

American Public Works Association

DIVERSITY

RESOURCE GUIDE

VOLUME II

TIPS, TOOLS, & TRIUMPHS

August 2003



CELEBRATES DIVERSITY

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A big "thank you" goes to members of the Kansas City Metro Chapter for allowing us to use their diversity logo. Michele Ohmes, Shelley Wolff, Chuck Madden, Ron Schikevitz, James Williams, Edward Ieans, Larry Frevert, Juanita Jackson, and Rick Smith all had a hand in the development of the logo

Introduction

The APWA Diversity Committee is pleased to present Volume II of the *APWA Diversity Resource Guide*. Responses were very favorable to the first volume and because we were not able to include all facets of diversity in that volume, the committee has prepared a second volume to address additional areas of interest to our Chapters. Some content in this guide is merely meant to raise awareness, other content provides suggestions for APWA Chapter's programs and activities.

The APWA Board of Directors believes that institutionalizing the diversity concept takes a commitment from all levels of the association, but that it must be embraced at the top level in order to empower the concept throughout APWA. The concept involves constant introspection and attention to the ways we all communicate and work with one another.

The APWA Diversity Statement approved by the Board of Directors states:

“The American Public Works Association recognizes, appreciates and fosters the synergy, which is created when the work environment values the differences in individuals and practices inclusiveness and open communication.”

Diversity is neither an affirmative action nor an equal opportunity program. Through legislating equality we can fail to recognize the spectacular ways in which people are different. APWA is moving beyond affirmative action and is affirming diversity. Diversity means “all the ways in which people differ from each other” and how we accept and use those differences depends on whether diversity becomes an asset or a liability for APWA, its Chapters, and for our workplace.

The American Public Works Association values all individuals and different perspectives of those individuals, and believes in providing the process for all to feel included as part of the whole. **Diversity includes race, gender, creed, age, lifestyle, national origin, disability, personality, educational background, processing style, thinking style, energy level, assertiveness level, weight and height, values, political views, marital status, goals and**

ambitions, likes and dislikes, social status, income level, tenure within an organization, level of position within an organization, geographic origin, management and union, rural and urban, etc.

Your APWA Diversity Committee supports you and thanks you for your work on helping to change our environment to celebrate diversity. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact us. Or if there is another area of diversity you would like to see highlighted in a future edition of the resource guide, please contact us.

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Gender Gap In Engineering/Public Works

The gender gap in engineering and in the field of public works is readily seen in the workplace and in the chapter setting. Chapters can certainly play a role in encouraging the importance of math and science to grade school and junior high girls/boys/minorities through various national programs such as *National Engineers Week*, *Math Counts*, *International* (or regional) *Science and Engineering Fair*, *Future Cities Competition*, *SkillsUSA-VICA*, *Junior Engineering Technical Society* – or through local school systems in class adoption, a mentoring program, Career Day, Job Shadow Day, career orientation programs, scholarship or internship programs, etc. Contact the national office of APWA if you are interested in any of these programs.

The American Association of University Women Foundation issued a report in 1998 entitled “*Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children.*” The report reveals some important realities, some future trends, and some crucial proposals for reversing the current gender gap in math, science and technology achievements and careers. It appears that within a six year period (1992-1998) girls’ test scores and course enrollments rose in mathematics and science. However, girls still consider and pursue a smaller set of career opportunities than do boys. Girls tend to cluster in traditionally female occupations in School-to-Work programs. The report suggests that teachers need to relate their course content to real world careers and counselors should encourage girls to explore nontraditional careers. Schools need to guarantee students the resources each realistically needs to achieve in school – there must be gender equity in the classroom. The report even suggests that states should make Algebra I and geometry, mandatory for college admissions and advanced study in math, science, engineering, and computer science.

The American Society of Civil Engineers and DuPont sponsor the program “*Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day*” through National Engineers Week. The packet of information is designed to encourage girls to enter the fields of math, science, and engineering through fun and innovative programs, hands-on activities and projects, and opportunities for career exposure with women in those fields. Their statistics indicate that less than 10% of American engineers are women – which is approximately 200,000 women out of just over 2,000,000

employed engineers. There are currently not enough Americans to fill all engineering positions, so outside talent is brought in, but because other nations are facing shortages also, they are competing for the same limited pool of qualified workers. If women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities participated in the U.S. engineering and technology workforce in parity with the percentages of women, minorities and people with disabilities in the total workforce, America would have almost all the qualified workers it needed in these fields. This program is planned to create a greater interest in math, to change the student and teacher expectations, and to encourage girls to take enough hands-on math and science courses in high school and college to they can have a wider choice of either college majors or post-high school jobs. The program stresses that teachers and counselors need to check and recheck to be sure that they pay equal attention to girls and boys, that an equal number of girls lead groups, that all students do hands-on activities, that girls feel comfortable asking questions, and that girls don't defer to boys nor do boys expect them to. Society, parents and academia all need to work at changing the stereotype that engineers and scientists are "nerds," "social outcasts" and "loners." Providing opportunities for girls to get to know women who are scientists and engineers and seeing for themselves that a social life and science/engineering do not have to be incompatible will certainly help invalidate that stereotype.

The National Science Foundation report: *"Women, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2000"* and the Congressional Commission on Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering and Technology Development Land of Plenty report: *"Diversity as America's Competitive Edge in Science, Engineering and Technology"* speak specifically to the field of engineering and provide us with some interesting statistics:

- In 20-30 years, the U.S. will not have enough technical workers to keep our economy moving if we continue to draw engineers from the pool of white males. We need to draw from the other pools of women and minorities if we are to have enough engineers in the future.
- By the year 2020, women will comprise nearly half the U.S. workforce. In 2001, they represented only 9% of civil engineers, 7% of electrical engineers, 11% of industrial engineers, and 14% of chemical engineers. By comparison, more than half of all psychologists - 63% - and sociologists - 55% - are women.

- In 1985, women earned 15% of the bachelor's degrees in engineering. By 1996, this number had increased to only 18% and has been stagnant since that time.
- Full-time women engineers generally earn less than men, although the differences are mostly due to differences in age, occupation and the highest degree attained. The 1997 overall median salary for full-time female scientists and engineers was \$47,000. This figure was much lower than the figure for men at \$58,000. But when you look at younger age categories and within occupations, you find that the median salaries of men and women are more alike.
- The 1998 census of women corporate officers found that only 11% of all corporate officers were women.
- Women and minorities are more likely to switch to non-science majors during their college careers than are white men. Once women are in the engineering work force, and they hit middle management, many women engineers grow tired of the lack of support from their companies and leave the engineering field to become successful businesswomen elsewhere. The exit rate of women in the industry is not only double that of men (25% versus 12%) but is also much higher than those of women in other employment sectors.

