



# PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

MAY 3-9, 2020

## 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 this year's **PSRW** celebration. We 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 in the appendix of this document 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.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [psrw.org](http://psrw.org), email [psrw@ourpublicservice.org](mailto:psrw@ourpublicservice.org), or call the Partnership for Public Service at **(202) 775-9111** for more information about how your organization can participate in *PSRW*.

# PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

## 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>), which represent federal offices located outside Washington, D.C.;
- Public employee unions;
- Local chapters of public employee member associations, e.g., ASPA, NARFE (please see [psrw.org](http://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.

# PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

## 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. Awards programs 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.

### 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.

In addition, you may ask 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.

# PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

## 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.

### 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.

### 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](http://psrw.org).

# PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

## 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 appendix.
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.
5. Invite local press to your **PSRW** awards ceremony. We have included a sample news release in our appendix 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.
10. Submit an op-ed to your newspaper with a local angle about **PSRW**. We have included some op-ed writing tips in our appendix.

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## APPENDIX—SAMPLES AND TEMPLATES

### SAMPLE PROCLAMATION REQUEST LETTER

Dear «Title» «Last\_Name»:

We hope that you will join your fellow [mayors or governors] in recognizing public servants across the country by issuing a proclamation designating [insert week] as *PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK* in [city or state].

Each year the President and Congress designate the first full week of May as *Public Service Recognition Week* in honor of the men and women who serve America as federal, state, county and local government employees. We hope you will join [insert name of your organization] in celebrating our civilian and military public servants this year. *Public Service Recognition Week* highlights the accomplishments of the dedicated public servants who work tirelessly on behalf of all Americans and who rarely get the credit they deserve.

[Insert language about your planned PSRW activities].

If your office has any questions regarding this request, please contact [insert name and details]. We have enclosed sample proclamation language for your convenience. For more information on *Public Service Recognition Week*, please visit [psrw.org](http://psrw.org).

Thank you in advance for your support of this effort, and for your support of public servants everywhere.

Respectfully,

[Name]

Enclosure: Sample Proclamation Language

### SAMPLE PROCLAMATION LANGUAGE FOR MAYORS/GOVERNORS

#### *PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK*

*In honor of the millions of public employees at the federal, state, county, and city levels:*

#### **Whereas:**

Americans are served every single day by public servants at the federal, state, county and city levels. These unsung heroes do the work that keeps our nation working. Their tireless efforts are especially critical today during the COVID-19 pandemic;

#### **Whereas:**

Public employees take not only jobs, but solemn oaths;

#### **Whereas:**

Many public servants, including military personnel, police officers, firefighters, border patrol officers, embassy employees, aid workers, health care professionals, intelligence officers and others, risk their lives each day in service to the Constitution and people of the United States and around the world;

#### **Whereas:**

Public servants include teachers, doctors and scientists ... train conductors and astronauts ... nurses and safety inspectors ... laborers, computer technicians and social workers ... and countless other occupations. Day in and day out they continue to fulfill their duties during a public health crisis—even at personal risk—to provide the diverse services demanded by the American people of their government with efficiency and integrity; and

#### **Whereas:**

Without these public servants at every level, continuity would be impossible in a democracy that regularly changes its leaders and elected officials;

#### **Therefore:**

I, the [Mayor or Governor] of [CITY or STATE] do hereby announce and proclaim to all citizens and set seal hereto, that [WEEK], is Public Service Recognition Week. All citizens are encouraged to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of government employees at all levels—federal, state, county and city.

## SAMPLE PROCLAMATION REQUEST LETTER

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May, XX, 20XX**

**Contact: [Name]**

**[Phone]**

**[Email]**

**[Insert number of award winners] PUBLIC SERVANTS RECEIVE [insert the name of the awards program]  
AT PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK AWARDS CEREMONY**

**[Insert City, State]** – The [insert name of your organization] presented [number of awards and name of program] to outstanding public servants whose remarkable work is making life better for all Americans – at a Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) awards ceremony held in their honor, May XX, 20XX.

Celebrated since 1985, PSRW is a nationwide public education campaign honoring the men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county and local government employees. Each year the President and Congress designate the first full week of May (May X-XX, 20XX) as PSRW and activities are held nationwide in celebration of public employees who put service above self.

The top award, [if applicable add information about the top award and the winner receiving it. Make sure to include a one-sentence description about the work they are being honored for.]

Additional awards were presented to [insert number of winners] public employees who boast achievements in [insert details].

Awardees come from [insert the names of the agencies. If you have a large amount of award winners, pick several to include to showcase the range of the work that is being honored.].

“[Include quote from agency or organization head]”

This year’s [insert name of awards program] recipients are:

[If space allows, please include the name of your awardees and a one-sentence description about the work they are being honored for]

The Public Service Recognition Week awards ceremony was hosted by [insert who is hosting the awards ceremony].

Award presenters included [insert the names of award presenters if applicable].

The winners were nominated by colleagues familiar with their work and selected by a committee that includes [include names of selection committee if applicable or if space allows]. Nearly [insert the number nominations received] nominations were submitted for medal consideration this year.

[Include two-sentence description of your organization including your website URL]

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## HELPFUL HINTS FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND OP-EDS

*Letters to the editor* are a quick, simple and timely way to share your opinion and story. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- Be timely. Make reference to the article that you are responding to in your opening sentence. Most newspapers will only publish letters that refer to a specific article.
- Be brief. The letter should be no longer than 250 words. Check your local newspaper for exact limits on the length of letters. If you need more space, consider writing an op-ed.
- Make it local. Editors will be more interested in editors that have a local angle.
- Use facts or figures to help support your position.
- Write concisely. Keep the letter to no more than three paragraphs, with short one to two sentence paragraphs.
- Make sure to include your contact information. Most publications will want to verify the letter's authenticity by phone or e-mail.
- Follow up. Once you submit the letter, don't be afraid to call the editor and ask if they received it and are planning to run the letter.

One of the best ways to gain visibility about an issue is through an op-ed.

- Limit the length of your op-ed to between 600 and 750 words.
- Be timely.
- Make a single point clearly and persuasively. Have a clear editorial viewpoint.
- Lead with your main point. Clearly state the problem.
- Tell readers why they should care. Provide insight and educate readers about your position.
- Don't be afraid to personalize the op-ed with an anecdote.
- Make recommendations.
- Use concise, direct sentences and short paragraphs.
- Avoid jargon and clichés.
- Write in active voice.
- Acknowledge the other side.
- Follow up. Once you submit the op-ed, don't be afraid to call the editor and ask if they received it and are planning to run the op-ed.

## SAMPLE 30 SECOND RADIO PSA

*Please air continuously until May 9, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact XXX.*

2020 Public Service Recognition Week - RADIO PSA

[30 seconds]

Public servants are on the front lines guarding our national security, curing diseases, caring for veterans and providing important services to the American people.

Since the founding of our country, public employees have worked to ensure that our government is the best in the world.

Take time during Public Service Recognition Week, May 3-9, to honor our unsung heroes for their dedication.

Visit [P-S-R-W-dot-org](http://P-S-R-W-dot-org) to learn how you can join in this year's celebration.



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

