



# Assessment of Wastewater Operator Workforce Development

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## Need for Workforce Development Recap

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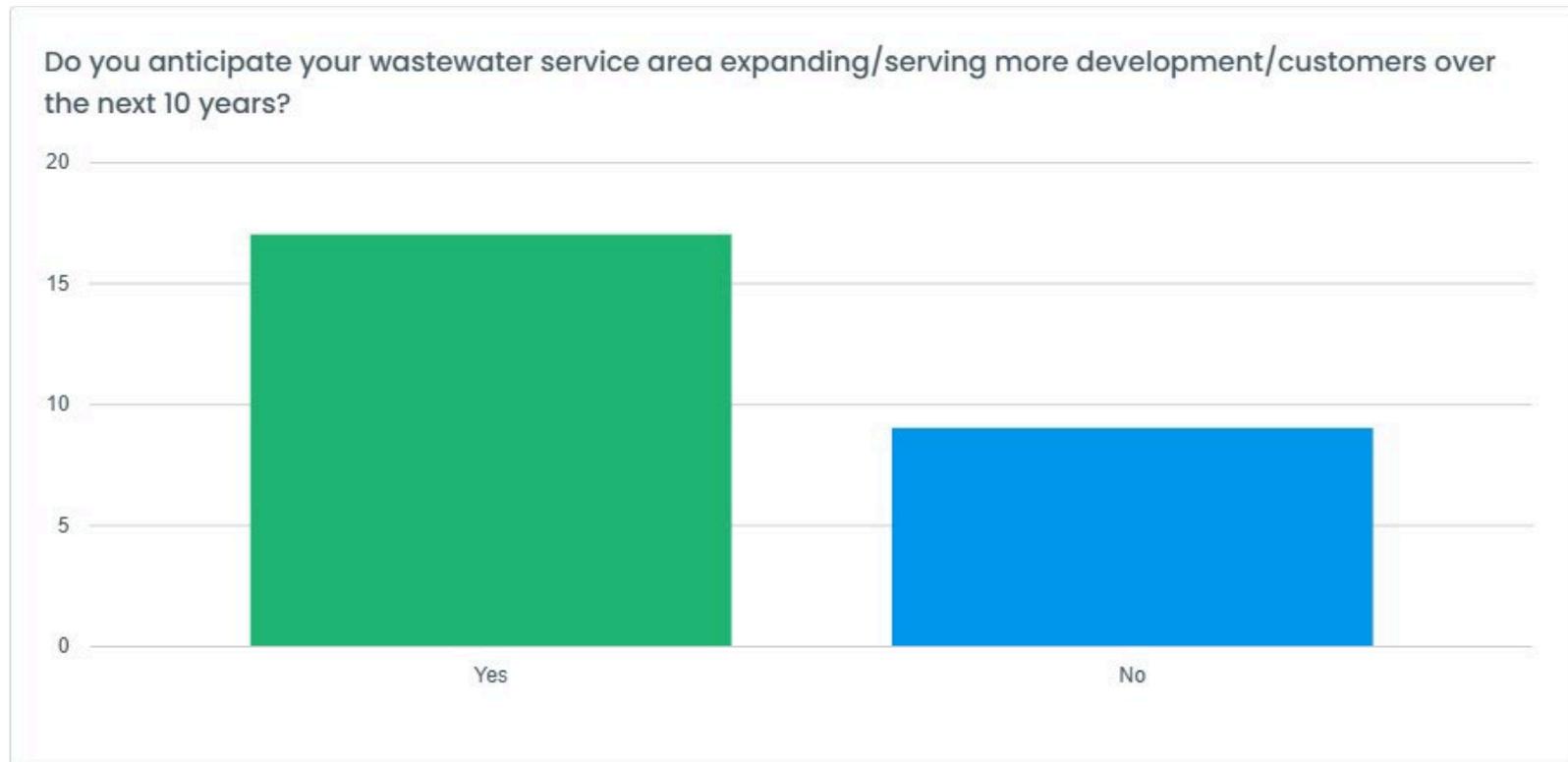
- After outreach from smaller facilities to MVRPC, the agency committed to researching challenges faced in accessing skilled Wastewater Operators across the region.
- MVRPC conducted interviews with peer regional planning commissions and statewide industry associations to see how they are overcoming these challenges.
- MVRPC also conducted an assessment of wastewater management agencies to understand specific regional challenges.



