



HOW TO CELEBRATE GUIDE



PARTNERSHIP FOR
PUBLIC SERVICE





JOIN US IN CELEBRATING

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

WHAT IS PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK?

Celebrated the first full week in May since 1985, *Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW)* is a time set aside to honor the men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county and local government employees. Throughout the nation and the world, public servants use this occasion to educate others about the work they do and why they have chosen public service careers, as well as the many ways government services make life better for all of us.

From the steps of the Capitol to the smallest towns, public servants will participate in ceremonies, information fairs, parades and other events in their honor. At the same time, they will work to open new avenues of communication with the public about the essential value of government service in sustaining the quality of American life.

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

We hope you will join the Partnership for Public Service (Partnership) and the Public Employees Roundtable (PER) in this year's **PSRW** celebration. The Partnership and PER understand that many celebrants around the country often have very limited budgets, time and space to carry out a **PSRW** celebration, and so we developed this guide to help you observe in a low-cost way *Public Service Recognition Week* in your communities.

Additional resources and sample document templates are available online at psrw.org to help facilitate your participation in **PSRW** whether you are from a government agency, Federal Executive Board (FEB), military base or school. In particular, these online resources provide ideas and tools to help you reach out to your community, the media and local educators.

Many of the ideas are simple, fun and inexpensive. Others require more coordination, planning and preparation. Whatever you do, it's a step toward public servants receiving the respect and appreciation they deserve.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call us at (202) 775-9111 or e-mail psrw@ourpublicservice.org for more information about how your organization can participate in *PSRW*. Complete program details are also available at psrw.org

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

GOALS OF PSRW

During **PSRW**, the Partnership and PER hope that public employees use the week to educate citizens about the work they do and why they have chosen public service careers, as well as the many ways government services make life better for the American people. Specifically, the goals of the program are to:

- Connect and educate citizens nationwide to the work of their government.
- Improve the perception and morale of federal workers and other public servants.
- Help inspire a new generation of public servants.

PSRW MESSAGES

PSRW is the perfect time to inform the American people about what public employees do, why they do it and how well they do it. Additionally, we want to foster pride among public servants and introduce the public to the wide range of employment opportunities in government. Event attendees will walk away with the following key messages:

- Government workers are doing important work that positively affects all of us every day.
- Government needs people like you to address the incredible challenges our nation is facing.
- Public servants deserve thanks for working diligently on our behalf.
- Government service is public service.

GET EVERYONE INVOLVED

Use **PSRW** to reach a wide range of audiences and build new partnerships with other public employees, associations, community organizations and private corporations. The image of public employees is strengthened when citizens see us working in cooperation with each other and with the community. Consider collaborating with any of the following groups when formulating your **PSRW** plans:

- Federal Executive Boards (<http://feb.gov>) and Federal Executive Associations, which represent federal agencies located outside Washington, D.C.;
- Public employee unions;
- Local chapters of Public Employee Roundtable member associations, e.g., ASPA, NARFE (please see psrw.org for a complete list with contact details);
- Military bases;
- Local affiliates of government organizations, e.g., National Association of Counties, National Governors Association, National League of Cities;
- Local Combined Federal Campaigns;
- College and university students;
- Public elementary and secondary schools;
- Local businesses that can display posters or sponsor your events;
- Citizen support groups like the PTA, League of Women Voters and Better Government Association;
- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Explorers and other youth groups who care about good citizenship;
- Civic groups like Kiwanis, Rotary International, Masonic lodges and others who may welcome speakers on good government during **PSRW**;
- Local law enforcement departments and affiliates of national associations; and
- Local government offices such as the Mayor's office, Health Department, Veteran's Affairs, etc.

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EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION ACTIVITIES

At the heart of *Public Service Recognition Week* is the opportunity to invigorate government workers by offering them the thanks they richly deserve but seldom receive. During this week-long celebration, it's important to honor public employees and tell them their dedication and service are noticed and appreciated.

AWARDS

PSRW is an ideal time to recognize outstanding individual employees, teams of employees or programs. Peer awards are particularly effective, and awards programs, rather than individuals, demonstrate that government can be effective and excellence is the rule rather than the exception. You can show appreciation to:

- Government employees who have served a distinguished career in public service.
- Government employees, teams or groups who donate their personal time to activities that benefit the community.
- Volunteers from the community who donate their time to assist your agency.

Example:

For more than 40 years, the Baltimore Federal Executive Board has recognized outstanding regional federal employees in an awards ceremony and luncheon held annually during **PSRW**. The awards honor more than 200 Maryland federal employees and service members in 19 different job excellence categories. The event is attended by more than 1,000 federal officials, employees and military service members, family members and guests.

Award nominations are submitted to the FEB in January each year. The awardees are selected by a screening committee of Maryland federal employees who choose the Silver Award finalists and a blue ribbon panel of private-sector executives who select the Gold winners. Agency employees nominated for an award will receive either a Gold, Silver or Bronze award.

