

Policy Statement 2022-2023

New Mexico Rural Water Association Water/Wastewater System Operations Specialist Apprenticeship Program



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REVISION SHEET

RELEASE NO.	DATE	REVISION DESCRIPTION
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Basic Principles

In order that the New Mexico Rural Water Association may fulfill its obligations and responsibilities of providing a sound and progressive Apprentice and training program as defined in the National Rural Water Association Standards of Apprenticeship and Training, this Statement of Policy is herein adopted this March 31, 2022.

The New Mexico Rural Water Association recognizes the sacrifices and efforts necessary to successfully participate in this training program, but also realizes that the rules must be carefully observed for the program to be a success. Keep in mind that the purpose of this apprenticeship training is to make you, the apprentice, into a well-trained, skilled water/wastewater operator, however your future depends entirely on your own efforts put forth while in the training program.

The Apprenticeship Director will act under the direction of the National Rural Water Association, Executive Director and the Training Coordinator in the administration of all Statements of Policy and will conduct all business of the New Mexico Rural Water Association's Office as directed.

The New Mexico Rural Water Association will be made aware of any disciplinary or scholastic problems of the apprentice as soon as they are detected. The prime source of detection will be through evaluations and/or school records and attendance. If deemed necessary, the apprentice will be directed to appear before the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director to discuss any problems.

I Selection of Apprentices

- A. The Apprenticeship Director will review all applications, verify any questionable or doubtful application for the minimum requirements and approve qualified applications on National Rural Water Association website.
- B. The Apprenticeship Director will select for interview applicants who meet the minimum requirements as set forth in the Apprenticeship Standards page D-2.
- C. After each interview, applicants will be graded in accordance with the adopted selection procedures in the Apprenticeship Standards page D-2.
- D. Final selection of apprentices will be in accordance with the selection procedures in the Apprenticeship Standards page D-2.

II Assignment of Apprentices

- A. The Apprenticeship Director will act for and under the policy of the National Rural Water Association/New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions Standards of Apprenticeship in the administration of these procedures.
- B. Apprentice transfer and training assignment will be made by the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director.
- C. Assignment/job placement of apprentices by the Apprenticeship Director will be based upon the employer's request and the training needs of the available apprentices. ***You must be willing to travel to anywhere within New Mexico!*** Any apprentice, who takes a training assignment and does not report, or reports and then declines, will be required to have a conference with the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director.
- D. Work will be provided for an apprentice when work is available, and in **NO** case will the NMRWA be held responsible for placement of an apprentice when work is not available.
- E. Apprentices, when unemployed, will report their status to the Apprenticeship Director immediately and sign the NMRWA's register. If the Apprenticeship Director is not contacted within five (5) days, the apprentice will be considered self-terminated from the program.
- F. If an apprentice quits a job without obtaining permission, from the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director, the apprentice is subject to suspension from training and risks the possibility of having the Apprentice Agreement canceled.
- G. Should an employer have difficulty with an apprentice, they should notify the Apprenticeship Director immediately. The Apprenticeship Director and employer will endeavor to resolve the difficulty prior to the discharge of the apprentice. If the Apprenticeship Director and employer do not resolve the problem after all efforts are made, the employer, before discharging the apprentice, should notify the Apprenticeship Director immediately and provide the applicable records involving the discharge, including but not limited to, the progression of discipline and attendance records.
- H. An apprentice who is terminated for "cause" shall contact the Apprenticeship Director immediately. An apprentice who is terminated for "cause" by an employer twice, the apprentice may be suspended or canceled from the Apprenticeship Program.

III Probationary Period

- A. For the first 1000 On-The-Job Training Work Processes Hours, approximately 6 months of employment, the apprentices shall be on probation. During this period, the Apprenticeship Agreement may be canceled without a hearing. The Registration Agency shall be duly notified of such cancelation. Violation of these policies will be cause for cancelation.
- B. During the probationary period, the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director shall make a thorough review of the apprentice's ability and development. Action will be taken on each probationary apprentice to end the probation if apprentice's ability and development has been satisfactory or cancel their registration if satisfactory ability and development is not met. All interested parties shall be notified of such action.
- C. Before advancement to next wage rate, the apprentice may be placed back on probation by the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director for violation of policies, rules, and/or regulations.

