



ACWA President Ernie Avila describes the groundbreaking potential behind the association's Vision for Our Water Future initiative during filming of a video. The video is among several items within a toolkit members can access to promote the initiative, aimed at establishing water as a top priority for California's next governor. See accompanying article to learn more and download the toolkit.



ACWA-Supported Bills, HRL Funding, Advance in Legislature

As the Legislature nears the July 2 beginning of a month-long summer recess, ACWA advocacy staff continue tracking and advocating in support or opposition on nearly 75 bills in the Legislature.

The bills address a wide range of topics of interest to member agencies, including infrastructure funding, wildfire policy, invasive species and Proposition 218 reform affecting rate settings.

A few key legislative issues and their status are summarized below.

Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program

The Legislature approved its version of the state budget on June 15, which included an additional \$25 million in funding for the ACWA-supported Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) Program. As of June 23, the final state budget was awaiting Gov. Gavin Newsom's signature.

The additional one-time General Fund monies would bolster efforts to deliver environmental flows, habitat restoration, science and monitoring to support the requirements of the soon-to-be updated Bay-Delta Water

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Vision for Our Water Future Continues Gaining Momentum

ACWA's Vision for Our Water Future continues to make progress with three specialized working groups developing recommendations to advance the initiative's priorities.

The detailed recommendations that emerge from this process will help shape a detailed implementation roadmap for the next governor and guide ACWA's continued engagement with the gubernatorial candidates and legislative leadership. The workgroups are focused on protecting affordability, delivering critical



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ACWA President
ERNIE AVILA, P.E.

Investing in Water is Investing in California



Water is more than a resource — it is the foundation upon which California's future will be built. No one knows this more than ACWA members. Every major challenge facing our state, from housing affordability and economic growth to food security and wildfire resilience, depends on reliable water supplies and modern water infrastructure. When California invests in water, it invests in statewide solutions.

That reality is at the heart of ACWA's Vision for Our Water Future initiative. Over the past several months, ACWA members and coalition partners from across California have come together around a simple but powerful idea: a strong water future is essential to a strong California future.

As we look ahead to the 2026 gubernatorial election, with Steve Hilton and Xavier Becerra advancing, we know when our next governor prioritizes a reliable water supply and infrastructure, they unlock the solutions to our state's most pressing challenges.

The Vision for Our Water Future initiative was designed specifically for this moment. It provides a clear, actionable framework for the next administration to strengthen water reliability for communities and agriculture, modernize infrastructure, support environmental stewardship and ensure affordability for the people and businesses that depend on California's water system every day. It is not a wish list. It is a roadmap built on decades of experience and the collective expertise of water leaders throughout the state.

ACWA has spent the past few months engaging with gubernatorial candidates and their teams, introducing them to the Vision and reinforcing the importance of water as a cornerstone issue for California's future prosperity. These conversations have highlighted a growing recognition that water is not a standalone policy issue, it is interconnected with nearly every priority the next governor hopes to achieve.

What makes water such a powerful issue is its ability to transcend political divides. Every Californian depends on safe, reliable and affordable water. Every community benefits from resilient infrastructure. Every business and industry relies on a dependable water supply to succeed. Water is California's ultimate unifier.

In the months ahead, ACWA will continue working to ensure that water remains front and center in the gubernatorial conversation. We are grateful for the growing number of ACWA members, organizations and coalition partners that have joined this effort and helped amplify the Vision's message.

Together, we have an opportunity to help shape the future of California. By advancing a shared vision for water, we can provide the next governor with the tools, partnerships and policy framework needed to secure a more resilient, prosperous and sustainable future for generations to come. 💧

ACWA News, a publication of the
Association of California Water
Agencies

Periodicals postage paid at
Sacramento, CA. USPS 334030

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to
ACWA News

980 9th Street, Suite 1000
Sacramento, CA 95814-3514

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Board Updated on Advocacy Progress, Votes to Oppose Ballot Measure

The ACWA Board of Directors on June 5 took action on several issues while receiving updates on federal and state advocacy.