PROCLAMATIONS

Proclamations are a simple way to help bring attention to **PSRW** and to ensure that federal officials are aware of its existence. To help you request one from your governor, mayor, city council or other official, we have put together a sample proclamation and request letter in our online resources. Once you receive your proclamation, you can arrange for it to be presented at a public event, such as a **PSRW** awards ceremony or city council meeting.

Example:

During its 2009 **PSRW** awards celebration, the Los Angeles FEB incorporated the mayoral proclamation into its ceremony and program. Additionally, the FEB asked its U.S. Representatives, State Senators and State Assembly members to serve as honorary co-chairs of the event.

OTHER EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION IDEAS

- Organize an employee appreciation event or rally. Remarks can come from agency heads, elected officials or local celebrities.
- Hold an appreciation breakfast, picnic or ice cream social. Consider co-hosting with your local Combined Federal Campaign, which will help boost attendance, promote CFC and honor the generosity of federal employees.
- Have your agency leaders blog or tweet about **PSRW** and the importance of public service.
- Display **PSRW** banners thanking agency employees inside and outside of your building.
- Create an online "thank you" card and invite employees and the public to write what public service means to them.
- Include the **PSRW** logo on your agency's website and use it in agency communications throughout the week.
- Create **PSRW** posters and display them in your office, lobby and cafeteria.
- Present each employee with a certificate of gratitude.
- Use your agency or employee print and electronic newsletters to publicize **PSRW** and the accomplishments of agency employees.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

One of the most important ways to achieve the goals of *Public Service Recognition Week* is to engage your community in your celebration plans. Through proactive and direct outreach, we can improve citizen support for government, a key element of public health institutions. Here are some community outreach ideas:

EXHIBIT EVENTS

During the week-long celebration, many government agencies will have exhibits or information. These exhibits are an interactive opportunity for multiple government agencies to inform and demonstrate to the public the services that they provide. Exhibitors can include federal, state, county and local government agencies, as well as public employee associations and unions. These events can help agencies focus attention on both their innovative work and programming the broad array of career opportunities available in government; inspiring others to consider a career in public service.

To help you launch a successful event, here are some helpful tips:

- Coordinate efforts with your local Federal Executive Board (FEB), Federal Executive Association (FEA) and other government entities.
- Choose a location with high public traffic like a shopping mall, park or public plaza. Find out what permits you will need and any costs or other rules associated with the site.
- Determine the event budget, which will depend on: 1) cost of the tents, flooring and covering (if needed); 2) cost of tables and chairs; 3) tablecloths, draping and skirts; and 4) any other items deemed necessary by your agency.
- Use interactive and informative displays. These can include fire trucks, police cars, the canine corps or large scale models. It's a good idea to also involve agency choirs and bands who can be a crowd-pleaser and attract visitors to the event.
- Plan an opening ceremony or kickoff to the exhibit event. Guests of honor could include local council members, the mayor, the governor, members of Congress and heads of agencies.

OTHER COMMUNITY EVENT IDEAS

- Offer “behind the scenes” tours and open houses of government agencies and other familiar sites such as military bases, City Hall, fire houses, post offices, etc.
- Hold workshops ranging from career training to youth service for community members. These sessions can be hosted in your facility, in a community center, or at a local business establishment.
- Unveil a special program, dedicate a new building or draw attention to the special work of your agency.
- Arrange for Public Employee Night at a sports or culture facility—a baseball game, bowling alley, movie theater or the zoo. The evening could include free or discounted admission for public employees and/or a special tribute at intermission or half-time.

Example:

To celebrate **PSRW**, the city of Hollywood, Fl., arranged for multiple community events during the week-long celebration. Events included a concert in the park for government employees and their families, an employee health fair, open houses at police and fire stations and lunch on the City Hall lawn. Additionally, they arranged for the “City of Hollywood Night with the Florida Marlins,” which was an activity for government employees and their families to purchase tickets at a group rate and attend a Marlins baseball game in the picnic area at the stadium.

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EDUCATION OUTREACH

Public Service Recognition Week offers a valuable opportunity to increase awareness of public service among young people. During this week-long celebration, there are a variety of ways to engage this key audience. Below are some ideas:

HOMETOWN HEROES

PSRW is a great opportunity to send public employees to schools, colleges and civic groups to educate the audience about the federal workforce and inspire the next generation to public service. We encourage agencies to leverage any existing relationships that they may have with local schools, after school programs, places of worship, volunteer sites and civic groups and offer volunteer matching hours or make this program part of their week-long celebration. To help you share your federal story, we have put together some useful templates for getting started in our online resources.

ENGAGE TEACHERS

Many people tend to forget that teachers are public servants and should be recognized as such during **PSRW**. Teachers also need to be incorporated into the educational segment of the celebration. Exhibit events and open houses are great interactive learning experiences, and you should make sure to contact teachers, principals and guidance counselors at local schools in your area to promote your event as a field trip opportunity.

