

## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

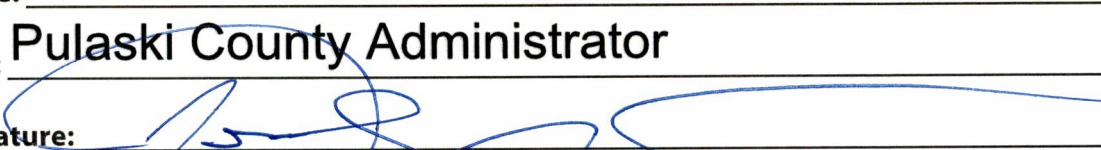
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Pulaski County  
Program Title: Innovative Solution to Human Capital Shortage  
Program Category: Communications

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Jonathan Sweet  
Title: Pulaski County Administrator  
Signature: 



Innovative Solution to Human Capital Shortage

Program Category: Communications

## **Executive Summary**

In Winter and Spring of 2022, Pulaski County experienced an employment crisis, like most of the nation, in several critical departments – PSA, Emergency Services, Waste and Water Management and Maintenance. These vacancies significantly affected the functionality of the departments, increased existing staff’s workload, and created a decline in morale. To remedy this issue, Pulaski County implemented a strategy to address the vacancies and low morale.

Through an innovative marketing campaign, Pulaski County utilized creative advertising to highlight the County's most loyal and valued employees in the departments of need, making employees “ambassadors.” The ambassadors shared personal testimonies about their work, which resonated with the target audience of potential employees with the skills and values aligned with the identified areas of need.

Driven by employees’ heartfelt testimonies, the ambassadors served as the inspiration for campaign tagline, “Work Where Your Job Makes a Real Difference.” This tagline was utilized in a mixed-media campaign compiled of social media video and static ads, and print ads. Pulaski County also implemented an employee referral program bonus, a new employee sign-on and retention bonus, and welcome bags. To further celebrate all employees, Pulaski County hosted the “Play Outside 250” at Motor Mile Speedway, with VIP seating and dining at the track.

The increase in internal pride and morale is priceless; however, the “Work Where Your Job Makes a Difference” mixed media campaign totaled \$5,000. As a result, all positions in the selected departments were filled. Pulaski County continues to host the Play Outside 250, create welcome bags, and use the same branding in hiring efforts. The overall outcome was a tangible increase in positive employee morale and an effective hiring campaign of new and highly capable talent.

## **Brief Overview** (per requested)

Pulaski County like most of the nation in both the private and public sectors, faced an employment crisis in critical departments: PSA, Emergency Services, Waste and Water Management, and Maintenance Management. These vacancies affected the functionality of the departments, compounded the workload of existing staff and created a decline in team morale. To remedy this issue, Pulaski County implemented a strategy to address the vacancies and low morale among existing employees.

By identifying Pulaski County ambassadors in each of the critical departments, Pulaski County utilized employee testimonials via a mixed-media campaign. The heartfelt testimonies of the employees resonated with the target audience and served as the inspiration for the campaign tagline – “Work Where Your Job Makes a Real Difference.” Alongside the mixed-media communications and marketing efforts, Pulaski County created an appreciation event and referral program for all current and new employees.

As a result of these efforts, all positions in the selected, critical departments were filled and a tangible increase in positive employee morale was achieved. Pulaski County continues to host appreciation events and utilizes the same branding and campaign strategies in their hiring efforts.

## **The Challenge**

In Winter and Spring of 2022, Pulaski County faced the challenge, like most of the nation in both the private and public sectors, of a human capital shortage for positions in PSA, Emergency Services, Waste and Water Management, and Maintenance. After coming off the comprehensive challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, job morale was extremely low in these departments, workloads were high and job vacancies were many.

