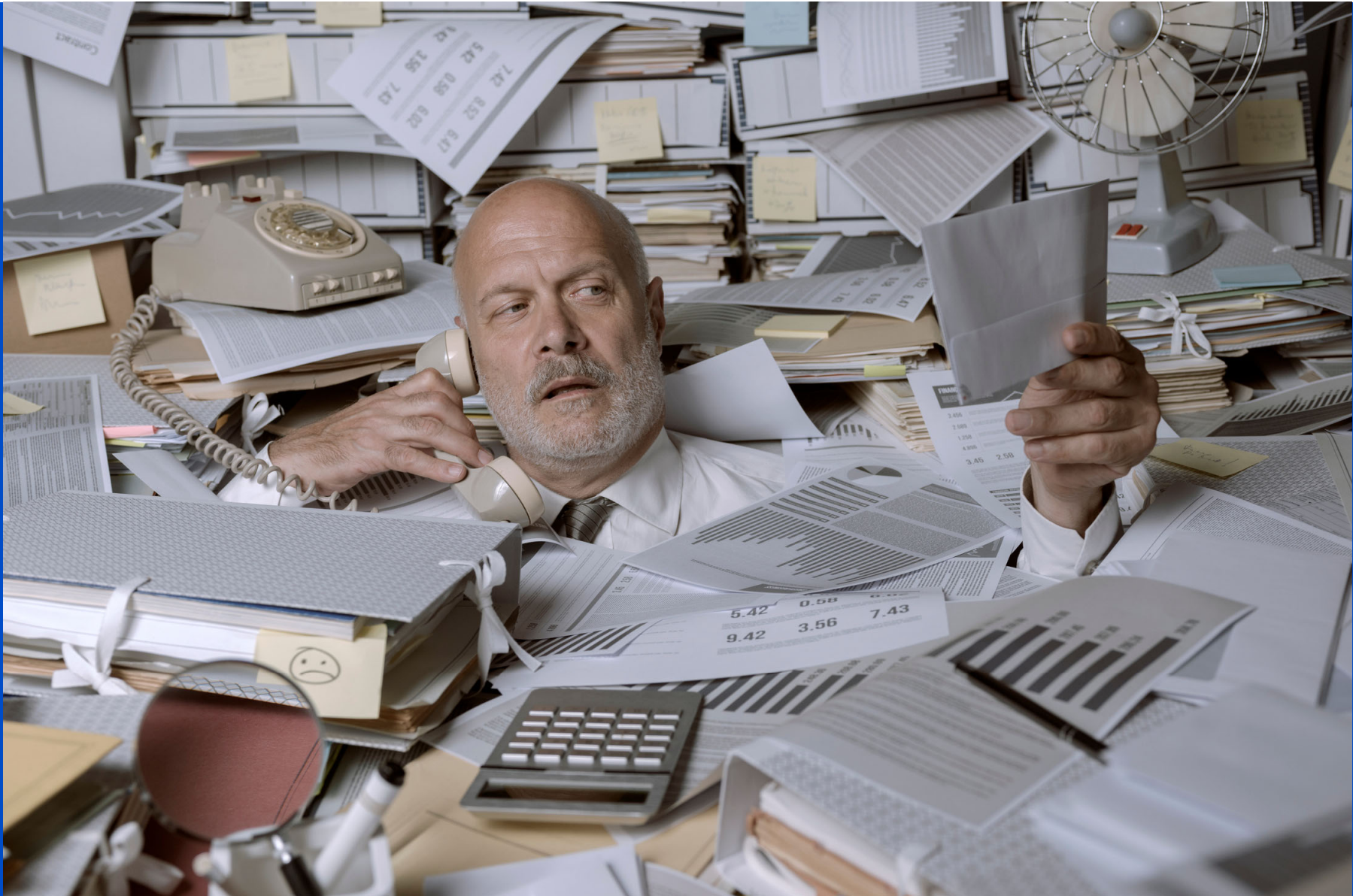


Life Free of Water Challenges





CHALLENGE
CHALLENGE
CHALLENGE

The image features the word "CHALLENGE" repeated three times in a bold, sans-serif font. The top and bottom instances are black, while the middle instance is white. A dynamic, flowing graphic element, resembling a stylized leaf or flame, cuts through the text from the bottom left to the top right. This element is white with blue outlines and is set against a solid blue background.