Shelley Wolff, past president of the National Society of Women Engineers, likens the gender gap puzzle to an engineering student pipeline. K-12 education is the first run in the pipeline. At the 4th grade level, the pipeline is still very large with U.S. scores very high in mathematics and science, but by the time our students reach the 12th grade, they are among the lowest performing – as U.S. students progress through the education pipeline, their performance in math and science declines significantly. Even though girls and boys perform equally on tests and girls are taking upper level math and science courses required to enter engineering majors at the same rate as boys, among students taking the SAT test for college entrance, over $\frac{3}{4}$ of students majoring in engineering and computer science are boys. Girls' interest and participation in these two areas goes down.

At the end of high school the pipeline branches by those going directly into the workforce and those going into college. It immediately branches again by those going into engineering and technical majors and those pursuing non-technical degrees. The women engineering

students' pipeline increased to 18% by 1995 and has been stagnant ever since. Once in the college engineering curriculum, women are much more likely to switch to non-technical majors than are men, thus narrowing the pipeline again. Reasons cited for this switch include: more interest in non-engineering subjects, poor quality of teaching, inflexible curriculum, lack of role models and experience of gender bias.

The final constriction of the engineering talent pipeline lies in the message – or lack of message to women. The studies of medicine and law continued to grow for women, but engineering fell flat in the mid-80's. The two former fields are very people oriented and have messages of helping others through healing and justice. Engineering has not carried forth the message of how the field adds to the quality of life, how it helps communities and individuals to build a better environment.

Ms. Wolff suggests that the higher educational systems and employers recruit and retain women; and seek out talent and provide special training and mentoring programs for women. Several ways for those currently in the field of engineering to do that are:

- Volunteer to supplement classroom teaching with real-life experiences.
 - Encourage nationwide standards for math and science.
 - If you are retiring, consider a second career in teaching.
 - Provide opportunities for young women and minorities to meet higher-level, more experienced women and minority engineers.
 - Acknowledge differences in communication styles – companies tend to reward an aggressive style of speaking and behavior.
 - Provide and support informal networks.
 - Implement a mentoring program.
 - Provide a flexible working environment.
 - Work to make the image of engineering inclusive.
-
- Send the message to the public that engineering and public works are improving the quality of life and they are extremely rewarding and worthwhile endeavors.

“I like to use the air bag example. . .Here we had this wonderful product to save lives, and it wasn’t until fatalities occurred that we realized it was designed for the average male. There probably weren’t a lot of women on the design team for airbags.” —Stephanie Blaisdell, Ph.D., director of diversity and women’s programs, Worcester, MA, Polytechnic Institute

“Scientists discover what is, but engineers create what has never existed.”
—Professor Theodore von Karman, originator of the Jet Propulsion Lab

Wage Gap By Gender and Race

In order for us to understand factors dealing with wages, we need to look at the median annual earnings of African American men and women, Hispanic men and women, and Caucasian women as a percentage of Caucasian men's median annual earnings. The following chart depicts all occupations:

Year	White men	Black men	Hispanic men	White women	Black women	Hispanic women
1970	100%	69.0%	n.a.	58.7%	48.2%	n.a.
1975	100	74.3	72.1%	57.5	55.4	49.3%
1980	100	70.7	70.8	58.9	55.7	50.5
1985	100	69.7	68.0	63.0	57.1	52.1
1990	100	73.1	66.3	69.4	62.5	54.3
1992	100	72.6	63.3	70.0	64.0	55.4
1994	100	75.1	64.3	71.6	63.0	55.6
1995	100	75.9	63.3	71.2	64.2	53.4
1996	100	80.0	63.9	73.3	65.1	56.6
1997	100	75.1	61.4	71.9	62.6	53.9
1998	100	74.9	61.6	72.6	62.6	53.1
1999	100	80.6	61.6	71.6	65.0	52.1

Source: National Committee on Pay Equity.

As of 1999, Caucasian women in today's society earned an average of \$.72 for each \$1 that Caucasian men earn; African American men earn an average of \$.81; Hispanic women earn an average of \$.52, etc. as you can see from the table. Since 1963 when the Equal Pay Act was signed, the closing of the wage gap between men and women has been at a rate of less than half a penny per year. In 1948, 17 million working women represented 28.5% of all employed workers, and in 1955, 60 million working women represent 46.1% of all employed workers.

The wage gap between women and men cuts across a wide spectrum of occupations. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 1999 that women physicians earned 62.5% of the median weekly wages of male physicians and women in sales occupations earned just 59.9% of the wages of men in equivalent positions. And women in the construction industry earned 74.1% of what their male counterparts earned.

Full-time women engineers generally earn less than men, although the differences are mostly due to differences in age, occupation and the highest degree attained. When you look at younger age categories and within occupations, you find that the median salaries of men and women are more alike. A REASON TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO ENTER THE ENGINEERING FIELD.

“Equal pay is not a political issue. It is not even a gender issue. It is, at heart, a national issue, a family issue, and a matter of principle – a question of what kind of country we want America to be today, and in the 21st century.” — President Bill Clinton

Differences In Gender Communication

With women in the minority in the field of public works and thus in our chapter settings, it is important to understand the differences in gender communication in order to encourage women to participate more fully in a male-dominated field and association. Women may find they need to be more assertive in a male-dominated field. Dr. Beth Vanfossen prepared research on this topic for a presentation at the Institute for Teaching and Research on Women (ITROW) *Women and Expression Conference*.

The following facts may surprise you as you read through them:

- Men initiate more interaction than do women.
- In mixed-gender groups, men spend more time talking than do women.
- Men with expertise talk longer than women with expertise.
- In meetings, men gain the “floor” more often and keep the floor for longer periods of time, regardless of their status in the organization.
- Men are more likely than women to interrupt the speaking of other people, however when women do interrupt, they are more likely to interrupt other women than they are to interrupt men.
- Interrupters are perceived as more successful and driving, but less socially acceptable, reliable, and companionable than the interrupted speaker.
- When women ask a question, they take less time in asking it than do men. In addition, they employ much less pre-question predication, they are less likely to ask multiple questions, and they are more likely than men to phrase their question in personal terms.
- When the floor is an informal, collaborative venture, women display a fuller range of language ability.
- Women are less likely than men to have confidence in their ability to make persuasive arguments.
- Many women feel inhibited in formal, mixed-gender groups.
- Some women, when they do gain the “floor,” talk too fast as though they know they are about to be interrupted.
- If women are known to have prior experience or expertise related to the task, or if women are assigned leadership roles, then women show greatly increased verbal behaviors in mixed-gender groups.
- Those who talk more are more likely to be perceived as dominant and controlling of the conversation and those who talk the most in decision-making groups also tend to become the leaders.