# Wastewater Treatment Agency Assessment Results

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- The majority of responses indicate they anticipate their service area to expand within the next 10 years.
- This is due to anticipated growth of the community(ies) they serve, with most growth expected to be between 5-15%.



# Wastewater Treatment Agency Assessment Results



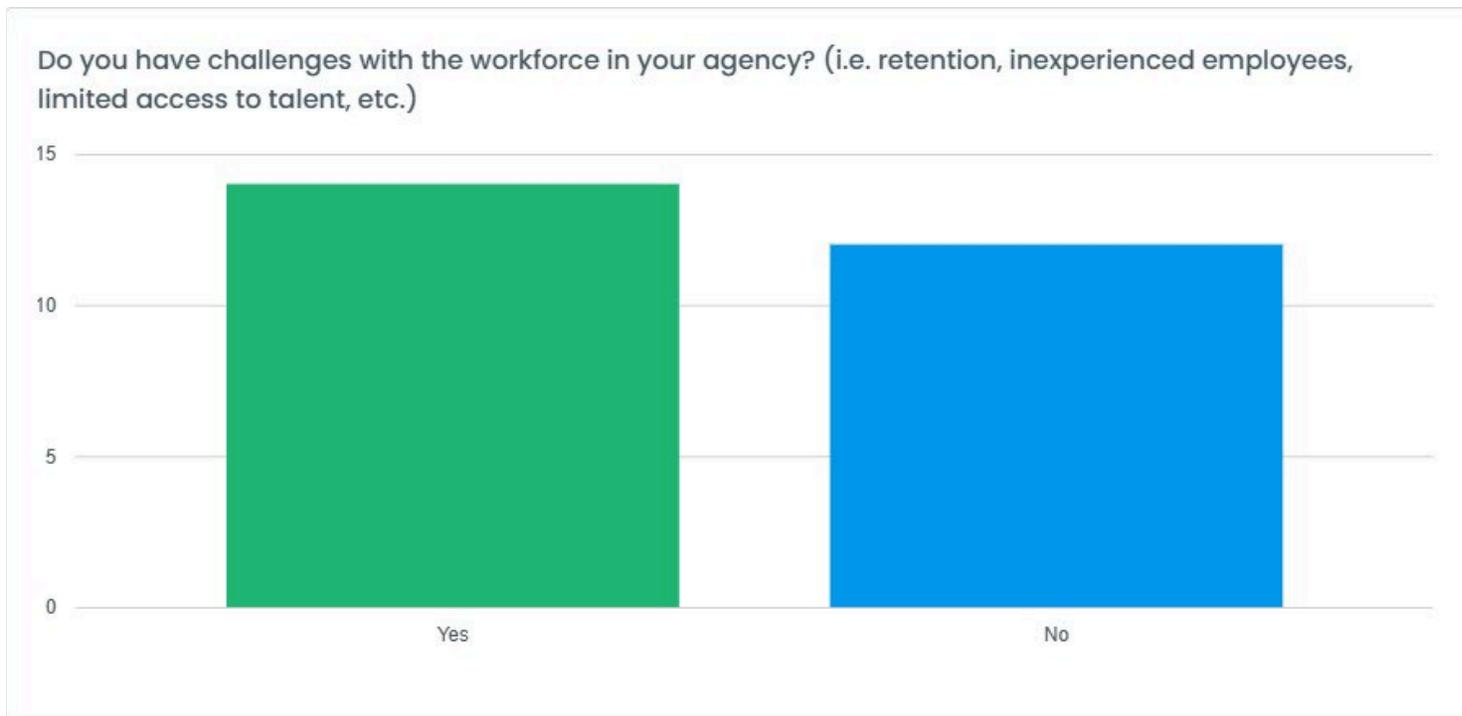
- Most indicated, currently they have enough staff to provide full operations with a mix across the board of Class I-IV operators depending on size of community or type of treatment plant.



