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# NORTHEAST PUBLIC POWER ASSOCIATION



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## **Public Utility Management Program (PUMP)**

### **Class of 2024**



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## NEPPA PUMP and the Next Generation of Utility Manager-Leaders

**"The PUMP program has proven to help utility leaders and managers become more self-aware and self-confident, with a clearer sense of how best to help their utilities deal with the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing work environment".**

NEPPA and Collaborative Learning are again offering the Public Utility Management Program (PUMP) for a new class of municipal utility manager-leaders in 2024. This program is our response to the reality that excellent management and leadership is essential to the long-term success of our member utility organizations.

Leadership is part of our most basic understanding of how people work together to get things done. People look for and hope for strong leaders who can guide them to produce good outcomes and create a positive future. Leadership is an often-discussed topic. There seems to be an inexhaustible number of leadership books, programs, and models. We have added to that number...but with an important difference. This program has been prepared with public power and municipal utilities in mind.

### Role of Leaders in Municipal Utilities

Utilities, like most organizations today, need and are looking for good leaders—leaders who can establish a vision and goals, can drive accountability, are effective communicators who empower others, understand how the organizational systems can be leveraged to create important change, and have a deep sense of service to the organization, the utility's customers, and the community.

2024 is another chapter in the continuing story of a time when municipal utilities need strong leadership to guide them through a myriad of significant and often unpredictable change and challenges:

- ▶ The ownership and operation of the **regional and national electric power grid** continues to evolve through a series of **structural and regulatory changes** that were initiated late in the 1990s. Municipal utilities who generate electricity (or used to) have been significantly affected by these changes. Those who interact directly with the power grid and the grid operators are faced with complex pricing structures and regulatory compliance requirements, especially as related to system security and reliability..
- ▶ In addition to the grid changes, municipal electric utilities see **challenges to their traditional not-for-profit business model**. With the expansion of distributed energy resources (DERs) like small scale solar, battery storage, and end-use energy management and conservation, many utilities are seeing limited growth and sometimes a **decline in their traditional sources of revenue**. Retail customer relationships and distribution system operations are also changing in recognition that energy moves both to the customer and from the customer.



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- ▶ Many municipal electric, water and communication systems are facing substantial new **capital investment to renovate and replace aging infrastructure**. Aging infrastructure also includes systems and components that are functionally obsolete because of rapidly changing technologies and what they offer in terms of improved service levels and economic efficiencies.
  - ▶ Employers everywhere are facing a **shortage of qualified employees** to meet their evolving workforce requirements. Municipal utilities are often at a disadvantage in the market for attracting and retaining qualified employees because of non-competitive compensation practices and workplaces that don't measure up to the expectations of the younger generations of workers.
  - ▶ Many of our municipal utility customers don't understand or **appreciate the benefits** they and their community receive from their **locally-owned municipal utilities** and the not-for-profit business model. The stakes are high when it comes to sustaining the local engagement and support that is essential to success.
  - ▶ Overlaying all these preceding challenges, our **national environment is in a period of unprecedented change and uncertainty about the future**. Some changes are cyclic (economic and seasonal weather patterns), some follow trends (regulation, evolution of technologies, and climate change), and some are discontinuous or abrupt (break-through technologies, cyber-terrorism). Today's municipal utility leaders must pay attention to the larger context in which their utilities operate. They must also spend enough time pondering the future to help their organizations adapt to and influence the new realities that most impact their continued success.

The aim of the PUMP Program is to strengthen local leadership by preparing talented employees to become effective leaders and by providing the opportunity for current leaders to update and improve their leadership knowledge and skills.

Program participants will gain a comprehensive perspective on what is required to be a successful leader of a municipal utility now and in the next decade. Participants will develop or enhance the knowledge, skills, and attributes to lead their organizations with vision and competence. The NEPPA PUMP is expected to equip member utilities for continued success as providers of essential services for their communities in the face of a rapidly changing and challenging future.

The ACCESS Leadership model that is central to PUMP is built around the idea that,

1. Strong leaders **ACCESS** the strengths within themselves for the benefit of their groups, organizations, community, and society;
2. Organizations need **ACCESS** not only to the leader at the top, but to all the many leaders within the organization;



3. A good leader builds for the future by being able to **ACCESS** the inherent leadership capabilities in others; and
4. Finally, effective leaders artfully **ACCESS** the various organizational, political, and community levers (structure, systems, processes, resources, people) to achieve positive results.

To address these four (4) aspects of leadership, ACCESS Leadership is a tiered model of six (6) key dimensions of leadership and 17 commitments that together encompass the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and guiding principles we believe mark leaders who positively influence their organizations, the community, and even society.



In this 6-day leadership development program, we will lay out the actions and commitments of ACCESS Leadership in six (6) sections, each of which focuses on one of the dimensions defined in the ACCESS model and the commitments associated with that ACCESS action. Through presentations, learning exercises, reflection, discussion, case studies, skill-practice, and action

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learning projects, participants will build understanding and capabilities needed to be leaders in their utilities. Participants will discover a dual focus throughout this course. The first focus is on the individual's skills, capabilities, and understanding of themselves as leaders. The second is on the organization—its need for and support of leaders.

## **PUMP Objectives**

NEPPA's PUMP is designed to meet the following objectives:

### **Leadership**

- ▶ Provide an overview of a leadership philosophy and key leadership concepts specifically applicable to a non-profit municipal utility
- ▶ Enable participants to better understand their own leadership style, tendencies, strengths, and limitations in support of on-going learning and development
- ▶ Build competencies that enable leaders to develop others through training, coaching, mentoring and on-the-job training in a multi-generational, diverse work environment

### **Operations and Management**

- ▶ Support participants in the development of specific knowledge, skills, and practices associated with effective municipal utility leadership including utility operations, finances and management
- ▶ Enable participants to build and sustain an organization culture of safe and effective operations within a highly regulated environment

### **Governance and Utility Guidance**

- ▶ Support those with decision-making authority for their utilities to better understand current and future responsibilities and challenges
- ▶ Build awareness of the trends, technologies and changes expected to impact the utility of the future

### **Learning Environment and Methodology**

- ▶ Create an interactive learning environment that supports the practical application of program concepts and subject matter content
- ▶ Use an action learning approach that applies learning to actual utility issues and situations, both in class and at home in the participants' utilities
- ▶ Ensure transfer and application of learning to the job setting



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## For More Information or to Register...

For more information and to register for the PUMP Class of 2024, please contact NEPPA as soon as possible. **The first in-person workshop session will start during the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup>.** Space is limited to ensure a quality experience and the opportunity to engage and build relationships with people in other municipal utility organizations like yours.