ENGAGE STUDENTS

- Plan a PSRW students' day. Make sure to include kid-friendly and interactive materials and websites. If you are expecting college students, it might be a good idea to also include information on internship, co-op, scholarship and fellowship opportunities available at government agencies.
- Partner with your local newspaper to sponsor an essay contest about a "Favorite Public Servant." The winner could receive a savings bond or college scholarship.
- Sponsor a poster coloring or photography contest for pictures of public employees. Display the drawings at City Hall, the library or in another visible community place.
- Sponsor a job shadowing day to provide hands-on experience to students interested in public service.
- Provide teachers with the free Teacher's Guide and **PSRW** posters from our online resources.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Almost every school in America will have a civics or government course that is required for their students. That's why we have put together a Teacher's Guide designed for middle and high school teachers of civics, social studies and American government. The free booklet contains unique and interactive learning projects, games and discussion ideas to get students thinking and talking about the role and process of government and the responsibilities inherent in citizenship. To download your copy, please visit psrw.org.

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PRIVATE-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Partnering with the private-sector is a great way to alleviate much of the financial and logistical burden of a **PSRW** celebration. It is also a great way to create meaningful relationships with the business community that will continue beyond the week-long celebration. A great place to start is with companies that market to the government sector since they have a specific interest in maintaining a positive image for themselves among public employees. Here are a few suggestions to help engage businesses in your **PSRW** efforts:

- Approach local businesses to donate raffle gifts or prizes for exhibit events or agency open houses.
- Ask merchants to offer discounts, coupons, prize giveaways or other specials for customers with a government ID during the week.
- Partner with a government credit union to sponsor one of the events or help pay for advertising.
- Ask public facilities like museums and zoos to offer free admission for a week and/or day to public employees and their families.

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MEDIA OUTREACH

There is an exciting opportunity to garner positive media coverage during **PSRW**, for both the events and public employees in general. Government employees do a broad range of jobs and difficult tasks and have interesting stories to share with the American public. The best way to do so is through the news media in your hometown, which includes newspapers, magazines and TV and radio stations.

There are many different ways to get your **PSRW** story out to the media. Here is a list of 10 ideas to help get you started:

1. Send a radio Public Service Advertisement (PSA) to your local radio stations about a month prior to **PSRW**. PSAs are short, informational items that usually announce events or provide educational information of interest to the public. If a station agrees to use a PSA, it is at no cost to you! A sample PSA can be found in our online resources.
2. Reach out to the community calendars in your area and ask them to list your **PSRW** events that are open to the public. Ask when the deadlines are and if you can submit photos with your listing. Be sure the date, time and location are clearly listed, along with contact information.
3. Call your favorite radio station, whether it's Top 40 or news talk, and ask them if you can set up an interview to let their audience know about the **PSRW** activities. You can also invite them to do a live broadcast from your event.
4. Prepare short, vignette stories about outstanding employees in your agency and ask your local newspaper to consider running one each day during **PSRW**. These profiles are a great way to highlight the work of public servants. Visit washingtonpost.com/politics/fed-player to view "Federal Player" profiles that run weekly in The Washington Post.
5. Invite local press to your **PSRW** awards ceremony. We have included a sample news release in our online resources that will help provide reporters with background information on the event and the public employees who are being honored. Here's another tip: ask one of your local TV personalities to serve as the host and/or MC of the event.
6. Call up your local TV station and ask if they will share information about your **PSRW** activities during their community news segment. They may also be interested in interviewing you or someone from your agency in charge of local **PSRW** activities, your award winners or finding out what job opportunities your agency has available. Like with radio, you can also invite them to broadcast live from your events.
7. Contact your local cable TV company about having them spotlight a public employee each day during **PSRW**. Most cable TV companies must offer a public access station and are very interested in promoting community activities.
8. Write an article for a community newsletter or magazine that emphasizes the important contributions of public employees, salutes your award winners or highlights your **PSRW** activities. Be sure to include photos. Before submitting the article, take time to contact the editor about deadlines and potential story ideas.
9. Develop a list of "Facts and Figures" on the surprising and unique contributions of your agency. You can use these as talking points in media interviews, in news articles and agency newsletters. To help you get started, check out the "Did You Know" resource available online.
10. Submit an op-ed to your newspaper with a local angle about **PSRW**. We have included some op-ed writing tips in our online resources.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

There's more online! Visit psrw.org to access additional resources, download sample templates, find **PSRW** events, and join the **PSRW** community on Facebook and Twitter.

PSRW logos

Available in PNG, JPEG and TIFF formats

Employee Recognition Activities

- Sample Proclamation Request Letter
- Sample Proclamation Language — for Mayors/Governors

Education Outreach Resources

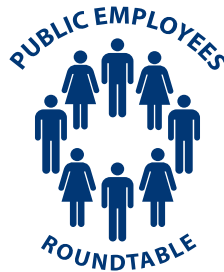
- PSRW Teacher's Guide (PDF)
- Sample Hometown Heroes E-Mail Templates

Media Outreach Resources

- Sample PSA
- Sample Awards Release
- Sample "Did You Know" Facts
- Sample "50 Ways Government Works for Us" Facts
- Letter to the Editor and Op-Ed Tips



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