- The adoption of task behaviors (a focus on getting things done) enhances a female's adaptability in the organization – but the adoption of relationship behaviors (focusing on the relationships among people) proves problematic for males. Women may want to focus on task- and impression-management goals in their interactions.

Dr. Vanfossen goes on to say that women should avoid using tag questions (“*That’s an interesting idea, isn’t it?*”) or disclaimers (“*I could be mistaken, but...*”). To gain the floor in discussion, women can creatively use strategic questioning. The careful use of questions in a conversation controls when a topic is changed and when a topic is extended and discussed at greater length. Women probably should not adopt male behavior by greatly increasing their rate of interrupting others. Once a woman has the floor, she should resist giving it to another speaker until she has completed her points (“*Just a moment, I haven’t finished...*”). Instead of asking open-ended questions (“*How is the project going?*”) they should ask closed questions (“*When can we expect the report of the data structures?*”). Women should be careful not to undercut what they are saying with their nonverbal actions. They should adopt a slightly more relaxed posture, do less frequent smiling (and smile only when there is something to smile about), and less frequent nodding, head tilting and dropping of eyes in response to another’s gaze. They should avoid using the intonation of a question (raising the voice at the end of a sentence rather than lowering it) when making a declarative statement.

At the chapter level, there are some practices that might help integrate women APWA members into the activities of the chapter:

- Provide a mentorship program or support informal networks for women members, as men tend to have more active informal networks.
- Introduce a strategic goal into the chapter’s strategic plan for parity among all subgroups in volunteer positions.
- Provide opportunities for young women to meet more experienced women leaders in the chapter.
- Aggressively seek out and encourage women members to volunteer for leadership positions.
- Acknowledge differences in communication styles and ask women for their input/opinions in meetings.
- Recognize that women bring to the table workplace experiences, problem-solving abilities, and opinions that are fresh and unique, which strengthens the chapter’s ability to accomplish its goals.

Diversity of APWA Members

APWA's membership is very diverse in the areas of educational background, work experience, age, gender, race, level of responsibility, area of responsibility in public works, salary, earning potential, level of involvement with elected officials and the community, processing style, level of decision-making, accountability, technical knowledge, working hours, articulation skills, negotiation skills, consensus building skills, leadership skills, motivation level, size of municipality/organization; personal interests, etc. All these variances in our membership and the public works profession create a mosaic that makes a career in public works attractive to a variety of people and provides the opportunity in APWA to celebrate its diversity.

APWA has 27,000 members from 67 Chapters in North America. Its members have diverse areas of responsibility (i.e., streets/roads/bridges; potable water distribution & treatment; safety; engineering/surveying; administration; stormwater/flood control; wastewater collection & treatment; parks & recreation; fleet services; emergency management; right-of-way; buildings/grounds). From APWA's membership database, the following demographics can be drawn (note: some respondents did not reply to every demographic question so % does not always equal 100%):

- 2% are under the age of 20; 3.4% are between the ages of 21-30; 15.8% are between the ages of 31-40; 64% are between the ages of 41-60 (with 29% between the ages of 51-60); and 7% are over 61;
- 86% are male; 8% are female;
- 83% are Caucasian; 2.8% are Asian/Pacific Islander; 2% are Hispanic; 1.8% are Black/African-American; and .6% are American Indian/Inuit;
- 10% have a high school diploma/GED; 9% have an Associate degree; 44% have a Bachelor degree; 24% have a graduate degree; .7% have a PhD
- 56% have an engineering or architecture educational background; 10% have a business educational background; 7% have a public administration educational background; 1% have a finance/accounting educational background; and 1% have a planning educational background; 14% have an "other" educational background; and
- 71% are from the public sector; 29% are from the private sector.

There are a few ways we would like all our members/employees to be similar:

- to have integrity;
- to show respect for others;
- to treat all people in a fair manner;
- to be accountable for their own actions;
- to be honest and ethical; and
- to exhibit an appreciation for the differences in all of us and how those differences contribute to make the association and the workplace successful.

Cultural Etiquette and Customs

In the first volume of the Diversity Resource Guide, we addressed a few of the differences in behaviors/mannerisms (i.e., personal space, silence, gestures, greetings, volume of speech, and punctuality) among various cultures. Unfortunately the guide cannot devote much space to this issue compared to the multitude of information available in publications and on the Internet. Therefore, we will concentrate on the three countries/international associations with which APWA has established formal partnerships – Slovakia Public Works Association (SPWA); Asociacion de Municipios de Mexico, A.C. (AMMAC); and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA). The APWA International Affairs Committee works hard to broaden the knowledge and exchange experiences of our members and provide information on trends and advances in public works, through contact with our international partners. They also work to promote friendship and understanding among public works staff on an international basis. Members from these three associations/countries attend our Congresses. Therefore, understanding these three cultures will help us in our communications with our partners. There are some U.S. gestures that are offensive to a number of other countries – such as pointing (it is recommended that Americans use two fingers or the whole hand when pointing in other countries). Other gestures specific to the named country are identified below and in Volume I of the guide – however, it is important to understand that there may be nuances of these identified traits that vary from location to location in each country.

The following information comes from the publication, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Cultural Etiquette*.

Eastern Bloc Countries (Slovakia):

- Handshakes are very appropriate when you arrive and when you leave. When you are greeting a close friend, a man will shake hands and then embrace and touch cheeks (left, then right). Women will do the same, but they don't shake hands first.
- Bring lots of business cards and hand them out to everyone you meet. One side of the card should be printed in the language of your host country.

- Be very formal when you greet someone and use their title (Mister, Miss, Doctor) unless your colleague lets you know it is okay to use their first name.
- A serious expression is generally presented as smiling in public is not part of their cultural setting.
- Avoid chewing gum in public, don't litter, don't be loud in public, and avoid discussion of politics.
- Decision-making is a slow process so final decisions or actions may not be made quickly unless you are meeting with young business people.
- The business arena is still a man's preserve – many men do not appreciate assertive women and there are not many women in upper management.
- Eastern bloc folks love to talk about food, wine, sports, sightseeing, and their fine architecture, beautiful parks and museums. Don't talk about the condition of historic buildings or the air quality.
- If you take a gift to the association's president and/or executive director, also bring a bag of small presents and hand them out liberally.
- Standard business dress is conservative and tasteful.
- Discussing business is not appropriate while eating.