PRODUCTS THAT CONTAIN PFAS

Candy
Wrappers



Shampoo



Water Resistant
Clothing



Non-Stick
Cookware



Microwave
Popcorn Bags



Eye
Makeup



Pizza
Boxes



Sealants,
Gaskets



Fertilization

K

P

N





Funding

① _____

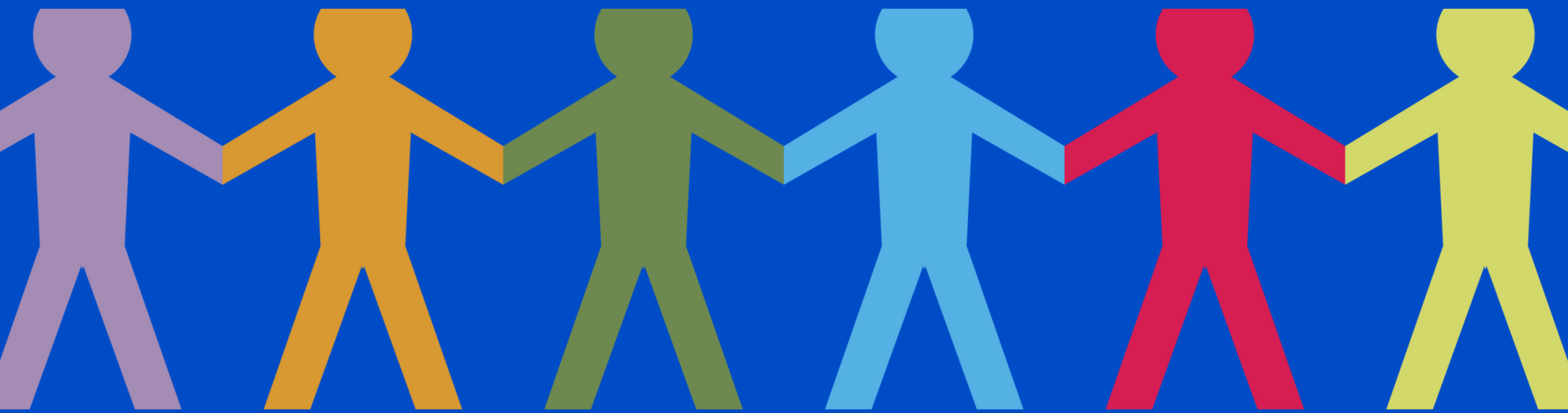
② _____

③ _____

④ _____







HOW

WHERE

WHY

WHO

WHAT

WHEN

A light box with three rows of text. The top row contains the word "START", the middle row contains "WITH", and the bottom row contains "WHY". The text is in a bold, black, sans-serif font on a white background. The light box has a black frame and a small black knob on the left side.

