



Community Outreach Guide for Local Transportation Agencies



MINNESOTA LTAP
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



Community Outreach Guide for Local Transportation Agencies

Many local public works agencies across Minnesota are struggling to hire and retain enough qualified staff. This guide is part of a Minnesota Local Road Research Board initiative to help local transportation agencies meet their workforce needs.

The purpose of this guide is to support local transportation agencies in community outreach about careers. It includes tools, tips, and strategies to plan and manage outreach activities and communicate with students. The guide also provides a long-term, sustainable plan for ongoing efforts.

Topic areas covered in this community outreach guide

- Planning community events and contacts
- Event checklist
- Communication guidance for middle and high schools
- Sample outlines for formal presentations
- Additional outreach strategies

Planning Community Events and Contacts

The first step in the outreach process is to plan your community events and contacts. Outreach may include career fairs, classroom presentations, agency open houses, youth group visits, and community-based organization presentations or events.

The following charts can help you document your agency’s efforts. Keeping track of and sharing this basic information helps project team members communicate before, during, and after an event. In addition, this information may help you plan and staff subsequent events. Feel free to adapt these charts to suit your agency’s needs.

Outreach contacts

Middle School Contacts		Youth Group Contacts	
Name:		Name:	
Title:		Organization:	
Email:		Email:	
Phone:		Phone:	
Notes:		Notes:	
Name:		Name:	
Title:		Organization:	
Email:		Email:	
Phone:		Phone:	
Notes:		Notes:	
High School Contacts		Community-Based Organization Contacts	
Name:		Name:	
Title:		Organization:	
Email:		Email:	
Phone:		Phone:	
Notes:		Notes:	
Name:		Name:	
Title:		Organization:	
Email:		Email:	
Phone:		Phone:	
Notes:		Notes:	

Commonly attended outreach events

Event:		Event:	
Host organization:		Host organization:	
Host contact:		Host contact:	
Month of event:		Month of event:	
Event audience:		Event audience:	
Notes:		Notes:	

Event Checklist

This checklist will help you get the most out of organized events such as career fairs, making them fun-filled for both the local agency and attendees.

Always

- Maintain communication with event host and others who are volunteering at related events

Before the Event

- Determine the most appropriate activities to demonstrate
- Recruit representatives (at least two)
- Determine if an upcoming project should be showcased
 - Examples: Clean water/flood mitigation/infrastructure-hardening demonstrations
 - Recruit project members to assist at the event
 - Create simple hands-on demonstrations or displays
 - Create take-away information
- Make arrangements to display equipment
 - Equipment may include drones, computer programming, software, GIS, remote-controlled inspection vehicles, traffic lights, and signs — whatever equipment your agency wants to showcase
- Print several copies of the brochure [Local Transportation Agency Careers in Minnesota](#) and activity materials (if applicable)
- If providing a formal presentation, see sample presentation outlines for additional guidance

At the Event

- Arrive at least 30 minutes early
 - Check in with the event host
 - Set up booth space
 - Equipment
 - Display and take-away information
- Bring laptops or tablets to display the [Become a Civil Engineer website](#)
 - Make games available: [Gridlock Buster](#), [Mini Motorways](#)
 - Play one of the videos featured on the Become a Civil Engineer website.
 - Be prepared to demonstrate one of the outreach activities listed on the Become a Civil Engineer website or demonstrate an activity of your own.
- Hand out the brochure [Local Transportation Agency Careers in Minnesota](#)
 - Provide contact information with each brochure by stapling business cards or using preprinted stickers
 - Leave behind with teachers, counselors, and career centers
- Offer registration for follow-up events
 - Provide a sign-up sheet for agency tours, project tours, and job shadowing for students who want more
 - Organized group activities should be on non-school days

After the Event

- Document and share follow-up event
- Optional: Submit a short summary for Minnesota LTAP to share with other agencies

Communication Guidance

Middle school

Focus demonstrations and presentations on a theme such as “Explore your community” or “See your world (community) through a different lens.” (Those lenses could be municipal, structural, water, environmental, geotechnical, transportation, planning, construction, and surveying).

Conversations to have with students:

- How did you travel to school today?
- What are the different modes of transportation?
- What aspects of transportation can you see and what can't you see?
- What is your favorite class, activity, or sport and why? Follow up by tying this interest to transportation.
- Did you know...? Say something about the environment, imagining the future, problem-solving, or designing the future.
- Look at community maps and ask students what they see, why they think it was designed this way, or what they would change.

Share your agency's experiences:

- [Add your agency examples here]

High school

Focus demonstrations and presentations on a theme, such as “How transportation is saving the world,” “How cool it is to fix our world,” or “Careers that help your community.”

