

CLIENT STORY

From Staff Feedback To Action

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

TINYpulse by WebMD Health Services



The County of San Luis Obispo (SLO)'s Public Works Department has been a TINYpulse client since 2019. SLO County Public Works uses the TINYpulse solution for its 300-employee department, which encompasses water and wastewater utilities, roads and facilities.

SLO County Public Works leverages the full suite of TINYpulse solutions: *Engage* for ongoing employee feedback, *Cheers for Peers* for recognition, and *Onboard and Exit* for employee lifecycle management—helping them drive engagement, celebrate achievements, act on employee insights in real time and strengthen culture.

The Ask

SLO County Public Works engaged TINYpulse by WebMD Health Services to drive employee engagement and improve internal communication and feedback loops.

The Strategy

A combination of survey tools, internal communications tactics and feedback loops drove SLO County Public Works' engagement strategy.



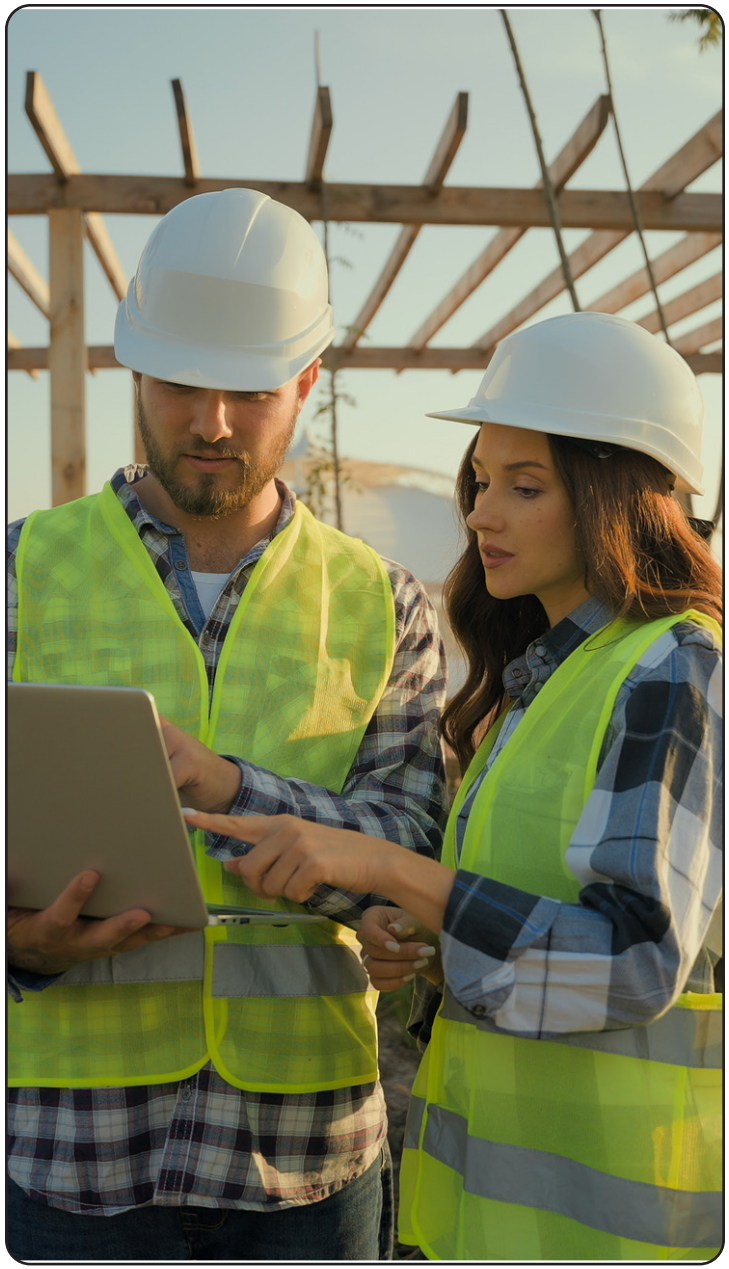
Annual engagement survey: Launched in 2021, the annual engagement survey allows SLO County Public Works to identify key focus areas for the coming year. Recently, these have included focusing more on employee well-being and giving employees in-depth information on the resource allocation process. The transition to a strategic, focus-oriented survey has allowed SLO County Public Works to better identify and act on large-scale issues.

Pulse and ad-hoc surveys: Once the focus topics have been identified, SLO County Public Works uses pulse surveys to to determine action items that will be most impactful. They also use the TINYpulse platform for one-off surveys to get employee feedback or gauge interest, such as naming a new newsletter or gathering input on content preferences for internal communications.

New-hire onboarding surveys: New hires participate in department-developed onboarding surveys and discuss their feedback with the Director at the five-month mark.

Managing employee feedback and expectations: SLO County Public Works strives to balance employee expectations with organizational reality, ensuring that feedback is acknowledged with full transparency regarding what can and cannot be done.

Internal communication strategy: Leadership's goal is to ensure that all department staff, regardless of role, can articulate the department's daily contributions to the community. The "Tell Our Story" communication initiative highlights various public works functions to tell a cohesive story of the department's value. As proof of the importance of this campaign, a Public Information Officer (PIO) position was established a few years ago; 50% of the role is dedicated to internal communication and 50% to external storytelling.



The Output

SLO County Public Works has been able to collect feedback from the annual engagement and pulse surveys and translate that into action with:

The PW Radio podcast: To demystify the resource allocation process, the PW Radio podcast series was launched to communicate key milestones in the budget cycle. The podcast was also made available through the TINYpulse Announcements tool for broader awareness.