START

WITH

WHY

2018 BROOKINGS REPORT

↓ [READ MORE](#) ↓

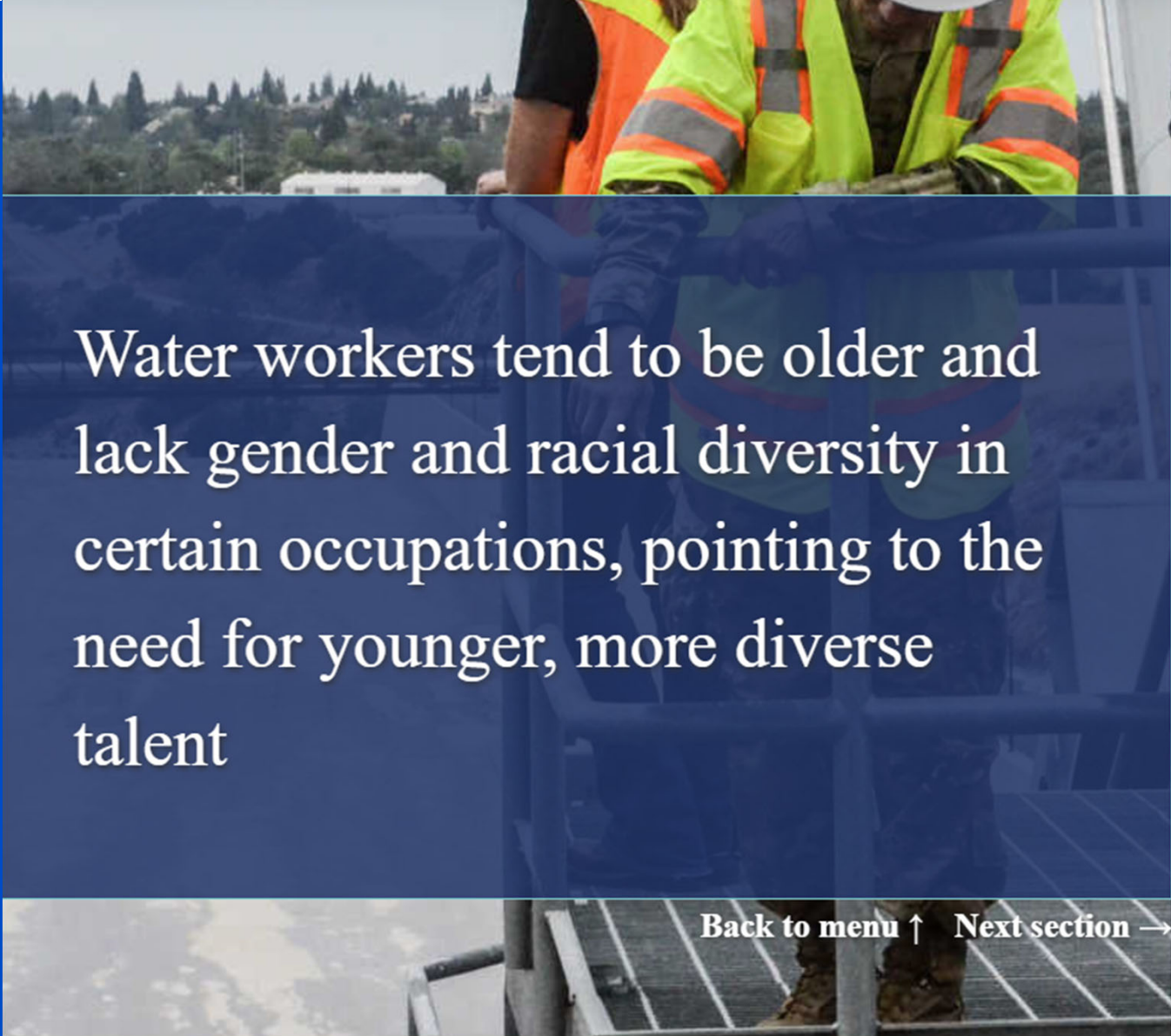
85%

MALE

2/3

WHITE

BROOKINGS INSTITUTE

A photograph of two water workers wearing high-visibility safety vests (one orange and one yellow) standing on a metal platform. In the background, a residential area with houses and trees is visible under a clear sky. The image is partially obscured by a dark blue semi-transparent rectangle containing text.

Water workers tend to be older and lack gender and racial diversity in certain occupations, pointing to the need for younger, more diverse talent

[Back to menu](#) ↑ [Next section](#) →

200+ Water Occupations

MOSTLY SKILLED TRADES

ALSO ADMIN, FINANCE MANAGEMENT

NOT ISOLATED TO A FEW AREAS OF U.S.