ACWA staff also briefed Board members on progress toward meeting the goals of ACWA's Vision for Our Water Future initiative. Launched in April, the initiative prioritized ACWA staff engagement with gubernatorial campaigns before the June 2 primary election, including those of Xavier Becerra and Steve Hilton, who will appear on the November ballot. That engagement continues and more updates on the initiative are available in a separate article on page 1.

The meeting was preceded by a Board workshop the day before to review committee work plans, which align with goals established through ACWA's 2025-'29 Strategic Plan.

The June 5 Board meeting included discussion or action on the following agenda items.

Projects of Statewide Significance

An ACWA Board-level task force is exploring a recommendation from the association's Water Management Committee that could result in ACWA taking positions on projects of statewide significance.

The task force held its inaugural meeting on May 22. It is composed of Board representatives from each of ACWA's 10 regions who will consider establishing a formal process for the association to take positions on projects of statewide significance.

ACWA Rejoining NWRA

The Board unanimously voted to rejoin the National Water Resources Association (NWRA), a federation of state water

associations that represents both agricultural and municipal water providers with a focus on western water issues.

Under NWRA's membership model, all ACWA members can access NWRA membership benefits at no additional cost. Benefits include access to NWRA federal updates, monthly policy calls and member pricing at NWRA events, including the annual conference which will be held Nov. 2-5 in Coronado.

ACWA left NWRA in 2024 citing concerns that have since been addressed, ACWA Federal Relations Director Ian Lyle told Board members.

Ballot Measure

Board members voted to oppose a ballot measure, qualified for the November 2026 ballot, backed by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. The measure proposes changes to Proposition 13 that would limit the way revenues can be generated by and for local governments, particularly affecting counties and charter cities.

Advocacy

ACWA staff briefed Board members on progress of two association-sponsored bills: SB 1153 regarding wildfire policy and AB 2180 concerning rate setting. Both bills have passed out of their house of origin and are advancing in the Legislature. For more information, see Capitol Corner on page 1.

In Washington D.C., ACWA federal advocacy is focused on several areas, specifically on supporting the restoration of federal funding for water-related projects and programs. This work is continuing through meetings with members of Congress and participation in multiple coalition letters. ♣

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infrastructure and modernizing water management.

ACWA staff met with several of the candidates before the primary election, including the two who are advancing to the November general election. Staff continue to schedule briefings with those candidates and their staff.

The initiative has also gained momentum with statewide support from more than 45 member agencies and partner associations passing resolutions and letters of support.

For questions regarding the Vision, please contact ACWA Director of State Regulatory Relations Chelsea Haines at (916) 669-2431. ♣

Get Involved

Member agencies can support and amplify the initiative using the following resources and engagement opportunities.

Member toolkit includes:

- 4-minute video
- Social media video clips
- Sample resolution and letter of support
- Sample news release

Additional opportunity:

- Submit case studies supporting Vision recommendations



Scan to download
toolkit



From Page 1 | *Capitol Corner*

Quality Control Plan. The State Water Resources Control Board is expected to adopt an updated Bay-Delta Plan by the end of 2026 with the HRL as a compliance pathway for participating water agencies.

Wildfire Liability

Author: Sen. Anna Caballero (D-Merced)

ACWA Position: Sponsoring

What it would do: SB 1153 would clarify and declare the limited role of public water systems during wildfires. While water systems support firefighting, they are not designed or intended for wildfire defense or suppression, and it would be impractical and costly to require them to function as such. The bill would establish that water supply or pressure limitations during a wildfire are not a substantial cause of wildfire damage. It also would require certain urban water suppliers in high fire-risk areas to include wildfire specific response procedures in their emergency response plans.

Status: Passed Senate, scheduled for Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee hearing June 30

Wildfire Impacts

Author: Sen. Shannon Grove (R-Bakersfield)

ACWA Position: Co-sponsoring with California Forest Watershed Alliance

What it would do: SB 899 would require the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, created by Gov. Gavin Newsom, to assess the health costs and impacts of high-severity wildfire smoke to better value the importance of investing in achieving the task force's action plan goals.

