

When it comes to public works, one size definitely does not fit all, so defining the term becomes problematic. Even APWA members have trouble arriving at a common definition. Because of the multi-faceted, ever-evolving nature of public works, we may never arrive at a final definition but, for now, the following definition seems appropriate:

*Public works is the combination of physical assets, management practices, policies, and personnel necessary for government to provide and sustain structures and services essential to the welfare and acceptable quality of life for its citizens.*

## About the American Public Works Association

Working in the public interest, the members of APWA plan, design, build, operate and maintain the transportation, water supply, storm drainage, sewage and refuse disposal systems, public buildings, and other structures and facilities essential to our nation's economy and way of life.

Chartered in 1937, APWA is the largest and oldest organization of its kind in the world. With headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, and an advocacy office in Washington, D.C., APWA provides a forum for public works professionals to exchange ideas, improve professional competency, increase the performance of their agencies and companies, and bring important public works-related topics to public attention in local, state and federal arenas.

## Membership

Organized within nine regions, APWA's 28,500 members comprise 63 chapters, serving virtually every community, state/province and region throughout North America. The association is a highly participatory organization with hundreds of opportunities for leadership and service. Governed by a 17-member board of directors, elected at both the regional and national levels, APWA is an open, flexible association with diversified membership and a reputation for quality services and products.

## Online Networking Tools

APWA's infoNOW Communities give members the opportunity to email questions to other public works professionals, share real-live experiences, discuss current issues and trends related to the field, or conduct their own research using the library of past online conversations. There are currently 16 topic-driven infoNOW Communities.



## Education and Professional Development

With a wealth of management and technical resources, APWA offers extensive professional development opportunities through timely publications and videos, workshops, interactive audio- web conferences, chapter programs such as the Public Works Institute, and national. APWA keeps public works professionals up-to-date on trends and emerging issues with activities open to members and non-members (reduced pricing for members). APWA's nationally sponsored educational programs provide Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and Professional Development Hours (PDHs) for time spent in the classroom during professional development and training activities. The Public Works Institutes are programs offered throughout the U.S. which are designed to address supervisory and management needs through 10 core areas of study, ranging from basic management skills to fundamentals of government.

## Center for Sustainability

The new APWA Center for Sustainability was created by the Board of Directors to address sustainability challenges in public works organizations across the United States and Canada. Guided by a 12-member Leadership Committee, the Center supports the integration of sustainability in all aspects of APWA as an organization, and in public works management and services. The Leadership Committee reviews APWA programs and initiatives in relation to the overall goal for sustainable public works operations.

## Monthly Magazine

The award-winning *APWA Reporter* serves as the prime communication link uniting the community of public works professionals who make up the association. Most articles are written by member- experts on subjects ranging from emergency management and water resources to transportation, fleet services and winter maintenance. The articles contain information on management techniques, research, training programs and new technology.



## Accreditation and Certification

The APWA Accreditation program was developed to recognize excellence in the operation and management of a public works agency by meeting over 540 management practices. The first awards were made in 1997 and the program continues to grow with more than 65 agencies now accredited. APWA's certification program provides a strong benefit to the public works industry, and ultimately to their communities, by providing recognized hiring and promotion standards that lead to an improved workforce and improved delivery of services.

## Advocacy

APWA empowers public works professionals to be the voice for adequate investment in public infrastructure among local, state and federal policymakers. APWA's Government Affairs Committee and other member advocates create partnerships with key stakeholders, establish new lines of communication with decision makers and extend outreach into the center of public policy discussions. Working in the public interest, APWA members bring their experience, expertise and unique perspective to policy debates that impact public works and our communities.

**For more information on APWA, please visit the website at: [www.apwa.net](http://www.apwa.net) . For media queries, please contact APWA Media Relations and Communications Manager Laura Bynum at [lbynum@apwa.net](mailto:lbynum@apwa.net).**