EMPLOYED EVERYWHERE

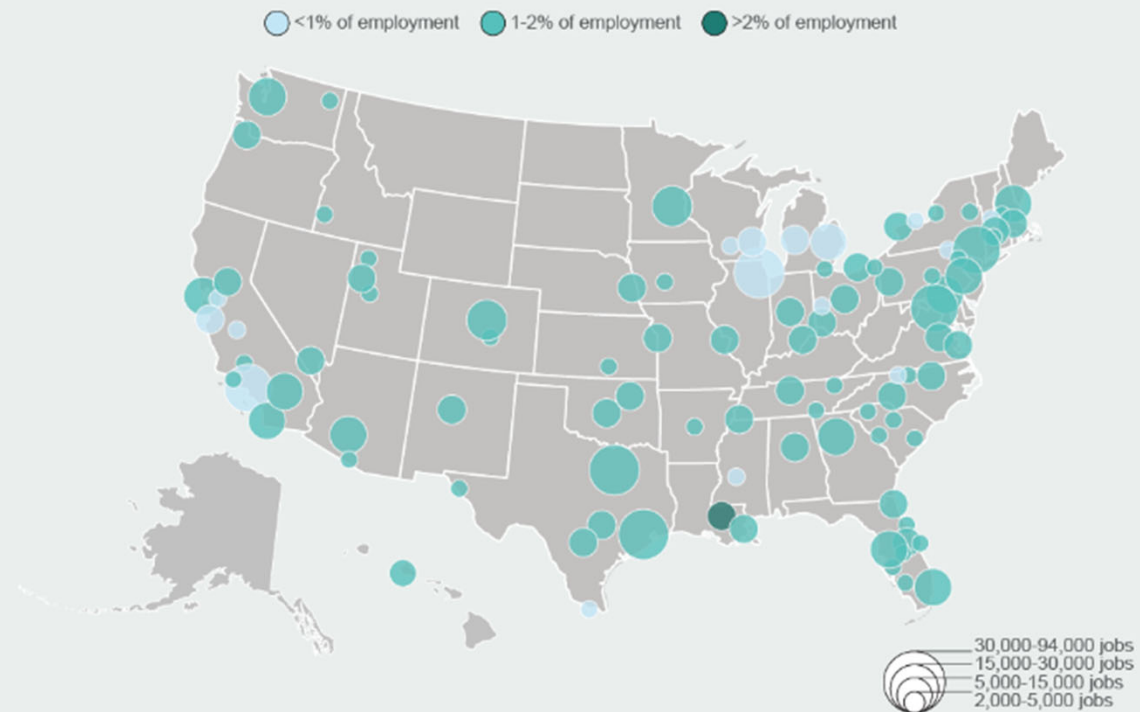
1-2% OF METRO & RURAL AREA JOBS

RESISTANT TO ECONOMIC DOWNTURNS

GOOD BENEFITS

Water workers in the 100 largest metro areas

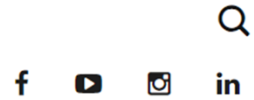
By total employment and share of employment, 2016



Source: Brookings analysis of BLS Occupational Employment Statistics

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Career Paths in the Water & Wastewater Industries



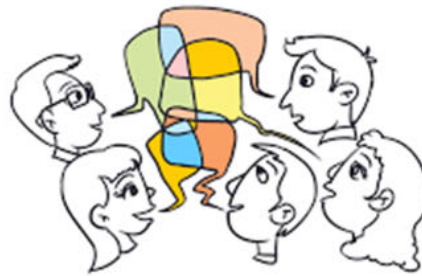
WASTEWATER TREATMENT



WORKFORCE
where we tend to focus
This needs to continue; and



Living Wage



REAL WORLD WORKFORCE ISSUES



CHILD
CARE



Self Reflection

LANGUAGE, DECISION MAKING, CRITERIA INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

applications

orientation

abstracts

exhibitors

plans

trainings

materials

comms

An illustration of a baseball game in progress. In the foreground, several fans are shown from behind, cheering with their arms raised. They are standing on a wooden fence or bleachers. The background shows a baseball field with players on the field and a large crowd of spectators in the stands. The scene is set during the day under a clear sky.

What perspectives are we potentially missing right now?

How might our personal and professional biases be influencing our discussion and decision?

What steps do we need to take to include valuable, yet missing perspectives?

Who benefits, and who is potentially harmed by our actions and the decision we are about to make?