Status: Passed Senate; in Assembly

Rate Setting

Author: Assemblymember Chris Ward (D-San Diego)

ACWA Position: Sponsoring

What it would do: AB 2180 would clarify how water agencies comply with Proposition 218 when setting water rates. This clarification would provide predictability for agencies, support California's water-use conservation goals and help minimize unnecessary legal disputes over water rates. ACWA is leading a coalition supporting the bill.

Status: Passed Assembly; awaiting Senate Floor vote

Golden Mussels

ACWA staff continue tracking and engaging on three bills related to golden mussels: AB 1772 (Papan), on which ACWA has a support-if-amended position; and AB 1894 (Rubio) and AB 2032 (Ransom) on which ACWA has favor positions.

All three bills have advanced out of the Assembly and are now being heard in various Senate committees. Advocacy efforts to strengthen California's and local water agencies' response to golden mussels are building on the success of a coalition formed earlier this year, supported by ACWA and led by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and East Bay Municipal Utility District. That effort resulted in \$20 million being added to a budget trailer bill for use in responding to golden mussel issues, such as severe damage to water infrastructure. ACWA advocacy on the issue is also focused on educating legislators about impacts to water agencies and the vital importance of funding to countering the threat of invasive species to water infrastructure.

Water Affordability

Author: Assemblymember Esmerelda Soria (D-Merced)

ACWA Position: Support

What it would do: AB 2739 proposes a lasting funding solution to water affordability at the household, system

Take Action

These are among dozens of priority bills that could affect ACWA member agencies. Support and strengthen ACWA's advocacy by joining a coalition at acwa.com/coalitions.

and community levels. The bill advances a sustainable funding solution to support a statewide Low-Income Rate Assistance program for water, as proposed by SB 1125 (Menjivar), while also supporting strategic investments that stabilize water systems and help reduce cost pressures before they are passed on to ratepayers.

Status: Passed Assembly; in Senate

ACWA IN ACTION

ACWA Senior Policy Advocate Soren Nelson, right, testifies June 11 before the Senate Local Government Committee in support of association-sponsored bill AB 2180. ACWA advocates testify on bills and build coalitions throughout the legislative year in representing member agencies' interests and mission to support their communities.



ACWA Foundation Launches Student Workforce Initiative

A new statewide effort will connect students, educators and water agencies through a partnership between the ACWA Foundation and the organization Tomorrow's Talent, LLC. Called Tomorrow's Water, the initial phase will produce a comprehensive, co-branded High School Internship Program Toolkit that water agencies can use to design, launch and sustain high-school internship opportunities.

The Foundation will serve as the collaborator to bring water agencies specific needs to the table, ensuring that the program is representative of their work and the communities they serve. The initiative will provide participating agencies with practical tools, implementation support and proven workforce development strategies while creating greater awareness of the diverse

and rewarding career opportunities available throughout California's water industry.

"This partnership between the ACWA Foundation and Tomorrow's Water represents an investment in the future of our industry," said ACWA Foundation Executive Director Lisa Mealoy. "Water agencies across California recognize the importance of preparing the next generation of professionals who will operate, maintain and innovate the systems that our communities rely upon every day.

The toolkit will provide standardized resources, implementation guidance, supervisor and mentor development tools, recruitment strategies, college partnership resources and evaluation frameworks that can be adapted to agencies of varying sizes and capacities.

"Tomorrow's Talent was founded on the belief that every student should be able to discover meaningful career opportunities, and every employer should have access to a strong local talent pipeline," said Tomorrow's Talent Chief Operations Officer Jennifer McDaniel. "Through Tomorrow's Water, we have an opportunity to connect students with purpose-driven careers while helping water agencies build the workforce they will need for decades to come."

The ACWA Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)3 formed by the ACWA Board of Directors in 2022. The Foundation and its Board of Trustees operate separately and independently from ACWA and its Board of Directors.

For more information, visit acwa-foundation.org.