IV Periodic Advancement of Apprentices

- A. Apprentices will be eligible for advancement providing the following requirements are met:
 - a. First 6 months apprentices must have completed 1000 hours of Approved Employment On-The-Job training as well as 72 related technical instruction class hours.
 - b. Second 6 months apprentices must have completed 2000 hours of Approved Employment On-The-Job training as well as 144 related technical instruction class hours.
 - c. Third 6 months apprentices must have completed 3000 hours of Approved Employment On-The-Job training as well as 216 related technical instruction class hours.
 - d. Fourth 6 months apprentices must have completed 4000 hours of Approved Employment On-The-Job training as well as 288 related technical instruction class hours.
 - e. Satisfactory school attendance.
 - f. Satisfactory school grade average.
 - g. Satisfactory employer records.

- h. On-The-Job Training Work Processes Hours are due online, through the National Rural Water User's Manual Apprentice Tracking System daily. Apprentices must log in and submit On-The-Job Training Work Processes Hours showing total number of hours and date. If an apprentice quits turning in their daily hours, the apprentice may be suspended or canceled from the program.

Hours can only be turned in ONE WAY

Online through the National Rural Water Association website:

<https://apprenticeship.nrwa.org/lib/ojt.cfm>

On left click: **OJT / Work Processes**

Select: **Water System Operation Specialist, or Wastewater System Operation Specialist**

Click: **Add New Entry**

Click: **View/Edit Hours**

Make sure to: **Save Log Entry**

- i. If you are receiving VA benefits, you will need to email your paystubs and claim form to susanp@nmjatc.org and log your On-The-Job Training Work Processes Hours online.
- B. All apprentices are expected to apply themselves to their homework. Unsatisfactory test grades may be cause for cancelation from the program.
 - C. All apprentices are required to maintain a grade average of 70% or better during this apprenticeship. An unsatisfactory average for these school years may be cause for cancelation. Any apprentice scoring below a 70% on a test may be required to see the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director.
 - D. If a student quits participating in this program, the apprentice will be contacted by mail, phone and/or email to see why the apprentice is not participating. If there is not contact from the apprentice for 5 days, it may be cause for cancelation from the program.
 - E. Any apprentice held back at re-evaluation, who is drawing benefits from the Veterans Administration, will lose those benefits for the time the apprentice is held back. (This is a Veterans Administration ruling).

V Apprenticeship School

- A. The Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director shall act for and under the policies of the NMRWA in the administration of the apprenticeship school.
- B. The apprentice will need access to a computer (laptop, notebook, etc.) along with internet access for virtual meetings and homework online.

- C. Disciplinary problems shall be referred to the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director.
- D. Overtime work will not exempt an apprentice from attending classes, completing home study assignments, or maintaining passing grades on all tests.
- E. **At least** four (4) hours must be given to Related Technical Instruction class each week.
- F. The apprentice shall email to susanp@nmjafc.org online class progress to Apprenticeship Director a **bi-weekly** (every 2nd Friday) report by each Friday of online class progress to ensure on time advancement of related technical instruction class completion.

Class reporting must include:

- a. Start date
 - b. Total pages attempted (example: pgs 15-40)
 - c. Total pages completed (example: pgs 15-39)
 - d. Estimated completion date of chapter(s) you are working on
- G. Each apprentice shall attend all required classes.
- a. All classes begin promptly, Apprentices are expected to plan wisely to attend all in-person classes.
 - b. Any student leaving an in-person class after it begins, for any reason, will be marked absent for that class. When attending class virtually, cameras must remain on during class and apprentice present to be considered in attendance.
 - c. If a student misses a test, the apprentice will be required to make it up before the next class or get a zero (0) for a grade.
 - d. Any student disrupting the class may be dismissed and will not be allowed back in class until they appear before the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director.
 - e. When an apprentice has a failing grade at re-evaluation, an appearance before the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director is required to explain why they have a failing grade and the apprentice will not be advanced. See Section III, A in this Policy.
 - f. Excessive absences and being tardy from classes and work could be cause for cancelation from the program. If an apprentice finds it necessary to miss class more than twice, the apprentice shall notify the Apprenticeship Director immediately. Any student missing 4 or more classes in one (1) year shall be required to see the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director and may be either canceled from the program or required to repeat the school year.