Mexico

- Mexicans have enormous pride in their cultural heritage and like to find out how much you know about them, so they may ask what you've seen so far in Mexico.
- Personal friendship is very important to Mexicans, so upon returning home, call or send them a note – stay in touch. In any business transaction, they are looking for long-term relationships with people they can respect.
- Be sure to use everyone's title when you address them. In Mexico you should use the person's professional title by itself (Doctor rather than Dr. Smith). If they don't have a professional title, then use Señor (Mr.), Señora (Mrs.) or Señorita (Miss). Don't be the first to call anyone by his/her first name.
- Hispanics typically use two last names – one from their father (this comes first) and one from their mother. Therefore, you would call Señor Luis Juan Pedro Lopez Morales, "Señor Lopez." When a woman marries, she usually adds her husband's last name – so in the above example, she would be "Señora Morales."
- When greeting, men shake hands upon meeting and women may shake hands with men, but it is up to the woman – so wait and see if the woman extends her hand. Mexican men may also bow while shaking a woman's hand. For acquaintances, for both men and women, a handshake and a kiss on the cheek are in order.

- When interacting with Mexican colleagues, look into the eyes of the other person intermittently, then look away. Constant eye contact will be interpreted as aggressive. The person who is talking can maintain direct eye contact. Don't put your hands in your pockets or on your hips (this is interpreted as a challenge); put your cash into a clerk's hand, not onto the counter; and use your index finger when indicating height.
- The Latin expectation that men should be gentlemen virtually guarantees that female executives will be treated with respect.
- Conservative clothing and jewelry should be worn in a business setting.
- Things happen at a leisurely pace in Mexico, so expect delays in decision-making as the decisions that are made at the top must first be discussed at the lower levels.
- Custom doesn't require exchanging gifts among executives, but small items might be nice on the first visit – something with APWA's logo. On a follow-up visit, something more substantial should be given, such as a bottle of wine. Don't give gifts made of silver as it is linked to the sort of tawdry trinkets snapped up by visiting gringos. Knives imply you're interested in severing a relationship. Mexican folklore has assigned meanings to certain colors of flowers: red flowers cast spells; white flowers lift spells; and yellow flowers represent death.
- Business is not discussed during social events.

Australia

- Do not confuse Australia with New Zealand; the latter smaller country strives to establish a separate identity apart from its giant neighbor.
- Never arrive late for a business appointment. You'll rate points if you get to your meeting five-ten minutes early.
- Informality is very important in all aspects of life in Australia; no one is more important than anyone else. Aussies are proud of their "classless" society. Handshakes are firm and accompanied by eye contact. At first meeting, address by a title and the surname, but Aussies are quick to switch to a first name basis.
- It is acceptable to hand over a business card, but you may not receive one in return. Many Australians don't use business cards.
- Be careful of U.S. gestures in Australia:
 - Winking of a man to a woman is inappropriate;
 - Thumbs up, hitchhiking, or okay gestures are considered rude;
 - V for Victory with palm inward is obscene.

- Business clothes are slightly more formal than in the U.S., although casual wear is the same. Women don't wear pants as often as they do in the U.S.
- Topics of conversation appropriate for a casual discussion are international politics, weather, team sports, sailing and fishing. Avoid discussions about racial strife, labor disputes, religion, and nuclear arms.
- Aussies love to tease – if you get teased, grin and bear it – or laugh it off and tease back.
- Gifts should not be ostentatious as Australians are more impressed by personal characteristics than by showy gifts.
- In an Australian pub, each person in a party is responsible for buying a round of drinks.

“You get sick by what you put in your mouth, but you can be hurt by what comes out of your mouth.” —Old Chinese Proverb

disABILITY Information and Considerations

A common adage among people with disabilities is “Stop focusing on our disabilities, because you lose the focus on our abilities.”

Only 15% of people with disabilities in the U.S. were born with them; one in six Americans will have a disability at some time in their lives. Therefore, the likelihood that one of us or someone we know has a great chance of becoming disabled to some degree within our lifetime. Remember that disability does not discriminate. According to Douglas Kruse, an economist from Rutgers University, more than \$109 billion of public and private funding goes to the 60% of working age people with disabilities who are unemployed. If only 1 million people with disabilities of the 60% unemployed were to find jobs, the following statistics would hold true:

- There would be as much as a \$21.2 billion annual increase in earned income;
- There would be a \$286 million annual decrease in the use of food stamps;
- There would be a \$1.8 billion decrease in Supplemental Security Income payments; and
- There would be 284,000 fewer people using Medicaid and 166,000 fewer people using Medicare.

A Harris survey conducted in 2000, found that:

- Almost 90% of workers with disabilities received “Good” or “Excellent” performance ratings;
- Almost 70% of people with disabilities say they need no special equipment to perform their jobs; and
- Nearly 20% of accommodations that are needed cost nothing and another 50% cost less than \$500.

Often the most difficult barriers for people with disabilities to overcome are attitudes other people carry regarding people with disabilities. These attitudes keep people from appreciating and experiencing the full potential a person with a disability can achieve. Remember: *Attitudes are the real disability.*

The U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy identifies some tips for interacting with people with disabilities:

- Listen to the person with the disability. Do not make assumptions about what that person can or cannot do.
- When speaking with a person with a disability, talk directly to that person, not through his or her companion. This applies whether the person has a mobility impairment, a mental impairment, is blind or is deaf and uses an interpreter.
- Extend common courtesies to people with disabilities as you would anyone else. Shake hands or hand over business cards. If the person cannot shake your hand or grasp your card, they will tell you. Do not be ashamed of your attempt, however. (Or you might choose to gently put your hand over their hand or arm as a handshake. This still allows the human touch that says I accept you and am not turned off by your disability. Be willing to put the business card in another location on the person, bag, etc as they might direct – or you can offer.)
- If the person has a speech impairment and you are having trouble understanding what he/she is saying, ask the person to repeat rather than pretend you understand. The former is respectful and leads to accurate communication; the latter is belittling and leads to embarrassment.
- Offer assistance to a person with a disability, but wait until your offer is accepted before you help.
- It is okay to feel nervous or uncomfortable around people with disabilities and its okay to admit that. When you encounter these situations, think “person” first instead of disability; you will eventually relax.

In addition to this list, the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities identifies some additional tips:

- Treat adults with disabilities as adults rather than as children, regardless of the disability.
- Speak at a normal rate, without exaggeration or overemphasis
- Allow people to do things for themselves when they want to, even if it takes longer or results in mistakes. Do not always “do for” the person.
- Respect the individual’s personal space and auxiliary aids. Do not:
 - Lean against or push a wheelchair;
 - Pet a service animal in a harness;
 - Grab an arm or hand when attempting to guide; or
 - Move wheelchairs, crutches, canes or other assistive devices out of reach of a person who uses them.