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CV-SALTS Effort Tackling Nitrate in Central Valley



Photo courtesy of CV-SALTS

The stakes are always high in the Central Valley, where the epicenter of California's agricultural economy encompasses 40% of the land mass of the state and provides 25% of the nation's food. Where there are challenges, you'll find ACWA member agencies working within collaborative efforts to find a solution. One of those challenges is addressing nitrate accumulations in groundwater from historical and ongoing discharges stemming from accepted agriculture, municipal and industrial activities. ACWA member agencies belong to a broad-based initiative working on this challenge through an effort better known as CV-SALTS.

History

In 2006, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board initiated a forward-thinking and collaborative stakeholder initiative known as Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability – CV-SALTS – to develop a Central Valley-wide Salt and Nitrate Management Plan (SNMP).

The SNMP complied with the requirements in the State Water Resources Control Board's Recycled Water Policy. Stakeholder membership included representatives from regional and the state water boards along with agriculture, municipalities, industry, water supply, environmental justice, state and federal regulatory agencies, as well as the public. Today it provides a comprehensive regulatory and programmatic approach for the sustainable management of salts and nitrate in groundwater and surface water.

How it Works

The Central Valley's Basin Plans were amended to include the Nitrate Control Program through the establishment of management zones. In general, a management zone consists of multiple permittees from various sectors working collectively to first ensure safe drinking water, then to achieve balanced loadings within the management area, and ultimately to develop a long-term plan for managed restoration of groundwater to

meet applicable water quality objectives. The Nitrate Control Program is an innovative, collaborative approach because it shifts from traditional one-size-fits-all regulations to a flexible, community-driven model that prioritizes public health.

The Nitrate Control Program also establishes a long-term management strategy for addressing nitrate pollution in the Central Valley's drinking water aquifers. Nitrate at high levels can reduce the blood's ability to carry oxygen, which can result in brain damage and death. Infants and pregnant women are most at risk of nitrate toxicity.

High resolution groundwater quality mapping was conducted for the Central Valley floor and was the basis for prioritizing nitrate management in the identified basins. There are multiple management zones funded by permitted dischargers from various industries, including irrigated agriculture, dairy, oil and gas, publicly-owned treatment works, wine, poultry and food processors.

quality and also support a sustainable and thriving agricultural economy for the entire Central Valley,” Cory added.

Ensuring Access to Safe Drinking Water

Management zones are also working on long-term solutions through inter-organizational collaboration needed to get rural communities safe drinking water, such as accelerating actions to install in-home treatment systems to remove nitrate from domestic drinking water supplies, all while simultaneously implementing new management practices and developing

new technologies. Both aim to remove nitrate from discharges that may otherwise leach to groundwater, such as connecting a neighborhood of well-dependent homes to a nearby water system or consolidating smaller water systems to expand their capacity.

Management zones facilitate the finding of long-term drinking water solutions for rural communities within their service areas. This includes working with nitrate-impacted rural communities to explore what solutions will work for their area. Such collaboration involves county

governments, water systems, area residents, local nonprofits and others. It is the kind of partnership ACWA members are practiced at and understand the value of.

Ultimately, the Nitrate Control Program recognizes the complexity of addressing nitrate issues and takes a realistic phased approach, which includes providing safe drinking water to residents in the Central Valley while the program is being implemented. It also underscores the value and importance of collaboration amongst agencies, industry, agriculture and regulatory agencies. ♦

MEMBER NEWS

Carpinteria Breaks Ground on Historic Water Purification Project

The Carpinteria Valley Water District (CVWD) and Carpinteria Sanitary District (CSD) broke ground recently on the Carpinteria Advanced Purification Project (CAPP), a landmark initiative designed to provide a drought-proof, locally controlled water supply for the community.

The project will recycle over 1 million gallons of water per day, meeting approximately 25% of Carpinteria’s annual water needs. By treating wastewater with proven, advanced technology and injecting the purified water into the Carpinteria Groundwater Basin, CAPP will create a reliable, year-round source that is resilient to drought conditions and climate change.

“I’m excited for the opportunity to serve the Carpinteria community and construct the water purification project for improved water management in the future,” CVWD General Manager Kelley Dyer stated in a news release. “CAPP represents a critical step in strengthening our local water supply by helping recharge the groundwater basin. Following recent



Photo courtesy of CVWD

drought conditions that reduced basin levels, this project will help maintain more stable groundwater supplies during future dry periods.”

