



## 2023 Water Workforce Virtual Workshop

Make Sure the 'Force' Is with You: How to Attract,  
Retain & Equip a Modern Workforce

December 5 – 6, 2023 | 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM ET | Virtual Event

Current as of December 4, 2023

### Tuesday, December 5, 2023

#### 1:00 – 1:10 **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

**Oluwole 'OJ' McFoy**, NACWA President  
General Manager  
Buffalo Sewer Authority | Buffalo, NY

*Moderator*

**Danielle Cloutier**, Director, Legislative Affairs  
National Association of Clean Water Agencies | Washington DC

#### 1:10 – 1:45 **Keynote Address:**

##### **Workforce and Talent Management Study: Study Results and Recommendations**

The keynote address will be delivered by Dr. Beverly Scott, Co-Chair of the working group that crafted the National Infrastructure Advisory Council's (NIAC) groundbreaking 2021 Workforce and Talent Management Study. Dr. Scott's extensive experience and knowledge will shed light on the most pressing issues facing the water workforce today and share strategies on how to create a thriving workforce that is adaptable, engaged, and well-equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

**Dr. Beverly Scott**, Chief Executive Officer  
Beverly Scott and Associates, LLC | Emeryville, CA

#### 1:45– 2:30 **Workforce Trends and Challenges in the Modern Era**

For many of today's water utility General Managers, workforce is often at the top of their priority list of issues. Competition for workers with other sectors is stiff and current and prospective employees are looking for more flexibility, which can be challenging given the nature of some jobs in the clean water sector. The environmental stewardship role of a water sector job, which sets it apart from other sectors, is a selling point for some, but may not be enough to make up for differences in salaries and benefits. Water utilities are increasingly recognizing the importance of diversity in their workforce, reflecting a broader societal shift, but building these diverse workforces adds additional complexity to an already complicated landscape. This panel will explore how water utilities must proactively address these trends and challenges to ensure the continued delivery of safe and sustainable water services to communities across the nation.

**Joe Kane**, Senior Research Analyst and Associate Fellow  
The Brookings Institution | Washington, DC

**Beverley Stinson**, Executive Vice President, Global Water Business Line Leader  
AECOM | Chelmsford, MA

**2:30-3:15**

### **Recruitment Renaissance: Strategies for Sourcing Stellar Talent**

Recruitment and talent acquisition within the water sector have evolved significantly in response to the sector's growing workforce demands and changing demographics. In addition to building new pipelines for employees through educational and vocational institutions, many organizations are prioritizing the rebranding of careers in the water sector, emphasizing the critical role they play in safeguarding public health and the environment. Our speakers will discuss how embracing technology-driven strategies can help the water sector create a steady pipeline of robust, skilled, and diverse utility workers.

**David Fiffick**, Deputy Director of Human Resources  
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District | Cleveland, OH

**Pamela Wideman**, Senior Manager  
Raffelis | Charlotte, NC

**3:15-4:00**

### **Fostering Employee Commitment and Staying Power**

The impending retirement of a sizable portion of the water workforce and stiff competition from other sectors have forced utilities to use various strategies to retain existing employees and capture the knowledge of employees nearing the end of their careers. This has spurred innovation and creativity among utilities looking to keep the workers they have, make sure they are satisfied with the work they do, and are given the opportunities to work with and learn from more seasoned employees. Water utilities are also fostering a sense of pride and purpose within their employees by highlighting the critical role they play in their communities. This session will explore strategies to improve retention by improving employee satisfaction with their water sector careers.

**Sarah Cwikla**, Vice President, Regional Growth Leader – Water, US North  
Stantec | Broomfield, CO

**Laurie Horridge**, NACWA Board Member  
Executive Director  
Narragansett Bay Commission | Providence, RI

## **Wednesday, December 6, 2023**

*Moderator*

**Kishia Powell**, NACWA Board Member  
General Manager and Chief Executive Officer  
WSSC Water | Laurel, MD

**1:00 – 1:45**

### **Elevating Expertise: Upskilling and Reskilling Strategies for a Dynamic Workforce**

As technology and environmental considerations transform the water utility sector, employees need to adapt and acquire new skills to remain effective and competitive. By reinvesting in existing employees, water utilities can future-proof their workforce, ensuring employees are equipped to navigate complex challenges, embrace innovation, and provide sustainable water solutions for communities. Building on Day 1's

discussion of employee retention, speakers on this panel will dive deeper into insights on best practices and strategies for maintaining and elevating your current workers.

**Todd Swingle**, NACWA Board Member  
Executive Director  
Toho Water Authority | Kissimmee, FL

**Jennifer Allen**, Human Resources Director  
Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts | Whittier, CA

### 1:45 – 2:30 **Passing the Torch without Losing Critical Knowledge**

From mentorship programs that bridge generational gaps to well-structured training initiatives, water utilities are building a legacy of expertise that transcends individual careers. Building on Day 1's discussion of impending retirements and knowledge transfer, this panel will highlight how, through the thoughtful cultivation of emerging leaders and the harnessing of decades of experience, utilities are not only safeguarding the reliability of essential services but also nurturing a culture of learning and innovation that will carry them confidently into the future.

**Kevin Shafer**, Executive Director  
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District | Milwaukee, WI

**Maggie Frye**, Founder & Chief Executive Officer  
Core Consulting Group, LLC | Cincinnati, OH

### 2:30 – 3:15 **The Employee Well-Being and Mental Health Balancing Act**

In a sector where employees bear the weighty responsibility of delivering clean and safe water to communities, their physical and mental health must be paramount. Forward-thinking utilities are fostering a culture of well-being by offering wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, and access to mental health resources. Utility leaders will share how, by acknowledging the unique stressors of the job and providing the necessary support, their utilities are not only enhancing the quality of life for their employees but also bolstering productivity and resilience.

**Juli Sholar**, Human Resources Director  
Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans | New Orleans, LA

**James Fisher**, Human Resources Manager – Compensation and Benefits  
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago | Chicago, IL

### 3:15 – 4:00 **Leveraging Private Sector Partnerships for Public Wastewater Utilities**

In this dynamic session, we will delve into the innovative ways in which public wastewater utilities can address workforce challenges by harnessing the expertise and resources of the private sector. As the water sector faces an impending talent gap and an evolving workforce landscape, this event will provide valuable insights into collaborative strategies to build a resilient and skilled workforce. Session speakers will explore successful workforce initiatives where the private sector contributes to training programs and skills enhancement, ensuring a highly capable workforce.

**Pieter Van Ry**, NACWA Board Member  
Director  
South Platte Renew | Englewood, CO

**Prabhu Chandrasekeran**, Vice President,  
Intelligent Water National Practice Leader  
Arcadis | Hanover, MD