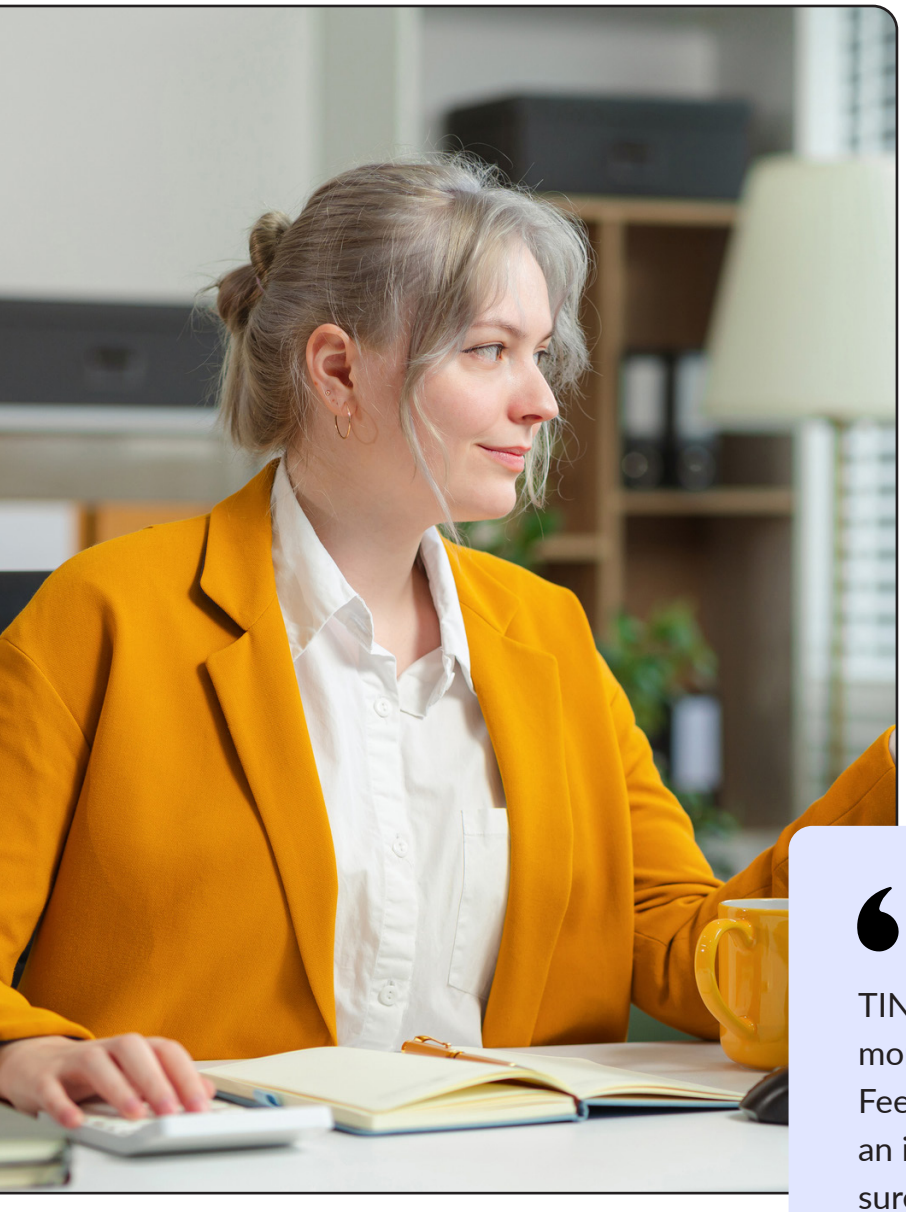
Professional development clarity: Employee confusion regarding professional development opportunities gave SLO County Public Works the chance to clarify the difference between department-paid training, technical division-funded training and union-provided tuition reimbursement. In addition, when survey respondents indicated they'd like more opportunities for group discussions and networking, SLO County Public Works held supervisor training sessions in collaboration with the county's HR team.

Monthly communication: In 2023, SLO County Public Works launched a monthly newsletter compiled and distributed by the PIO to communicate survey results, feedback and next steps to employees, which helps close the feedback loop and strengthen communication on actions taken. Feedback is also discussed during quarterly supervisor meetings.

The Results

- Survey participation has grown over the years. The annual engagement survey **participation rate has improved from 50% in 2023 to 56% in 2026.**
- Engagement Index scores have **grown 2.75% over the last year to 4.11 (out of 5),** reflecting action SLO County Public Works has taken on feedback.
- The implementation of new-hire onboarding surveys has spurred **participation in the Peer-to-Peer Onboarding Program.** The Onboarding Program connects new employees with volunteer ambassadors from each of Public Works' thirteen divisions to build a broader understanding of department functions and establish personal connections across the organization.





What's Next

SLO County Public Works recently updated its mission statement and core values. They will be integrating these core values into the TINYpulse platform through the Cheers feature, where they will use value tags (custom labels) to accompany and improve employee recognition. This aligns with SLO County Public Works' broader goal of celebrating excellence, which will be integrated into their upcoming strategic plan.

There are also plans to increase use of the Cheers for Peers tool and incorporate the new value tags to encourage employees and supervisors to more regularly recognize one another.

> "TINYpulse tools have been invaluable in helping us understand more about what employees need from us to do their jobs well. Feedback we've received from the surveys has allowed us to clarify an important aspect of our financial allocation process and make sure employees know how they can take advantage of professional development opportunities."



TINYpulse by WebMD Health Services is the leading employee feedback and engagement solution, empowering companies around the world to measure and improve company culture, increase employee retention and enhance performance.

To learn more, get in touch with our employee engagement experts.

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