Infrastructure NEXT: Fostering 21st Century Innovation & Job Skills

Infrastructure can be the backbone of strong economies, vibrant communities, and a resilient environment. Center for Sustainable Infrastructure (CSI), Willamette Partnership, and Portland State University have formed a partnership aimed at innovative investments and job skills for infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest.

PROJECT SCOPE

The CSI Innovation Lab will provide technical assistance to communities actively working through innovative infrastructure investments like industrial water reuse, developing a smarter power grid, or rethinking transportation systems. The Innovation Lab’s value planning and data visualization assistance tools will help communities rethink projects, plan smarter, and build capacity.

The Infrastructure NEXT team will also conduct a comprehensive water workforce needs assessment that utilities, colleges, and job training programs can use to make sure they are training and retaining the workforce that will fill the sustainable design, construction, maintenance, and leadership positions of tomorrow. The assessment, anticipated in early 2019, will identify workforce-related barriers to utility performance (such as availability of training programs, recruitment, retention, etc.) and propose solutions to improve the region’s water infrastructure talent pipeline, including tailored recommendations for large, small, rural, and urban settings.

Infrastructure jobs account for greater than 10% of national employment

The Northwest needs billions of dollars in infrastructure upgrades to recover from decades of underinvestment and prepare for the future. Oregon and Washington communities need to spend that money wisely, investing in innovative new approaches that will be more affordable, support local economic development, and improve the environment. The Infrastructure NEXT project partners are working together to advance the Northwest as a nationally-recognized infrastructure innovation hub.

OUTCOMES

By focusing on smarter infrastructure investments and a prepared workforce, the project partners can support thoughtful policies, statewide systems, and educational pathways, all building toward a future where sustainable, resilient, and affordable infrastructure systems support healthy, prosperous, and cohesive communities in the Northwest.

WORKFORCE NEEDS

Talent pipeline for good jobs in water resource management

INNOVATION LAB

Data Tools and Value Planning

Innovative and efficient infrastructure

Healthy, prosperous, and cohesive Northwest communities

PROJECT SUPPORT

This project is funded from 2017-2019 through a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

LEARN MORE

Infrastructure NEXT partners hope to gain insights about how to improve statewide systems, policies and educational pathways to address big-picture problems in Washington and Oregon. The project team includes Willamette Partnership, Portland State University, and the Center for Sustainable Infrastructure. Learn more about the Infra-NEXT project by contacting members of the project team listed below.

Contact Us

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