- g. If food and drink is allowed in in-person classroom training, please pick up after yourself.
- h. Destruction of equipment shall be cause for cancelation from the program. Please do not sit on tables nor put your feet on walls.
- i. All tests and review times will be at the discretion of the Training Coordinator.
- j. Any person cheating on any test will be canceled from the apprenticeship program.
- k. There will be no weapon or firearm allowed on the NMRWA's or employer's property or any other property the NMRWA uses for classes or training. Any apprentice found with a weapon or firearm on the property will be subject to discipline, up to and including being terminated from the program.
- l. Any use of tobacco products must take place only in a designated smoking area, if one is available.
- m. No cellular phone usage will be allowed in class.
- n. All cellular phones and PDAs (a palmtop computer that functions as a personal organizer but also provides email and internet access.) must be turned OFF during testing. If not, a zero (0) will be given for that test and you will be required to see the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director.
- o. Any apprentice that is required to see the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director three (3) times in a calendar year for violation of NMRWA Policies may be suspended from class, must repeat the school year, will not be advanced and may be suspended or canceled from the program.

H. Books and lesson material for the apprentice.

- a. All books and/or online classes must be paid in full. There will be no exceptions. Any apprentice that does not pay may be subject to suspension and/or cancelation from the program.
- b. Any additional cost for lost books and/or additional textbooks required shall be the responsibility of the apprentice.
- c. Once books and/or online classes are purchased, there will be no refund of money. There will be no exceptions.

VI Water Systems Operation Specialist One (WS1) or Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist One (WW1) Operator Certification

- A. Depending on the program you are signed up with, after successfully completing the **first year**, each apprentice is required to take, pass and download a copy of the certification onto the National Rural Water Association Apprenticeship website:
 - a. Water Supply Level 1 (WS1) examination, or
 - b. Wastewater Level 1 (WW1) examination
- B. For more information on testing, go to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) website at: https://www.env.nm.gov/drinking_water/certification-renewal-requirements/

VII Completion of Apprenticeship

- A. **Water Operator, or Wastewater Operator Apprenticeship:** To be eligible for wage advancement and change of classification to Mentor, each apprentice shall have successfully:
 - a. Completed 4000 On-The-Job Training Work Processes Hours,
 - b. Satisfactorily have completed the two (2) years, 288 minimum related technical instruction class hours,
 - c. Passed either the
 - i. Water Supply Level 2 (WS2) Operator's Certification test or
 - ii. Wastewater Level 2 (WW2) Operator's Certification test,
 - d. Submitted certification numbers to the New Mexico Rural Water Association Apprenticeship and
 - e. Downloaded a copy of the certification onto the National Rural Water Association
- B. **Water Operator, or Wastewater Operator Apprenticeship:** If after the completion of
 - a. 4000 On-The-Job Training Work Processes Hours,
 - b. Satisfactory completion of the two (2) years, 288 minimum related technical instruction class hours and **HAS NOT** obtained the
 - i. Water Supply Level 2 (WS2) Operator's Certification, or
 - ii. Wastewater Level 2 (WW2) Operator's Certification,
 - c. The Apprentice will be:
 - i. Suspended from apprenticeship program for one year until they have obtained their certification.
 - d. Once the apprentice **HAS** obtained the
 - i. Water Supply Level 2 (WS2) Operator's Certification, or
 - ii. Wastewater Level 2 (WW2) Operator's Certification and

- e. Submits their certification number to the NM Rural Water Association and
- f. Downloads a copy of the certificate onto the National Rural Water Website,
- g. The apprentice will be reinstated and advanced to Mentor.

- h. If after one year the apprentice still ***HAS NOT*** obtained the
 - i. Water Supply Level 1 (WS1) Operator's Certification, or
 - ii. Wastewater Level 1 (WW1) Operator's Certification
- i. The apprentice will be canceled from the program.