## **The Innovative Solution**

Pulaski County was actively contending with the employment and workforce challenges of its business community and large advanced manufacturing industries through its Economic Development Department and County Administration. During this time, Pulaski County as one of the top major employers in the region, was facing its own critical challenges with workforce retention and recruitment. This subject matter seemed to be at the forefront of most BRE conversations and those conversations were focused on the challenge with little focus on the solutions and response. Pulaski County sought to take a different approach to both retention and recruitment that was different than simply a monetary response that we were hearing from other major employers. Pulaski County's innovative solution to the problem was to invest in a strategic recruitment marketing campaign that would also have a residual benefit to existing employees, by utilizing committed, loyal and valued employees as Pulaski County ambassadors. Pulaski County wanted sincere and honest ambassadors whose voices resonated with the target audience, potential employees with skills, interests, and values that aligned with the identified areas of need. These ambassadors served as the inspiration for the campaign's slogan - "Work Where Your Job Makes a Real Difference," as each of the ambassadors make real differences in Pulaski County every day.

The recruitment marketing campaign was truly driven by the hearts and voices of the Pulaski County ambassadors. Personal testimonials from the ambassadors served as the foundation for all advertising efforts. Pulaski County created a mixed-media campaign with social media static ads, social media video ads, radio ads, and a variety of print media ads centered around real employees sharing their real experiences. All ads ran for the length of one month with one ambassador featured per week across each advertising platform. All ad materials paralleled the Pulaski County brand ranging from colors, to fonts, to design style.

Examples of each ad are included below:

Social Media Video Ads:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/112B\\_PUiVbh4mOJbgXusiYPGnCAi6z-Ha?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/112B_PUiVbh4mOJbgXusiYPGnCAi6z-Ha?usp=sharing)

Social Media Static Ads:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NumZm3FwPxVmzfZWzpEpYJx10PqVC\\_wy?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NumZm3FwPxVmzfZWzpEpYJx10PqVC_wy?usp=sharing)

Print Media Ads: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14enlt3x2SBuSf-QUPhab35zPiURL-2Fg?usp=sharing>

In addition to the mixed-media advertising, Pulaski County created campaign magnets to be placed on county trash trucks to promote and extend gratitude to Pulaski County employees. Pulaski County also offered a \$250 bonus to current Pulaski County employees for referral efforts, coupled with a new employee sign-on and retention bonus. Examples of these efforts are included below:

Advertising Magnet:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dWwqL-JykYt5cPs4pPCpmUqZtBj-X9sq/view?usp=sharing>

Referral Card:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rae9FKB-1vXk3hdACwww4o6S9SuoRW6X/view?usp=sharing>

Lastly, to honor and celebrate the Pulaski County ambassadors and welcome new employees, Pulaski County hosted the “Play Outside 250” at Motor Mile Speedway, which provided VIP seating and dining at the racetrack.

### **The Results**

The “Work Where your Job Makes a Real Difference” campaign created both quantitative and qualitative results. In 6 months (which includes the two-month time frame for the campaign), all needed positions were successfully filled with skilled and talented professionals. On social media, the video ads reached over 8,000 people with an average of over 120 link clicks per video post. The static ads reached over 7,000 people with an average of more than 100 link clicks per static post.

Qualitatively, the advertising campaign also significantly boosted morale and pride among Pulaski County employees. Emergency Services, Waste and Water management, PSA, and Maintenance Departments shared with us their sincere in genuine gratitude and excitement about seeing their fellow team members highlighted.

The “Work Where Your Job Makes a Real Difference” tagline is still used on County communications and job hiring ads. Pulaski County has continued to host the “Play Outside 250” at Motor Mile Speedway to thank and celebrate Pulaski County employees, providing complimentary tickets and VIP access.

The budget for the “Work Where your Job Makes a Real Difference” totaled \$5,000. The campaign served as a partnership between the Pulaski County Tourism & Communications Department, Pulaski County Human Resources Department, and Pulaski County Administration. Pulaski County Human Resources selected the employees to be ambassadors. Pulaski County

Tourism & Communications created the video ads, social media static ads, and the array of print media ads. Pulaski County Administration supported the project and provided funding for the initiatives.

Overall, the “Work Where Your Job Makes a Real Difference” creatively solved a human capital shortage, boosted employee morale, and created opportunities that Pulaski County has continued to use in order to retain, celebrate, thank, and attract employees.