Diversity

Diversity encompasses the varying experiences, strengths, skills, perspectives, personal characteristics, cultures, and backgrounds represented by and within the WEF community.



Equity

A commitment to equity means an environment where everyone has the opportunity and access to realize their full potential, and no-one is disadvantaged because of their group identity or other socially determined circumstance.



Inclusion

The act of inclusion embraces and celebrates the perspectives, voices, values, and needs of each individual to generate a culture where all feel heard, respected, valued, and included in the broader WEF purpose.

[EVENTS & EDUCATION](#)

[PUBLICATIONS & NEWS](#)


[MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNITY](#)

[TOPICS](#)

[ABOUT](#)

This program aims to enhance diversity and inclusion in the water workforce.



[More about WEF InFlow Program](#) 

[Privacy Policy](#)





MEGAN YOO-SCHNEIDER AND DONNELL DUNCAN ON ADVANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Megan and Donnell discuss the efforts by the Water Environment Federation (WEF) to address

Conversations on Equity



Moderator Guide

What's my role?

You're in charge! Moderators set the tone for conference sessions. As a thoughtful, skilled moderator, you create an inviting space for **engagement, learning, and connection** that enhances participants' experience.

Own the Room:

Your confidence will set others at ease

Enthusiasm is infectious: a genuine interest in the speakers and audience will quickly create a positive environment. Don't worry if you don't know too much about the topic; your job is to be a confident and capable host, not the expert.

Be prepared:

- Check out the space early
- Make sure the speakers know where it is!
- Remind speakers to minimize jargon
- Introduce yourself to the Room Monitor

Own your biases: we all have them. Who are you more likely to greet or call on? Who else could you include? What discomfort might you need to move through? How can you be a role model?

Consider power dynamics in the room – are there any 'experts' who might expect to be called upon? How will you manage them, so they don't dominate the Q&A?

Encourage a conversational tone by asking the presenters what excites them about their topic.

Be prepared with a question or two that the speaker would appreciate being asked.

Speaker Introduction Essentials

Practice name pronunciation, confirm their pronouns and ask what they care about in their bio. Give a few highlights only!

WEF Member Feedback: Language Matters

In a 2021 WEF DEI member survey we were reminded of the importance of inclusive language in making everyone welcome at our events. As the moderator, please help model respectful language and remind speakers too.

Respectful language:

- It's safer to refer to people by their location in the room or clothing, rather than assuming identities such as gender or race. E.g. "In the 3rd row, the person in the blue jacket", not "the young woman in row 3". They may not identify as a woman, and referring to age is generally demeaning.
- What pronouns do you use?
- If you make a mistake, apologize and move on, don't dwell on it.

Warm Up the Room: Create a welcoming environment

As the moderator, it's your job to keep the session flowing. That doesn't mean the loudest people talking from start to finish! Welcome attendees from all backgrounds, technical and non-technical and foster connections by **asking questions as the audience is gathering**.

"Who do we have in the room today?" Any first-time attendees? Students? Emerging Professionals? Operators? New to the water industry? International?

- Have folks introduce themselves to their neighbors to break the ice – this is effective
- Encourage people to fill the front rows first, it helps speakers engage with the audience.
- Explain the format up front, so that folks know when they can engage with questions

Trouble Shooting

Keeping the event on track

Long-winded speakers

- Use pre-established signals if possible
- As they take a breath, jump in and redirect
- Approach the podium if all else fails

Is it a question or a speech?

- Excuse me, can you move to your question?
- What is the question you would like to ask?
- We agreed one one question only, please follow up with the speaker later.

Handling Hostile Statements:

Reframe/Redirect

- Thank you. I appreciate your perspective – I'd like to talk about that afterwards.
- This sounds more like a discussion. Please follow up with the speaker after the session.
- Find a way to acknowledge the individual and move on.
- **Remember, the room is with you!** Folks will thank you for handling an awkward moment confidently.

"It is rather common to witness dismissive or demeaning attitudes toward people with differing opinions or experiences, especially during the Q&A sessions of technical presentations. This does not encourage any meaningful discussion"

Thank the speakers and audience

If you can, reiterate key points, suggestions and opportunities for research or connections.