Per the NRWA Standards / Terms of Apprenticeship

Class Year	Period	Completion Requirements	Wage Rate	Comments
1 st 6 months	1st	1000 hours needed 0-1000 OJT hours total 72 *RTI class hours needed	See *AARF	Probationary Period. Agreement may be canceled by NMRWA or apprentice without a hearing.
2 nd 6 months	2nd	2000 hours needed 1000-2000 OJT hours total 144 *RTI class hours needed	See *AARF	
3 rd 6 months	3rd	3000 hours needed 2000-3000 OJT hours total 216 *RTI class hours needed	See *AARF	
4 th 6 months	4th	4000 hours needed 3000-4000 OJT hours total 288 *RTI class hours needed	See *AARF	2 nd year apprentice who does not have the Water Supply Level 2 or Wastewater Level 2 Operator's License at the end of the 4000 OJT hours and 288 RTI class hours, will be suspended from the apprenticeship for one year until obtained. If not obtained after one year, apprentice will be canceled.

*AARF = Apprenticeship Agreement and Registration Form

*RTI = Related Technical Instruction

The following are also required to be advanced in Period & Wages, as well as On-The-Job Training Work Processes and Related Technical Instruction Class Hours:

- Satisfactory school attendance
- Satisfactory School Grades (70% and above)
- Satisfactory Employer employment records/evaluations
- Passing grade on yearly Hands-On assessment tests
- Passing grade on Hands-On Mentor assessment test at the end of 2nd year

The wage rate is an hourly rate according to the Apprenticeship Agreement and Registration Form.

VIII General

- A. The New Mexico Rural Water Association shall have the right to discipline an apprentice as it deems necessary.
- B. During in-person school attendance, there will be no alcoholic beverages, illegal substances (such as drugs), or any weapon or firearm, permitted on NMRWA property or any other property the NMRWA uses for classes or training. Violation shall be cause for an absence, and/or being canceled from the program.
- C. The New Mexico Rural Water Association Executive Director shall select Training Coordinators.
- D. ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER MUST BE ENTERED ONTO THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION WEBSITE IMMEDIATELY. **EMAIL ADDRESSES MAY NOT BE CHANGED.**
- E. An apprentice must have and maintain a current New Mexico State driver's license. The driver's license must be valid. A restricted driver's license, due to a DWI or multiple DWIs, is not a valid driver's license for NMRWA purposes. Any apprentice while in the program that loses their driver's license for any reason including DWI violations, will be suspended from the program.
- F. Disruptive behavior is not allowed on the job or on NMRWA property or any other property the NMRWA uses for classes or training. Violations will be cause for action. Fighting or unlawful conduct shall not be tolerated on the job or on NMRWA property and shall be cause for cancelation of the apprenticeship agreement.

IX Drug Screening

- A. **Purpose:** The New Mexico Rural Water Association has a strong interest to provide a drug-free work and school environment that is safe and conducive to high standards for our

apprentices. As part of these commitments, the NMRWA has implemented this policy governing testing of apprentices, or applicants for employment, for certain drugs.

B. Definitions:

- a. **Drug Abuse:** Consumption of illegal drugs or controlled substances to the extent that the apprentice's conduct and performance in the training program is adversely affected, with evidence of impairment and a "positive" test result as defined below.
- b. **Illegal Drugs or Controlled Substances:** Any substance identified by the US Attorney General as a controlled substance. These include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Marijuana, narcotics (such as opium heroin and cocaine), stimulants, depressants, LSD and mescaline.
- c. **Alcohol Abuse:** Consumption of alcohol to the extent that the apprentice's conduct and performance in the training program is adversely affected with evidence of impairment, and/or blood alcohol level is .08 or higher.

C. Policy:

- a. Substance abuse, whether drug or alcohol, is contrary to the policies of the NMRWA, and is grounds for denying an applicant entry into the NMRWA Apprenticeship program, as well as termination of an apprentice from the program.
- b. Each applicant will sign a consent form permitting a urinalysis of applicant's urine for the purpose of screening for the presence of illegal drugs, controlled substances and alcohol. Failure to agree to this testing protocol will eliminate the applicant from further participation in the program.
- c. The drug screening will analyze a urine specimen provided by the applicant. A result is considered positive only after a confirmatory test, by gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS), has been performed on the specimen, and the NMRWA has ruled out legitimate use of legal drugs.
- d. A positive drug test result shall mean test levels on both the screening test and the confirmatory test are recognized as positive by the US Department of Health and Human Services in its *Mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs*, or in a subsequently issued rule or regulation issued by that agency.
- e. An apprentice or applicant testing positive shall have the right to request the secured portion of the urine or blood sample independently re-tested at the apprentice's or applicant's choice by a SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Certified Laboratory at their expense and bringing a cashier's check, money order or credit card in the amount of two hundred dollars to the NMRWA Office

to start the process of the re-test. The NMRWA will not accept personal checks or cash. If the independent re-test results are negative, the applicant shall be allowed to be reconsidered for entrance into the program, the apprentice shall be allowed to be reassigned to an employer and both applicant and apprentice will be reimbursed for the cost of such independent test.