# Wastewater Treatment Agency Assessment Results

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- However, survey results indicated some had issues with securing current & future workforce replacements.
- Concerns focus around OEPA licensure requirements, limited resources to provide competitive wage rates, and lack of access to interested talent.

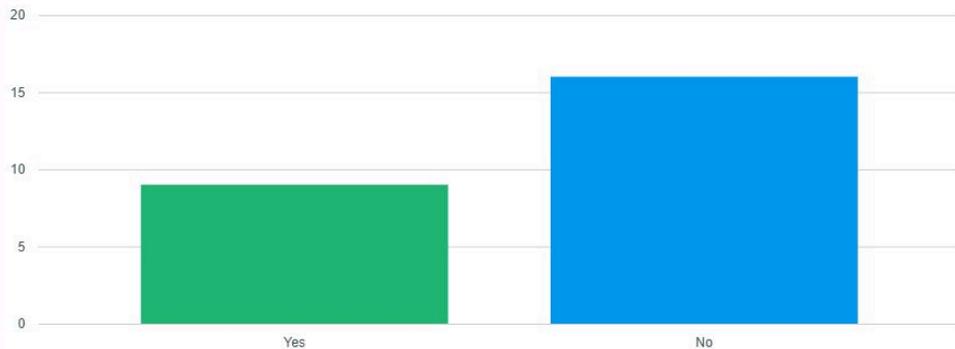


# Wastewater Treatment Agency Assessment Results

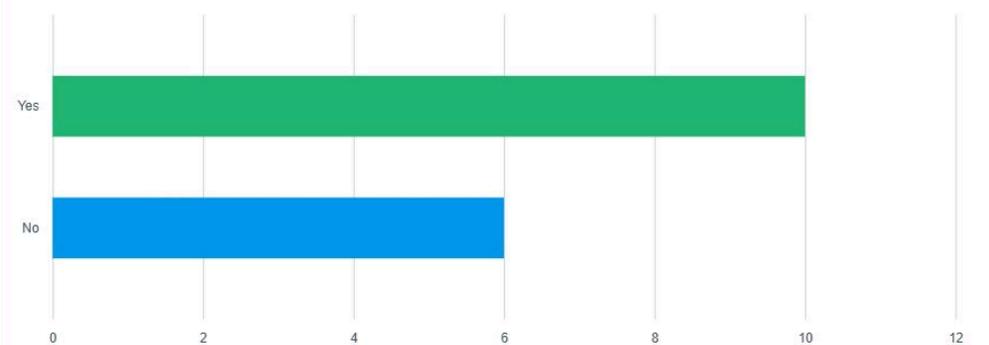


- The majority of agencies responded they did not offer internship opportunities but would be interested.
- Those that did provide opportunities worked with local high schools, community colleges, or offered entry level positions which did not require certification to allow employees to learn and gain experience.

Do you offer internship or apprenticeship opportunities for wastewater operators?



Would you be interested in offering internship or apprentice opportunities within your agency?



# Wastewater Treatment Agency Assessment Results

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- Biggest concerns about future of wastewater staffing:
  - Keeping up with comparable market pay scales.
  - Lack of OEPA coordination with smaller communities for licensing requirements (burdensome and unreasonable as some operate both water and wastewater facilities).
  - Aging workforce with limited talent to tap into (lack of interest in industry) with need to possibly fill gap with contract operators increasing cost of service for customer.



## MVRPC Next Steps

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- Engage with statewide industry associations to learn about Young Professional programs.
- Convene local and statewide workforce development organizations to understand how to market future career opportunities.
- Coordinate with educational partners to gauge feasibility for expanded programming/marketing (both at high school and post secondary)
- Evaluate the OEPA training requirement concerns with other regional peers.



# Contact Information

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For more information related to this work or to request full survey results contact:

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