides in the community and the types of jobs available. Is there an area that excites them or a job they would like to learn more about? Ask students to write down responses to the following questions:

What skills and abilities do you think you possess, and what skills would you like to develop?

What specifically would you like to learn or discover about a particular job during the event?

What kind of job shadowing or internship experiences would you be interested in?

Encourage the students to develop thoughtful questions to ask the host throughout the day.

## 5. Review expectations.

Discuss the day's schedule, dress code, and any safety precautions with both the host site and the school.

## 6. Obtain necessary forms.

Collect any required permission slips or waivers from parents or guardians. A release of information and/or media release is important to have for each youth participating. Having a release helps build trust and positive relationships with the community by showcasing the event's positive impact, provides a platform to share information and build support, and protects the organization and participants from legal issues by ensuring consent for media use. You can find a template for a release of information [here](#).

## Day-Of Materials And Helpful Tips

### Agenda

Agendas give a structured description of the day and should outline the topics, goals, and activities planned for the event. It serves as a roadmap for the day, ensuring that all necessary items are covered in logical order and within a designated timeframe. This agenda should be provided to the school counselor or leader, and the public works department(s) participating in the event.

You can find a sample agenda template [here](#).



### Job Shadowing Examples

The host site can plan activities for the students to observe, such as attending meetings, completing tasks, or interacting with staff.

Below are activities that can be done with the students during the job shadowing hands-on part of the day:

#### 1. Hands-on Demonstrations and Interactive Booths

Invite public works professionals to bring in tools or equipment, like a small crane simulator or a concrete mixer, for students to observe and ask questions.

#### 2. Safety Demonstrations

Show students how to properly use safety gear and equipment and explain the importance of safety in public works.

#### 3. Interactive Q&A Sessions

Allow students to ask questions and learn about the day-to-day activities of public works professionals.

#### 4. Resume Building

Offer a workshop on creating a basic resume, even for students with limited experience.

#### 5. Networking Tips

Role-play scenarios where students practice introducing themselves to professionals.

#### 6. Public Speaking Practice

Help students gain confidence in their public speaking abilities, which is valuable for interviews and presentations.

#### 7. Creative Activities

- **Career Poster Contest:** Encourage students to create posters highlighting different public works professions.
- **"What if?" Scenario:** Pose a public works challenge (e.g., how would you improve a road intersection?) and ask students to brainstorm solutions.
- **"My Public Works Superhero" Project:** Have students create a character who solves public works challenges.

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**Social Media Kit**

Goal: To raise awareness, encourage participation, and promote women in public works through engaging, branded, and shareable content leading up to and during the event.

Official Hashtags: #GirlsInPublicWorks, #APWAGirlsLead, #AQOLFA

**Suggested Posting Timeline**

Timeframe	Suggested Frequency	Focus
2-3 weeks prior	1-2X per week	Post flyer, activity previews, countdown, highlights
Day of event	Live Posting	Stories, videos, tagging attendees
Post-event	2 follow-ups	Recap photos, media links

Find day-of event live post examples [here](#).

**INSIGHT Inventory**

The INSIGHT Inventory student/teen personality assessment helps teenagers discover a more accurate perception of themselves and each other. It reveals their personality traits and teaches them how to utilize their strengths to communicate more effectively, improve relationships, and perform at a higher level.

<https://insightinventory.com/insight-inventory-student-teen/>

**Post-Program Follow-Up**

Sending a post-event thank you to the school and the public works partner is important because it strengthens the partnership; it can increase the likelihood of future events and allows for valuable feedback collection.

Here is a great example of a short but impactful thank you:

*Thank you to everyone who made our first-ever #GirlsInPublicWorks Day a success!*


*Over [#] girls got a behind-the-scenes look at what it means to be a public works professional.*

*Special thanks to our volunteers, public works professionals, and school sponsors for empowering the next generation of women in infrastructure.*

*See more: [Link to photo album and/or event survey]*

**Resources**

[Women In Public Works Playlist](#)

 [Careers in Public Works](#)

[Girls in Public Works \(black and white logo\)](#)

[Girls in Public Works \(color logo\)](#)

[Social Media Post 1](#)

[Social Media Post 2](#)

[Social Media Post 3](#)