- f. Refusal to take the drug screening tests, or confirmed positive test results, (for example, the presence of drug metabolites, or blood alcohol tests above a specified level) may both be cause for denial of training to applicants. Applicants rejected, because of positive drug/alcohol tests, may be eligible to re-apply, provided they present evidence of enrollment and completion of a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program. Apprentices must see the Apprenticeship Director and/or Executive Director and may be suspended until completion of a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program or may be terminated from the program.
- g. Drug testing results will be treated confidentially.
- h. Applicants who failed to report to the designated Drug Screening Collection Site within twenty-four (24) hours will not be eligible for the program.
- i. As a term and condition of continued training, all apprentices may be subject to drug screening because of unusual behavior on NMRWA property or any other property the NMRWA uses for classes or training. The NMRWA will pay for the cost of this test.

X Personal Appearance and Safety

- A. The apprentice, while on the job, represents the employer, the New Mexico Rural Water Association and the Apprenticeship Program to the public. With this in mind, the apprentice shall report to work in clean clothes and maintain a neat appearance.
- B. Due to the nature of the water and wastewater industry, attainment and use of safe work habits are of utmost importance and essential for the apprentice's personal safety, as well as for that of the associated Mentor's and other Operators that may be on the job.
- C. The apprentice must wear all required safety clothing and be always physically and mentally alert.

XI Expulsion from the Apprenticeship Program

Knowledgeable, dependable and safe Operators are of utmost importance in the Water and Wastewater Industry. With the above in mind, any continuous or deliberate violation of the policies

adopted by the New Mexico Rural Water Association Apprenticeship will be reason for cancelation of any Apprenticeship Agreement by the NMRWA.

I hereby give permission to the New Mexico Rural Water Association Apprenticeship to review my records and release information contained in them when necessary, concerning my apprenticeship.

Individuals who have been suspended or terminated from apprenticeship shall not be assigned by the NMRWA in any capacity. Suspended or terminated apprentices are not eligible to participate in any related technical instruction activities and are not eligible for any job assignments unless the NMRWA has determined that the individual is eligible for a change to another classification recognized by the NMRWA.

The New Mexico Rural Water Association reserves the right to change, alter, amend and interpret this Policy. Whenever changes are made, the apprentices will be notified on our website and in writing. Situations not covered in the Statements in these Policies will be dealt with on an individual basis by the NMRWA.

All wording appearing in the masculine gender will include the feminine.

XII Advice from the NMRWA Apprenticeship

Your reputation will follow you the rest of your life, guard it cautiously. Acquire a good work record, dress neatly, have a good attitude, attend work and school regularly, and on time.

Apprentice Policy Acknowledgment Form

I have read and understand the policies adopted by the New Mexico Rural Water Association and I will abide by such policies approved and adopted by the New Mexico Rural Water Association March 31, 2022.

(Print your name here)

(Sign your name here)

(Last four numbers of Social Security Number)

(Date)

(Emergency contact name)

(Emergency contact telephone number)

NMRWA Consent and Release Form

I, _____,
(Print name)

agree and consent to submit one or more of my urine specimens for drug and alcohol testing and analysis to a SMAHSA (formerly NIDA) certified medical laboratory selected by the NMRWA. I also consent to the release of such tests to the Medical Review Officer of that selected laboratory. I further consent to the release of the results of such tests to the NMRWA. I fully understand that a positive test result or the refusal to consent to a test may adversely affect my participation or continued participation as an apprentice in the NMRWA, which in turn may adversely affect my employment. Except as stated, I freely and voluntarily give this consent and release.

(Print your name here)

(Sign your name here)

(Last four numbers of Social Security Number)

(Date)

(Witnessed by)

(Date)