Direct the audience to the session survey and encourage them to complete it before leaving the room. Thanks for running an engaging session.

"I do not work at a large treatment facility and sometimes, I feel my questions are looked down upon"

WEF Member

"I have been dismissed when expressing my opinions by specific factions who believe they are smarter, know more, etc. because their education level is different." WEF Member

Handling Q&A: *Who has the floor has the power*

Help introverts prepare!

Announce the Q&A a minute or two prior to beginning to allow participants time to think of questions

- "We'll be moving to questions shortly; please start thinking about any questions"

Calling on a woman or younger person first will encourage a wider range of people to participate in the Q&A

Begin Q&A by explicitly setting expectations:

- "Out of respect for others, ask one question. Let us know your name, workplace and ask your question succinctly"
- "Please wait for the mic to arrive so that all can hear your question."
- Consider inviting questions on index cards ahead of time for a popular speaker
- Balance questions from different groups if possible – "is there a student with a Q?"

Where can I go to learn more?

www.wef.org/dei for WEF's DEI Committee

Book: *Reinventing Diversity: Transforming Organizational Community* by Howard Ross, 2013

Book: *Equity: How to Design Organizations Where Everyone Thrives* by Minal Bopai, 2021

SHRM's Workplace Resources:
<https://shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/tr-topics/Pages/diversity-equity-and-inclusion.aspx>

<https://500womenscientists.org/inclusive-scientific-meetings>

Inclusion and Diversity is Good for Your Business

WEF Strategic Goal: Attracting and Creating a Diverse Water Workforce

We are committed to revitalizing the water industry by attracting and developing a more diverse workforce. We believe in integrating Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in all that we do. Our exhibitors and manufacturer representatives play a crucial role on the WEFTEC exhibit floor by welcoming all respectfully.

We're very respectful - what's the problem?

Prior exhibition attendees and buyers told us they do not always feel respected in their interactions. We want to be clear about expectations and provide examples of behaviors that can even unintentionally lead to guests feeling ignored, dismissed or disrespected.



I approached people who were dismissive, or I was ignored. My counterpart went to the exact same people within minutes and had a totally different experience. We have the same ability to purchase/influence purchasing. I left the hall feeling totally disrespected.”

Z. English, Strategic Initiatives & Project Delivery Director.

Thank you for exhibiting at WEFTEC

We want you to **gain maximum business value by creating a welcoming and professional environment for all.**

We are providing this extra information because we have received feedback that **not everyone has felt welcome, especially on the exhibit floor.**

TELL ME MORE

Behaviors to avoid

- When a man and a woman approach a booth together, the exhibitor may address the man instead of the woman, even when the man looks much younger or when the woman initiates the conversation.
- When a person of color approaches with a white person, we heard multiple instances of exhibitors addressing only the white person, excluding the person of color.
- When a person of color approaches by themselves, they may find it hard to get any attention at all.
- When someone perceived as a young professional approaches the booth, staff might ignore them as someone who is not an influential decision maker.

What should we do? Best Practices:

- Staff your team with a diverse range of employees, including women, people of color, younger employees, non-technical staff or other under-represented groups in the water industry. Include bi-lingual staff if possible, especially Spanish or French speakers.
- Avoid assuming roles/seniority/experience level, as it might be perceived as judgmental. Instead, focus on seeking to understand guests' needs first.
- Welcome questions from early in career professionals, to create a positive image of the industry.
- Ensure that your booth layout is accessible and accommodating to all.
- When you're busy, establish a line to save people competing to catch someone's eye.
- Remind your team of the importance for professional language at all times.

“We're here to talk about water, not DEI!”

- We're here to provide a professional and welcoming environment for our guests.
- This is as simple as being welcoming to all and treating folks as you would like to be treated. Be observant – who has been hovering on the edge of your exhibit for a while?
- Have a few open-ended questions that are engaging and neutral. “How has your conference been so far?”. “What interests you about our exhibit?”