Some individuals believe that people with disabilities are given unfair advantages, such as easier work assignments. Although the means of accomplishing tasks may differ from employee to employee, an employer needs to hold people with disabilities to the same job standards as co-workers. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not require special privileges for people with disabilities, just equal opportunities. And most people with disabilities aren't asking for a lowering of standards – they just want the same chance to prove themselves that everyone else has.

As with any aspect of humanity, there are some people with disabilities who are rude or angry. Classifying all people with disabilities in the same way would be the same as classifying all engineers as having the same characteristics. People with disabilities have the same variety of temperaments and personalities as people without disabilities. If we treat each person openly, honestly, and equally, we reach the true understanding of diversity.

Patricia Digh, in an article from *The Disability Messenger*, provides some guidelines for writing (*and speaking*) about people with disabilities:

- Use the people-first rule: “the woman is blind” not “the blind woman.”
- Avoid the following terms, all of which cast disabilities as a negative. “Suffers from” indicates ongoing pain and torment, which is no more the case for most people with disabilities as it is for most people without disabilities. “Afflicted with” denotes a disease, which most disabilities are not. “Victim of” implies a crime is being committed on the person who has a disability.
- Do not use “wheelchair-bound” or “confined to a wheelchair.” People see their wheelchairs as convenient modes of transportation, not prisons. The proper phrase is “uses a wheelchair.”
- Use “disability” not “handicap.” The word “handicap” derives from the phrase “cap in hand,” referring to a beggar and is despised by most people with disabilities.
- “Blind” refers to total loss of eyesight; “low vision” or “visual disability” is more accurate for people who have some degree of sight. Avoid “non-sighted.”
- For people with speech disabilities, avoid “mute,” “dumb,” or “speech impediment.”
- Avoid “deformed,” “deformity” and “birth defect.” A person may be “born without arms” or “has a congenital disability,” but is probably not defective.

- Down Syndrome is a chromosomal condition that causes developmental disability. Use “person with Down Syndrome.” Avoid “mongol” or “mongoloid.”
- Quadriplegia is a substantial loss of function in all four extremities. Paraplegia is a substantial loss of function in the lower part of the body. Use “man with paraplegia” or “she has quadriplegia.”
- Just as it is not always necessary to convey the color of a person’s hair or skin, do not mention that a person has a disability unless the story is about disabilities.

Obesity Discrimination

Obesity is a disease that affects at least 70 million Americans – more than one-third of all adults and one in five children. Each year, obesity causes at least 300,000 excess deaths and costs the country more than \$100 billion. Research is severely limited by a shortage of funds, inadequate insurance coverage for treatment, and discrimination and mistreatment of people with obesity.

In our society, people larger than average encounter discriminatory attitudes and sometimes are denied equal opportunity in many areas of their lives. People of all sizes, classes and ethnic groups have positive and negative qualities. Some might have personality traits of which we do not approve, but it is unfair to make a judgment about an entire group of people based upon a stereotype or on one individual's behavior.

Some areas in which discrimination occurs with people larger than average are:

- Prospective employers sometimes refuse to hire large size people in jobs where employees do physical work or where employees interact with the public.
- Employers sometimes keep large people in jobs beneath their abilities or demote or fire them because of stated or unstated weight prejudice.
- Physicians/health care professionals sometimes tell large patients to lose weight rather than treat them for their specific medical condition.
- Health care equipment (i.e., cat scans and MRIs) is sometimes inaccessible to large people.
- Health and life insurance companies sometimes force large people to pay higher premiums than those of average weight.
- Public facilities are sometimes inaccessible to many large people because of turnstiles, narrow armchairs, narrow doors and small bathrooms.
- Airplanes, trains, and buses sometimes have seating that is uncomfortably small or tight for larger people and some airlines require a large person to purchase two airline seat tickets.
- Television and movies sometimes portray large people in the following ways:
 - Larger men are seen eating more often on TV than men of average weight.

- Larger women are almost twice as likely to be the object of humor as their thinner counterparts.
- Heavyset characters are more likely to be minorities, older and unemployed.
- Overweight people are portrayed as lazy and unmotivated.

Too often we tend to blame large people for their condition no matter what the real cause. We blame them for not losing weight no matter how difficult or impossible it might be. We blame them for using more than “their share” of health care resources. We consider them to be self-indulgent, which justifies any disrespectful treatment they might receive. Stereotypes are degrading – they destroy people’s individuality and emphasize only the negative qualities. Prejudices based on weight are no different from prejudices based on skin color, gender, religion, or disability.

Understanding Basic Beliefs of Major Religions

The “Big Five” religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Although a number of other religions exist in the world today, we will only review these five in this guide because of limited space. Religious beliefs are very important to people. By studying these various beliefs, we are able to understand various cultures’ and groups’ practices, philosophies, customs and traditions.

Although each of the five major religions is different from the others, all five share a basic common denominator – each offers man/woman/child a way of life, which can lead to a blissful destination.

Hinduism and Buddhism are Eastern religions, arising originally in India. Hindus and Buddhists believe there is no real meaning to human life and that the individual is not important. They both provide ways of escape for their believers. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are Western religions that believe there must be meaning to human life. They stress belief in One God with whom they can communicate, who cares about those who believe in Him and who can reward the believer with continued life after death.

Hinduism: Hinduism is the oldest of the world’s living religions, dating back more than 5,000 years, and claims approximately 900 million followers. The basis of Hinduism is the belief in the unity of everything and the main desire of a Hindu is not to become a perfect human being on earth or a happy dweller in Heaven, but to become united with Brahman, the eternal, universal spirit. The purpose of life is to realize that we are part of God and by doing so we can leave this plane of existence and rejoin with God. This can be achieved by going through cycles of birth, life and death known as samsara. The progress toward enlightenment is measured by one’s karma – the sum of a person’s thoughts and actions in all his/her previous lives. The accumulation of one’s good and bad deeds determines the person’s next reincarnation. Good acts and thoughts and a devotion to God, help one to be reborn at a higher level. Bad acts and thoughts cause one to be reborn at a lower level, perhaps even as an animal. The goals of Hinduism are release from repeated reincarnation through

the practice of yoga, adherence to Vedic scriptures, and devotion to a personal guru. Many objects in nature are considered sacred in varying degrees – the most sacred is the cow. The cow is divine in its own right and the killing or eating of cows is forbidden. The banyan and papal trees and the Ganges River are also sacred.