The May 28 groundbreaking ceremony was attended by local, state and federal representatives. The \$90 million project is supported by over \$35 million in state

and federal grants, including funding from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, State Water Resources Control Board and the California Department of Water Resources. The remainder of funding will be met by a low-interest loan from the State Water Board. ♦

LIKE, SHARE & FOLLOW

EXPLORING THE WATER WORLD ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA

This summer, the world's biggest sporting event is bringing soccer (fútbol) fever to North America. With the FIFA World Cup capturing attention across social media, many organizations are finding creative ways to connect their messaging to the excitement surrounding the games.

Tapping into major cultural moments and trending events can be an effective way to increase engagement, reach new audiences and make familiar messages feel fresh and relevant. Many organizations and ACWA members are already showing how a little creativity can turn a global sporting event into an opportunity to promote water awareness, conservation and community engagement.

See a few recent examples below.

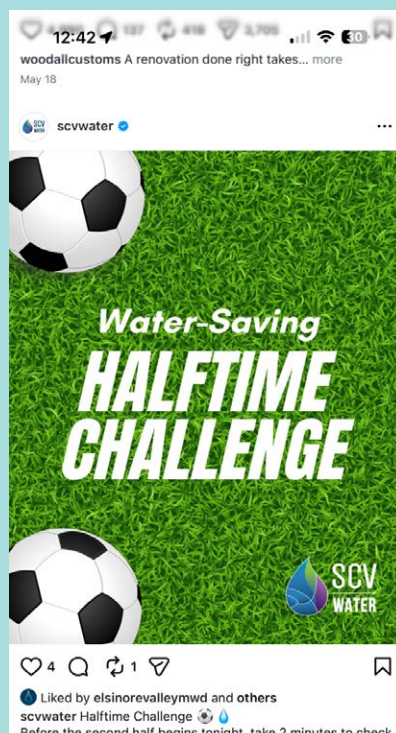
Be sure to follow us on Facebook, X, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram @ACWAWater to see more of what other ACWA member agencies are doing on social media.



West Valley Water District combined world cup hype with National Mascot Day and showed its mascot playing soccer while giving out some water saving tips.



California Department of Water Resources highlighted its "World Class Team" by having a soccer ball roll through the building as employees name off different departments.



SCV Water issued a "Water Saving Halftime Challenge" urging customers to take two minutes during halftime to check for leaks around their home.



Member Agencies Provide Valuable Support During May SoCal Wildfires

A reservoir and Heli-Hydrant system maintained by ACWA member agencies played critical roles in helping firefighters minimize wildfire threats to Southern California communities during May.

Firefighting helicopters saved valuable time between water refills through San Geronio Pass Water Agency's Heli-Hydrant system. Access to two strategically located refill stations allowed helicopters to refill water in as little as 10 seconds. As a result, firefighters contained the Lemon Fire near Cabazon to 14 acres, with damage limited to one outbuilding and four vehicles, according to a district news release.

The effort protected approximately 2,630 residents in Cabazon and demonstrated the life-and-property-saving value of investing in local wildfire response infrastructure and regional collaboration.

Earlier in May, Calleguas Municipal Water District's reservoir, Lake Bard, served as the primary water source for aerial firefighting operations during the Sandy Fire. Lake Bard holds over 3.4 billion gallons of water and Calleguas continued to top off the lake during firefighting operations.

Lake Bard was utilized by aircraft from Ventura County Fire, Los Angeles County Fire, and the U.S. Forest Service hundreds of times during the Sandy Fire incident — day and night — pulling a total of 787,000 gallons of water, according to a district news release.

Having a nearby water source reduced turnaround times for helicopters compared to trips to the ocean or other distant sources, helping aircraft return water to the fire faster during critical response periods. Damage from the two-



Photo courtesy of San Geronio Pass Water Agency

acre fire included the loss of one home before it was 100% contained, according to CalFire. ♦

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Outreach Award
Due Oct. 1



Communication Award
Due Sept. 1



Emissary Award
Due Sept. 1



Innovation Award
Due Sept. 1



Cliff Loeffler

ACWA Names Loeffler Region 7 Chair

The ACWA Region 7 Board recently elected **Cliff Loeffler** as its Chair. The position makes Loeffler a member of the ACWA Board of Directors.

