

# **Water Works: Why Modern Cities Depend on a Skilled Water Workforce**

The Invisible Force Behind  
Clean Water and Urban Survival

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# Clean Water Needs Skilled Hands

- Modern cities survive on complex water & wastewater systems
- These systems are built, maintained, protected by skilled people
- A dedicated workforce is the foundation of urban health & resilience



# The Hidden Engine of Cities

- 2 million+ miles of underground pipe in the U.S.
- Treatment, distribution, recovery—all 24/7
- Clean water systems run on human skill and vigilance



# A Quiet Crisis Is Brewing

- 30–50% of utility staff retiring in the next 5–10 years
- Urban systems already understaffed
- Aging systems + shrinking workforce = vulnerability



# High Skill, High Stakes

- Technical: chemistry, mechanics, electronics, SCADA systems
- Soft: crisis response, communication, teamwork
- No 4-year degree required—open to diverse talent
- Strong pathway to equitable, middle-class opportunity





# Invest in People, Not Just Pipes

- Partner with high schools, community colleges, unions
- Launch training, apprenticeships & internships
- Prioritize local, inclusive recruitment

As seen here, Veolia is partnering with Richmond schools and Contra Costa Community College in CA to provide students hands-on experience in water management, engineering, and environmental science through classroom lessons and treatment plant tours.



# Equity + Resilience = A Better Future

- Water careers uplift communities
- Every hire strengthens city resilience
- Skilled workforce = sustainable & just urban systems



# Secure the Future—Train the Workforce

- Cities can't thrive without clean water
- Clean water doesn't happen without skilled people
- Let's build the next generation of protectors





# Questions?



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