



Water Utility Resilience Forum

December 13 – 15, 2021 | Miami, FL

As of October 8, 2021

Sunday, December 12

EVENING

5:00 - 6:00 Welcoming Reception (tentative)

Monday, December 13

MORNING

7:00 - 3:00 Registration

7:30 – 8:45 **Networking Breakfast**

9:00 – 12:15 Plenary Session I

Welcoming Remarks

9:15 – 10:30

Community-Based Resilience in South Florida

Key stakeholders from South Florida will highlight the collaborations and partnerships among utilities, government agencies, and communities that make developing and implementing climate resilience plans possible.

Facilitator

Hardeep Anand, Deputy Director, Capital Improvement Program
Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Department

Panelists

Kilan Ashad-Bishop, Vice Chair of Sea Level Rise Committee
City of Miami

Megan Houston, Director of Resilience
Palm Beach County

Roy Coley, Director
Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Department

Jennifer Jurado, Chief Resilience Officer, Deputy Department
Director
Broward County

10:30 - 11:00

Networking Break

11:00 – 12:15

Strengthening Communities Through Emergency Preparedness

Utility managers and local leaders will explore how emergency preparedness acts as an essential component of community resilience. Speakers will describe how their agencies identify potential risks and how they collaborate with organizations from across the community to prepare for future emergencies.

Panelists

Jonna Papaefthimiou, Planning, Policy, and Community Programs Manager

Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, OR

Brian Perkovich, Executive Director

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Ghassan Korban, Executive Director

New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board

AFTERNOON

12:15 - 1:15

Networking Lunch

1:15 – 2:00

Plenary Session II and Breakouts

1:15 – 2:15

Resilience Spotlight

What I learned When I stopped Worrying and Embraced Future Uncertainty

Water utilities are the backbone of functional cities. Yet they face many largely undisclosed and potentially unmanaged risks. Based on understandings gathered from researching and assisting utilities planning for this uncertain future, Casey Brown will share insights and aspirations for utility managers learned from his work facilitating utilities' capacity to manage risks and embrace innovation.

Casey Brown, Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

University of Massachusetts Amherst

2:00 - 3:00

Breakout Sessions

Resilience requires community-based partnerships and collaboration – how is your utility approaching resilience? What do the questions and issues raised today mean for the future resilience of your agency? Insights from the breakouts will be shared and discussed during the plenary session.

2:45 - 3:15

Networking Break

3:15 – 3:35

Breakout Session Report-Outs and Discussion

3:35 – 4:05

Reframing Resilience: Equity as a Core Principle

How can utility resilience plans be transformed to acknowledge equity as a core principle – both in doing the work and as a key outcome for realizing resilience and sustainability? Our featured speaker will reflect on the themes from the day and focus resilience through an equity lens.

Featured Speaker

Kristin “Baja” Baja, Climate Resilience Officer
Urban Sustainability Directors Network

4:05 - 4:15

Closing Remarks

EVENING

5:00 - 6:00

Reception

Tuesday, December 14

MORNING

7:00 - 3:00

Registration

7:30 – 8:45

Networking Breakfast

9:00 - 11:45

Plenary Session III

9:00 - 10:30

Cyber Resilience: Exercising Leadership

Panelists will share best practices for protecting business enterprise systems and industrial control systems from malicious actors, with a particular view toward what utility managers should be considering. Roundtable discussions will provide participants with an opportunity to exchange lessons learned with their peers.

Panelists

Andrew Hildick-Smith, Advisor
WaterISAC

Matthew Gabrick, IT Director
Boston Water & Sewer Commission

10:30 - 11:00

Networking Break

11:00 - 11:45

Case Study and Discussion

Resilience in a Regulated and Political World

Regulations and political change are factors for every utility to varying degrees, and utility managers must strike a careful balance as they adapt to evolving conditions. Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority’s CEO Will

Pickering will discuss how PWSA has stayed resilient through years of regulatory and governance challenges in response to water quality and customer service concerns. In addition, he will discuss how PWSA is responding to several legal and regulatory challenges and is emerging as a Utility of the Future. Participants will then engage in a discussion on the implications for the water sector.

William Pickering, Chief Executive Officer
Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority

11:45 - 12:45

Networking Lunch

AFTERNOON

12:45 - 4:15

Plenary Session IV

12:45 - 2:15

Financial Resilience: Making the Dollars Work

A strong balance sheet is a key foundational element for utility resilience. Financial experts will explore financial risk management, investors' perspectives on resilience, bonds and insurance, affordability and sources of funding.

Facilitator

Peiffer Brandt, Chief Executive Officer
Raftelis

Panelists

Mary Tiger, Strategic Initiatives Manager
Orange Water and Sewer Authority, NC

Gregory Characklis, Director, Center on Financial Risk in
Environmental Systems
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

Doug Scott, Managing Director
US Public Finance Fitch Ratings

2:15 - 2:45

Networking Break

2:45 - 4:15

Panel Discussion

Resilience Up Close

Pace setters will provide insights on how they have addressed abrupt tests to their utilities' resilience from supply chain issues to fuel shortages and other challenges and share key lessons learned on how the threats were confronted.

Panelists

Scott Dewhirst, Superintendent
Tacoma Water

Michael Thane, Utility Director
City of Round Rock, TX

4:15 - 4:20 Closing Remarks

EVENING

5:00 - 6:00 Reception

Wednesday, December 15

MORNING

7:30 - 8:45 Networking Breakfast

9:00 - 11:45 Plenary Session V

9:00 - 10:30 **Tactics for Managing Today's Workforce and Nurturing Water Workforce Resilience for Tomorrow**

Events over the last 18 months have more prominently highlighted previously identified workforce challenges that the water sector faces both now and into the future. Panelists will share their insights and strategies on managing the post-pandemic workforce and remote work arrangements, ongoing and new struggles with hiring and retaining top talent, and diversity, equity and inclusion priorities and considerations.

Facilitator

Walt Walker, Water Equity Practice Leader
Greeley and Hansen LLC

Panelist

Elizabeth Brooks, Director, Human Resources
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer Authority

Candi Jones, Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Philadelphia Water Department

10:30 - 10:45 Networking Break

10:45 - 11:45

Roundtables

Bringing It All Together

Building on the conversations from the Forum, attendees will discuss efforts at their own utilities to stay resilient over the last 18 months and look ahead to the next big challenges and their plans to make their utilities more resilient.

11:45 - 12:00 Closing Remarks