Buddhism: Buddhism is considered more a discipline than a religion as the Fathers of the Buddhist church reject all ideas of a Supreme being or of a soul and see no need for a savior, prayer, or eternal life after death. Buddhists believe in reincarnation and that one must go through the cycles of birth, life, and death. After going through many cycles, if a person releases their attachment to desire and to self, they can attain Nirvana – which is the end of desire. Buddhism teaches that meditation and the practice of good religious and moral behavior can lead to Nirvana. Estimates indicate that Buddhist followers number around 360 million.

Judaism: Judaism's beliefs come from the Old Testament and the Torah, which contains a total of 613 biblical commandments. Judaism arose before Christianity and Islam and is characterized by belief in a monotheistic God, who is creator of the universe and who leads His people (the Jews) by speaking through prophets. Jews believe in the inherent goodness of the world and its inhabitants as creations of God. They do not believe that they require a savior to save them from original sin. They believe they are God's chosen people and that the Messiah will arrive in the future, gather them into Israel, there will be a general resurrection of the dead, and the Messiah will bring the world to a state of paradise.

Judaism is divided into three main groups that vary in their interpretation of those parts of the Torah that deal with personal, communal, internal, and religious activities: 1) the Orthodox Community that views the Torah as derived from God, and therefore is absolutely binding; 2) the Reform Movement, that follows primarily the Torah's ethical content; and 3) the Conservative Jews, who follow most of the observances set out in the Torah, but allow for change due to modern life. The most universal of Jewish rituals is kashruth, the dietary laws – most of which are based on sound hygienic or economic reasoning. Three Jewish festivals established by the Bible mark the times when God intervened in Israel's history. Passover marks the coming out of Egypt and deliverance from captivity. Rosh Hashanah celebrates the creation of the world and Yom Kippur is a day of fasting and prayer when the ultimate judgment and mercy of the Lord are awaited.

Judaism has approximately 18 million followers, but is far more important in areas such as history, literature, science, politics, and religion than its relatively small numbers might suggest.

Christianity: Christianity started out as a breakaway sect of Judaism nearly 2000 years ago. It claims about 2 billion followers. What separates the Christians from the Jews is Christians' belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and that Jesus died in our place to save us from original sin. Christians also believe that Jesus was fully human and fully God and as the Son of God is part of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christians believe that those who sincerely repent of their sins before God will be saved and will eventually join God in Heaven. There are a number of various forms of Christianity such as Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism (which can be divided into four major forms: Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, and free or independent).

Roman Catholics outnumber all other Christians combined with approximately 900 million followers. The Roman Catholic Church claims direct historical descent from the church founded by the apostle Peter. The Pope in Rome is the spiritual leader and administers church affairs through bishops and priests.

Eastern Orthodoxy denies the authority of the Pope to speak and act for the entire church without a church council. The main difference between the two churches is their attitude about the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father to Son. Roman Catholicism sees the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as three equal parts in the divine essence. The Orthodox Eastern church has approximately 158 million followers and is the second largest Christian community in the world.

There is so much diversity within Protestantism that some forms have more in common with non-Protestant Christianity than they have with each other. It is difficult to accurately categorize Protestant churches and would be impossible to mention them all, however, it could be said that Protestantism is basically non-Roman Western Christianity. Some of the largest churches of the independent movement are the Baptist, the Congregationalist, and the Churches of Christ which all exercise congregational government. Other forms of free churches are the Adventists, Quakers, Christian Science, Children of God, and the Pentecostal churches which grew out of the "holiness movement" that developed among Methodist and other Protestants in the first decade of the 20th century.

Islam: Islam is the youngest of the world's great religions, but Muslims do not view it as a new religion. They believe that it is the same faith taught by the prophets, Abraham, David, Moses, Jesus, and lastly, Muhammad. Islam believes there is One God, but while Judaism looks forward to the son of David as the final messenger of God and Christianity sees Jesus Christ as the final messenger, Islam sees Muhammad as the final messenger and as the last of the apostles. It also considers its holy book, the Qu'ran, as the final revelation of God's will – as more perfect than the Jewish Old Testament and the Christian New Testament. Islam sets man face to face with God with nothing between them – no other gods, no priests, and no ceremonies. The duties of all Muslims are known as the Five Pillars of Islam:

- Recite the shahadah at least once in a lifetime with total sincerity and total submission to God – “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger.”
- Perform the salat (prayer) 5 times a day while facing Mecca.
- Donate regularly to charity via the zakat, a 2.5% charity tax.
- Fast during the month of Ramadan, the month that Muhammad received the Qu'ran from Allah (the One True God).
- Make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca, if economically and physically possible.

Muslims follow a strict monotheism with one creator who is just, omnipotent and merciful. They also believe in Satan who drives people to sin and that sinners will spend eternity in Hell. Muslims who sincerely repent and submit to God will return to a state of sinlessness and go to Paradise after death. For Muslims, Islam is life – they make no artificial division between the secular and the sacred. They believe that alcohol, drugs and gambling should be avoided and they reject racism. In fact, their tolerance of diversity, particularly racial diversity, sets Islam high among the truly civilized forces in the history of mankind. Islam has over 1 billion followers from all races, nationalities and cultures.

Chapter Newsletter Diversity Quotes

A subtle way to introduce diversity awareness into your chapter is to create a special corner in each issue of your chapter newsletter labeled “Diversity Awareness Corner” and use quotes that speak to inclusiveness, that address how our differences contribute to the whole, that show appreciation of how diversity makes our lives richer. You’ll want to be especially careful in your chapter newsletter not to use jokes or photographs that express gender bias, religious or ethnic prejudices, or any type of discrimination. Some examples of diversity quotes might include...

“As long as I have a choice in the matter, I shall live only in a country where civil liberty, tolerance, and equality of all citizens before the law prevail.”
—Albert Einstein

“We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny. But what we put into it is ours.” —Dag Hammarskjöld

“Nothing in life just happens. You have to have the stamina to meet the obstacles and overcome them.” —Golda Meier

“Formula for handling people:

- 1. Listen to the other person’s story.*
- 2. Listen to the other person’s full story.*
- 3. Listen to the other person’s full story first.”*

—General George Marshall

“How do we create a harmonious society out of so many kinds of people? The key is tolerance – the one value that is indispensable in creating community.” —Barbara Jordan

“Choose your friends by their character and your socks by their color. Choosing your socks by their character makes no sense, and choosing your friends by their color is unthinkable.” —Anonymous

“I have a dream, that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!” —Martin Luther King, Jr.