Promotional Materials

Use inclusive language in your communication materials, signage and interactions. Avoid gender-specific or exclusionary terms and imagery, e.g., all white, older, all male images.



You agree to treat all individuals with respect and create a collegial, inclusive, and professional environment. You will value a diversity of views and opinions by communicating openly with respect for others.

WEFTEC Code of Conduct

Other information to consider

Familiarize yourself with your organization's own inclusive policies, and any diversity statistics that people might ask about from a careers perspective, or due to supplier diversity needs.

Developed for WEFTEC by The Silverene Group. www.silverenegroup.com

Recognition of Best Practices

If you would like to be recognized for your organization's contributions to creating a welcoming, inclusive environment at WEFTEC, please contact Laura Helm (lhelm@wef.org)

Questions/Concerns

WEF realizes that not everyone may fully understand or agree with the importance of DEI. We encourage open dialogue. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

- Manufacturers and Representatives Community Chair: Patrick Foley
foley.p@sherwoodlogan.com

Thanks for your consideration we look forward to seeing you all at WEFTEC



Other Resources and Support

At the conference, an Ombuds has been appointed as a resource for meeting participants, including exhibitors.
www.mwi.org/wef-ombuds

- DEI policy: <https://www.wef.org/topics/hot-topics/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>
- WEF Code of Conduct <https://www.weftec.org/about/about-weftec/code-of-conduct/>

Defining & Understanding LGBTQ

DEI Fundamentals

Guide for Conference Moderators

How to Shift Leadership Behaviors in Support of DEI

Identifying & Responding to Racism

Inclusion and Diversity for WEFTEC Exhibitors

Inclusive Committee Leadership

Intergenerational Networking & SPYC Mentorship Program

Understanding & Avoiding Microaggressions

Understanding Unconscious Bias

Which Community is Right for Me

Serve
Community



But





Amid lawsuits, indictments, water users worry about future of disadvantaged Alabama utility

In a scandal that some call "Guccigate," authorities say former employees embezzled millions of dollars from the water utility in Prichard. But for residents of one of Alabama's poorest cities, the scandal was just part of a pattern of distrust and neglect.

GABRIEL TYNES / January 5, 2024





CLOSED

關閉 jCerrada! Cấm Bơi Lội 계류안

High bacteria levels in this water may cause illness.



NO SWIMMING

Other beach activities permitted.

ecology.wa.gov/beach
360-480-4868



Beach Environmental Assessment Communication and Health Program



S&WB says payroll fraud and 'secret sex room' allegations were investigated and disciplined



**1 of every 10 Americans
DO NOT
drink their tap water**

DIS

TRUST



WHAT WE HAVE HERE

is a *failure*
to communicate

OUT OF SIGHT,

OUT OF MIND

A photograph of a railway track receding into a dense forest. The tracks are made of metal rails and wooden sleepers, and they lead the eye towards a person standing in the distance. The forest is lush with green trees and undergrowth. The image is framed by a blue border at the top and bottom.

"If you don't tell your story, someone else will."

- Unknown



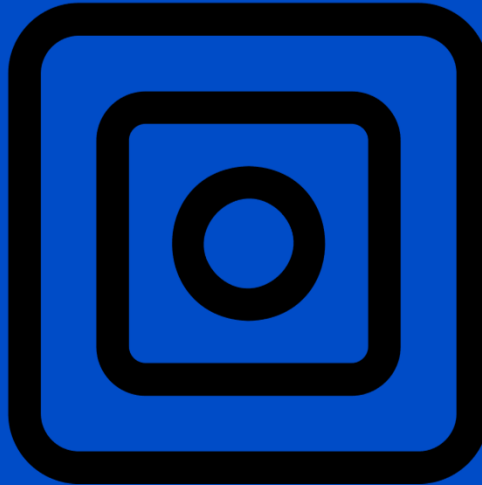
NOTE TO SELF

**The ability to
turn on the tap
and flush the
toilet is
EMOTIONAL
security**



it's time to
change
the
narrative

Meet | where
people | they
are







PARTNERSHIP

**WATER
WORKERS
DO
EXIST!**