Conversations with students should explain the importance of transportation to our economy. You can add a sense of urgency and need by using some of the following ideas:

- Toward Zero Deaths
- Survival rates for strokes and heart attacks depend on transit time of emergency responders.
- A healthy environment depends on clean waterways — but there is little money available for protection except when waterways cross roadways.
- Pedestrian safety depends on decisions made by drivers in a very short amount of time — being able to see and recognize a situation ahead, such as an 8-year-old going to a soccer field.
- Bridges and pipes under roadways often provide thankless service, frequently serving way beyond their intended lives, but we would be ... up a creek without them.
- Clean air can be polluted by vehicle emissions, but we can create protections.
- Salt can kill by causing aquatic toxicity and creating anoxic conditions.

Describe career pathways within your local agency. Make sure to have take-away materials (e.g., obtain materials from HR or use a business card).

- Seasonal employment opportunities
- Internship opportunities

Share your agency's experiences:

- [Add your agency examples here]

Sample Outlines for Formal Presentations

Here are three sample outlines based on the amount of time available. [If your agency creates a template presentation include the electronic location here.]

15-minute presentation

1. Introduce yourself through a story about your job
2. Explain what [your job or agency] is and how it impacts the quality of students' lives:
 - a. Include visuals such as pictures, videos, and maps
3. Ask them questions and answer any questions they have:
 - a. Do you think a [your job] works in the field or at a desk?
 - b. What kinds of projects do you think [your agency] builds?
 - c. What does it mean to be a [your profession] or work for [name local agency]?

30-minute presentation

1. Introduce yourself through a story about your job
2. Explain what [your job or agency] is and how it impacts the quality of students' lives:
 - a. Use a PowerPoint presentation or handouts (such as the brochure [Local Transportation Agency Careers in Minnesota](#) or agency-specific materials)
—or—
 - b. Show the video available on the website (be sure you have an Internet connection)
—or—
 - c. Show pictures or videos from a recent project
3. Ask them questions and answer any questions they have:
 - a. Do you think a [your job] works in the field or at a desk?
 - b. What kinds of projects do you think [your agency] build?
 - c. What does it mean to be a [your profession] or work for [name local agency]?

45-minute presentation

1. Introduce yourself through a story about your job:
2. Explain what [your job or agency] is and how it impacts the quality of students' lives:
 - a. Use a PowerPoint presentation or handouts (such as the brochure [Local Transportation Agency Careers in Minnesota](#) or agency-specific materials)
—or—
 - b. Show the video available on the website (be sure you have an Internet connection)
—or—
 - c. Show pictures or videos from a recent project
3. Lead a hands-on activity (choose an age-appropriate activity from the links on the website based on the amount of time and budget you have available)
4. Ask them questions and answer any questions they have:
 - a. Do you think a [your job] works in the field or at a desk?
 - b. What kinds of projects do you think [your agency] build?
 - c. What does it mean to be a [your profession] or work for [name local agency]?

Additional Outreach Strategies

1. This is a collaborative effort. Create a small task force that will act as liaison between school and your agency.
2. Create a small regional task force with local agencies to leverage resources.
3. Establish a summer work experience, where teachers work with local agencies to gain knowledge and skills to incorporate learned concepts into an existing classroom curriculum.
4. Connect with Minnesota LTAP to sponsor a regional Construction Career Day.
5. Connect with your regional [Minnesota Service Cooperatives](#) to leverage their resources for deeper community connections with teachers.

Expanding the Transportation Workforce Project

This document is part of the “Expanding the Transportation Workforce” project sponsored by the Minnesota Local Road Research Board. The project was guided by a technical advisory panel of experienced transportation professionals from a variety of local agencies and private firms from around the state, as well as workforce leaders and technical school representatives.

The project created a set of products to help local agency transportation departments meet their workforce needs. The other products are:

- [***Activities to Build Awareness of Careers in Local Transportation Agencies***](#). A spreadsheet to accompany this document (*Community Outreach Guide for Local Transportation Agencies*) with activities that agencies can use to spark interest with K-12 students.
- [***Recruitment Toolkit for Local Transportation Agencies***](#). Best practices and resources to help local agencies grow their employee pipeline.
- [***Training Roadmap for Civil Engineering Technicians***](#). A collaborative tool to help agencies and employees identify and plan training needed for civil engineering technician positions. An accompanying [***user guide***](#) includes tips for supervisors and employees, case studies, and more.
- [***Local Transportation Agency Careers in Minnesota***](#). Brochure to introduce students to careers within local agency transportation departments.

All the materials, along with links to other resources, are available at: mnltpap.umn.edu/workforce

Prepared by:

Minnesota Local Technical Assistance Program
Center for Transportation Studies
440 University Office Plaza
2221 University Avenue S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Phone: 612-626-1077
E-mail: mnltpap@umn.edu
mnltpap.umn.edu

August 2021

Editor: Michael McCarthy
Graphic Designer: Angela Kronebusch
Researcher: Katherine Stanley

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, or sexual orientation. This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

 Printed on recycled paper with 10% postconsumer waste.