"If you want to make beautiful music, you must play the black and the white notes together." —Richard Milhous Nixon

"Being a wheelchair user has not stopped me from dancing. The only difference is that now I dance to the ever-changing rhythm of life and more intensely participate in the endless harmonies of life that are presented to me each and every moment I breath. This 'dance of life' far exceeds physically dancing to a set rhythm of a particular song." —Michele Ohmes

"No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive." —Mahatma Ghandi

"The real death of America will come when everyone is alike."
—James T. Ellison

"Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."
—Benjamin Franklin

"There is no such thing as a 'self-made' man. We are made up of thousands of others. Everyone who has ever done a kind deed for us, or spoken one word of encouragement to us, has entered into the make-up of our character and of our thoughts, as well as our success." —George Matthew Adams

"There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self." —Aldous Huxley

"Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Others stay for awhile and leave footprints on our hearts and we are never the same." —Anonymous

"They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel." —Carl W. Buechner

"In the book of life, the answers aren't in the back." —Charlie Brown

"There wouldn't be a sky full of stars if we were all meant to wish on the same one." —Frances Clark

"If you want better eyes, try to see the best in people." —K.Hughes

“The troubles of the young are soon over; they leave no external mark. If you wound the tree in its youth the bark will quickly cover the gash; but when the tree is very old, peeling the bark off...you will see the scar there still.”
—Olive Schreiner

“There is no such thing as a sudden heart-attack. It takes years of preparation.” —Anonymous

“How do we create a harmonious society out of so many kinds of people? The key is tolerance – the one value that is indispensable in creating community.”
—Barbara Jordan

Volunteer Motivations by Generation

APWA's local Chapters and the national level rely heavily on volunteers to move issues forward concerning the public works profession. It takes a great number of volunteers to govern the chapter, plan programs of benefit to members, promote the profession to young people and infrastructure needs to the community, write chapter newsletter articles, serve on committees, plan golf outings and social events for members, etc. It is important to understand what motivates volunteers to donate their time and talents – particularly with three generations at present in our association and a fourth generation currently in the workforce and almost ready to join different associations. However, it is also important to realize that individuals do not fall neatly into one or another generation. Our attempt is not to stereotype people, but to provide some broad traits of each generation. (See **Diversity Resource Guide, Volume I* at www.apwa.net for a more in-depth discussion of what the different generations value, what motivates them, and what rewards they seek.) We want to make sure we provide our volunteers with an experience that gives them a positive return on their investment. Following are some points to keep in mind when recruiting volunteers from the various generations.

The **Veterans Generation** was born between 1909 and 1945. They have a very direct leadership style, operating in a command-and-control decision-making system, which gets things done easily and quickly. They value responsibility and bring to the volunteer role a sense of accomplishment and experience in leadership positions; they are loyal and hard working. This strong sense of self and of pride in knowing what they can accomplish can translate to others as “having all the answers.” But if you want someone to take charge, make decisions and delegate responsibility, this is the generation to do that. Their vast experience is valuable to the chapter through an historical perspective and in an advisory capacity.

The **Baby Boomers Generation** was born in the years following World War II through 1962. It is the largest generation. This group produced the suburban neighborhoods, which created a great growth in local organization and the need for volunteers. They got involved because “it was the right thing to do” and it was expected of them to give back to their community; they are service oriented and willing to “go the extra mile.” They are influenced to volunteer just on the

premise that they should. This generation makes up the vast majority of APWA's membership and as such, with retirement in the not too distant future, will be leaving the volunteer role to the younger generation, which has a different set of motivations. Chapter leadership roles are generally held by this generation of members, but the future of APWA will depend upon how well the chapters and the association overall can interest the next generation in valuing membership in their professional association and serving it through volunteerism designed with their values in mind.

Generation X (which most likely will rename their own generation), born from 1961 to 1981, was raised in a time of economic recession, a decade of disillusionment, and a time of very limited opportunities. They are very self-motivated and self-reliant. They were latchkey kids and entered into solo sports more so than group sports. They are technoliterate, independent, and creative. If they are going to volunteer, they want recognition; if they give of their personal time, then they expect something in return. They will do just about anything that they believe will get them instant success. They focus on goals and work very hard to achieve a reward. But if their focus is disrupted, they will move on to another task. Therefore, they function very well in short term task forces rather than standing committees whose job never seems to be completed. Xers possess the ability to learn and adapt quickly to new challenges and opportunities, thus chapters should keep these members in mind for short term technical projects or projects where new problem-solving techniques would be useful. They have a great deal of technological savvy and an ability to communicate using a broad range of information media. They may volunteer to do a program presentation on a technological advancement or provide a service that they can fulfill with the computer. They may use different technologies to research, communicate, and approach situations from an entrepreneurial perspective – which could be very valuable to chapters as they look to the younger members for new innovative program ideas, more efficient decision-making, and challenges that require a different skill set. One of the proudest achievements of Generation X is their part in the “diversity” movement of the last decade. They believe that individuals should seek to uncover the ways that they are different and understand how these differences can add value to the employment setting and their professional association.

Generation Y, born between 1982 and 2000, was born to older parents and have a very intense parent focus and structured life. They

seek affirmation, place a high value on integrity, thrive on supervision, are optimistic, believe in civic duty, and need a lot of attention. They respect the Veterans Generation and like to team with them; they believe the Veterans Generation to be trustworthy, good leaders, and brave. So pairing them with a well-seasoned leader in the chapter or providing mentorship through work situations or chapter projects works well for them.

Triumphs

Following the release of the first volume of the Diversity Resource Guide, the Diversity Committee has received information on some of the successes APWA Chapters have had in the area of diversity.

- First Timers' Meetings were held at the Texas Chapter Annual Conference and the Florida Chapter Annual Conference.
- San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter Membership Committee recognizes new members at program meetings and on the chapter website; a member of the committee introduces the new member to at least ten people, seats them with a group of people to get the network flowing, and asks that they participate on a committee in their area of interest. Non-members attending their meetings are given an application form and a member of the committee follows up with them. They are particularly looking for minorities and young people. If rosters are not filled through an agency or a corporate member, the committee members call the Public Works Director or the Principal directly and asks them to consider putting minorities or young people on their rosters to complete them.
- Texas Chapter has matched up diversity and membership by appointing one member in the chapter and each of their branches to be a Diversity/ Membership Chair.
- Northern California Chapter interviews each new member and takes their picture for their monthly newsletter and displays each new member's photo at the registration table of each chapter program meeting in order to encourage new members to attend meetings and to remind seasoned members to greet these new members. They also hope that the photo and information on the new member at each meeting will give members a starting point with which to approach the new member.
- One chapter diversity liaison indicated she copies excerpts from the first volume of the Diversity Resource Guide and has them laying on meeting tables prior to meetings at her place of employment. She also keeps a copy of the guide hanging on her office door and one lying on the meeting room table. She indicated people tend to pick it up when they come in to a meeting and see something that interests them.
- Chicago Metro Chapter held three breakfast meetings of a newly formed group for Administrative Assistants that featured speakers on the functions and projects of public works, adding to the knowledge base of the support staff of organizations. The three meetings featured

speakers on the topics of “Ice and Snow Control,” “The City of Chicago Streetscape Program,” and “Urban Landscapes.”