A multi-generational farmer, Loeffler serves on the Board of Directors of the Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District (LSID) and is

the district's representative on the Friant Water Authority Board of Directors, where he currently serves as Treasurer. Additionally, he represents LSID at ACWA JPIA.

He is also a founding delegate to the Great Valley Farm Water Partnership, a volunteer organization representing water interests from the Sacramento Delta, West Side of the San Joaquin Valley and the East Side of the San Joaquin Valley. ♦



Sherry Shaw

Shaw Retiring from Walnut Valley

Walnut Valley Water District (WVWD) General Manager **Sherry Shaw** will retire from her position in July after 25 years of service to the district. The WVWD Board of Directors in May appointed Assistant General Manager **Jared Macias** to serve as Interim General Manager.

Shaw helped guide the district through significant infrastructure investments, including the completion of a new headquarters building

and launching construction of a future operations building.

“Sherry’s leadership, professionalism and commitment to public service have left a lasting impact on Walnut Valley Water District,” stated Board President **Jerry Tang** in a news release. “On behalf of the Board of Directors, we thank her for her many years of service and the strong foundation she helped build for the future of this organization and the communities we serve.” ♦



Alex Sanchez

CVWD Names Sanchez to Board

The Coachella Valley Water District Board of Directors recently swore in long-time Coachella Valley resident **Alex Sanchez** to fill the seat vacated in April by **Peter Nelson**.

Sanchez brings more than 20 years of experience in agricultural operations, including working as a farm manager and ranch unit director. He serves

in several regional leadership roles, including as President of the Coachella Valley Irrigated Lands Coalition, Vice President of the Riverside County Farm Bureau and Vice President of the Darby Estates Homeowners Association.

Sanchez earned a Bachelor of Science degree in plant sciences from the University of Arizona. ♦

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Imported Water Expands Groundwater Storage Across the Region – June 4

The Gubernatorial Field is Set, Now is the Time to Talk About Water – June 3

National Water Groups Issue Cybersecurity Warning – June 10

Bureau Announces WaterSMART Funding Opportunities – May 27

State launches new \$1 billion rebate program for electric trucks – May 27

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JULY 2026

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ACWA Region 9 Event

ACWA | Temecula

Join ACWA Region 9 for a timely discussion on water policy, advocacy and effective communication strategies to help public water agencies strengthen their influence in California's evolving legislative and regulatory landscape.

ACWA EVENT

AUGUST 2026

12

ACWA 101

ACWA | Virtual

Celebrate Membership Appreciation Month with a special virtual ACWA 101 session. Discover member resources, advocacy, governance, events and communications, and learn how to maximize your ACWA membership experience.

ACWA EVENT

AUGUST 2026

19 – 20

11th Annual CA Water Data Summit

CA Data Collaborative | Los Angeles

The CA Water Data Summit, "Decade of Destiny," brings together water professionals, researchers, and leaders to advance collaboration and innovation in water data, strengthening data systems and improving water management across California.

ACWA EVENT

AUGUST 2026

20

ACWA Fall Quarterly Policy Committee Meetings

ACWA | Virtual

The Quarterly Policy Committee Meetings will include the Agriculture, Energy, Groundwater, Water Management and Water Quality committees. A detailed agenda and meeting materials will be available at a later date. These meetings will be held virtually.

ACWA EVENT

SEPTEMBER 2026

4

ACWA Region 5 Event

ACWA | Oxnard

Save the date for the ACWA Region 5 Event, bringing together California water agency leaders and professionals for regional networking and collaboration on water issues across the Central Coast and Bay Area.

ACWA EVENT

SEPTEMBER 2026

16

ACWA Executive Edge Leadership Forum

ACWA | North Hollywood

The ACWA Executive Edge Leadership Forum is a professional development event for public agency executives focused on strengthening leadership, communication, strategic thinking and collaboration through interactive sessions and peer networking.

ACWA EVENT