- Nevada Chapter sends a small team to meet with a city manager, city mayor, city department of public works. They explain APWA and ask the city to select their best staff – the ones they want to see move up in their organization – and then ask how APWA can help train them to do just that. They then implement a mentoring program for young leaders – part of which is to mentor the young leaders through planning all phases of the chapter’s conferences.

Basic Core Competencies for Public Works Directors

The APWA Leadership and Management Committee surveyed public works officials and those who employ them to determine what they believe to be the most important characteristics of an effective public works leader. That the leader must have technical knowledge needed for the job goes without saying, but something else distinguishes a leader. Successful public works leaders and those who know them well seem to agree that the following characteristics are essential:

An **effective public works leader...**

- Possesses **Integrity** – acts forthrightly and honestly, demonstrating through his or her actions how high moral character may be reflected in both the delivery of public works services and the operations of the public works organization.
- Is **Accountable** – takes responsibility for his or her individual actions as well as those of the organization and its members, using explicit explanations of expectations and objective measures to monitor progress.
- Is **Decisive** – draws conclusions, resolves disputes, and exercises judgment forthrightly, unambiguously, and with firmness.
- Is **Public Service Oriented** – acts in the public interest and demonstrates through his or her actions belief in the value of public service.
- **Empowers** others – grants authority and acts to allow subordinates to make decisions and act independently, providing support as necessary to encourage responsible independent action.
- Is **Deliberate** – makes decisions with careful consideration of the merits of alternative choices or courses of action available in a situation.
- Is a **Communicator** – listens to what others have to say about a situation and explains forthrightly his or her own views.
- Shows **Respect for Others** – demonstrates through his or her actions consideration for colleagues, subordinates, and members of the public, and an appreciation of concerns and contributions of each.
- Is **Technically Knowledgeable** – understands how the operations and facilities for which he or she is responsible work and maintains that understanding as these operations and facilities evolve.

- **Manages Resources** – recognizes the value of the organization's personnel, equipment, materials, facilities, funds, and reputation and allocates these to accomplish the organizations' objectives.
- Is **Resilient** – is able to recover and bound back from frustrations, disappointments, and setback without undue loss of confidence in his or her own capabilities or those of associates or the organization.
- **Delegates** – willingly assigns responsibility and authority to others capable of acting in his or her place to enhance the quality of the organization.
- **Maintains Balance** – recognizes that an individual's work is only a part of life and demonstrates through his or her actions all aspects of one's life merit time and energy.

APWA Standards of Professional Conduct

The APWA Diversity Committee respects all rights of members of the American Public Works Association, however, wishes to remind our members that we serve the public and as we do that, there are certain standards by which we should govern ourselves. These are not enforced standards, but should guide us within our profession.

The American Public Works Association serves the public interest through education of its members, decision-makers and the general public about the issues relating to effective provision, management and operation of public infrastructure, commonly referred to as public works. The Association is comprised of individual members, public agencies and private firms who are interested in effectively managing and protecting the public's investment in infrastructure and public works services. The Board of Directors of the American Public Works Association advocates the following Standards of Professional Conduct to guide its members in the conduct of their business. The Board of Directors encourages its members, whether individual or organization, to apply these standards to every aspect of their professional life.

As a member of the American Public Works Association I am dedicated and committed to maintaining the following standards of professional conduct.

- *I will keep the public trust and will not take personal advantage of privileged information or relationships.*
- *I will put public interest above individual, group or societal interest and consider my chosen occupation as an opportunity to serve society.*
- *I will encourage sustainability through wise use of resources; whether they are natural resources, financial resources or human resources.*
- *I will consider public health and safety in every aspect of my work.*
- *I will conduct myself with personal integrity in a manner that enhances and honors the reputation of the profession, my employer, my community and the Association.*
- *I will ensure that the work for which I am responsible complies with all legal requirements of the local, state, province, or federal governments.*
- *I will strive to plan, design, build, maintain and operate public infrastructure in a manner that respects the environment and the ability of government to adequately preserve these assets for succeeding generations.*

The Power of One

*As the soot and dirt and ash rained down,
We became one color.
As we carried each other down the stairs of the burning building,
We became one class.
As we lit candles of waiting and hope,
We became one generation.
As the firefighters and police officers fought their way into the inferno,
We became one gender.
As we fell to our knees in prayer for strength,
We became one faith.
As we whispered or shouted words of encouragement,
We spoke one language.
As we gave our blood in lines a mile long,
We became one body.
As we mourned together the great loss,
We became one family.
As we cried tears of grief and loss,
We became one soul.
As we retell with pride of the sacrifice of heroes,
We become one people.*

We are:

- *One color*
- *One class*
- *One generation*
- *One gender*
- *One faith*
- *One language*
- *One body*
- *One family*
- *One soul*
- *One people*

We are The Power of One.

We are United.

We are America.

—Anonymous

My View of Diversity

The beauty of our world is that diversity is one of the few constants that is always present and available in every arena of our life to enjoy, learn from, use, explore and eagerly anticipate.

Without diversity, harmony would be impossible. Music with only one note would have no melody. An orchestra with only one instrument cannot exist.

The animal kingdom with only one animal could not produce the wild, domestic, and working animals we so thoroughly enjoy.

A rainbow with only one color would only be a line across the sky, not a glorious vision.

An artist with only one color to choose from could not present the depth of beauty brought out by the defining shades of color. Even a charcoal or pen artist uses careful diverse levels of shading and lines to bring depth and beauty to the sketch.

Weather that never changes would produce either no rain or no sunshine depending on which was the constant, making it impossible to live on this planet.

If there was only one plant, where would the herbs and medicines come from? As we know most of the healing medicines we use originated from plants. Also think of our food supply. Could we survive on only wheat everyday?

What if we had only land and not water, or water and not land?

If there was only one gender, age, character, height, color, intelligence, opinion and goal in our human race, then man would not have had woman, the endless talents, abilities, viewpoints, and growth to develop upon would not exist, and the world as we now live in would not have been possible.

Let's give glory to the fact that diversity is a constant gift we are allowed to enjoy each and every moment of our lives. Then let us protect that diversity with every breathing moment of our lives."

—Michele Ohmes
Member of APWA KC Metro Chapter

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