

Policy Statement 2025

New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship Program for Water/Wastewater Systems Operation Specialists



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REVISION SHEET

RELEASE NO.	DATE	REVISION DESCRIPTION
REV. 0	3/31/22	Policy Statement
REV. 1	7/10/23	Policy Statement
REV. 2	8/31/23	Policy Statement
REV. 3	1/2/24	Revised from 4-Period to 2-Period Program effective 11/28/23, Emergency Contact: Added email address and relationship. VIII General, B, pg 14
REV. 4	2/13/24	All apprentices are expected to respond to the Apprenticeship Coordinators' emails or texts within 7 days. V Apprenticeship School, D, pg 8
REV. 5	5/23/24	Prior OJT & RTI credit, age limits on prior training pg 6; email required pg 9; Personal hygiene pg 19; Addition of Equal Opportunity Employment Pledge pg 20
REV. 6	8/1/24	Applicant Pool list time limit pg 6; Unemployed-email Apprenticeship Coordinator pg 8; submit pay stubs pgs 9-10; Warning letter pg 10; Class progress report to include "assignment" pg 10; Unsatisfactory RTI progress pgs 11, H. b.; Employer notification due to unsatisfactory RTI progress pg 11; Attend conferences pg 16
REV. 7	1/1/25	III Assignment of Apprentices, H.1. On hold instead of suspended; H.3. training webinar instead of PowerPoint presentation; H. Discharged apprentices 4. pg 7

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Basic Principles

In order that the **New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship Program (NMRWA RAP)** may fulfill its obligations and responsibilities of providing a sound and progressive training program as defined in the National Rural Water Association Standards of Apprenticeship and Training, this Statement of Policy is herein adopted on August 31, 2023.

The NMRWA RAP 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 program is to make you, the apprentice, into a well-trained, skilled Water/Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist “Operator”, however your future depends entirely on your own efforts put forth while in the training program.

The Apprenticeship Coordinator will act under the direction of the NMRWA RAP and the Executive Director in the administration of all Statements of Policy and will conduct all business of the NMRWA RAP’s Office as directed.

The NMRWA RAP 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 on-the-job training hours submissions, evaluations, school records and attendance. The apprentice may discuss any problems with the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director.

I Selection of Apprentices

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

II Prior Credit for On-The-Job Training (OJT) and Related Technical Instruction (RTI)

- A. On-the-job training (OJT) hours prior credit is limited to not more than two (2) years prior to the apprenticeship start date and no more than 1,000 hours may be awarded (unless an apprenticeship program has been completed in either Water or Wastewater within two (2) years, then 2,000 hours may be awarded) out of the 4,000 hours of OJT required to complete the Registered Apprenticeship Program. Documentation (such as check stubs) must be provided to the Apprenticeship Coordinator for review.
- B. Related Technical Instruction (RTI) hours prior credit is limited to not more than two (2) years prior to the apprenticeship start date and no more than 70 hours may be awarded (unless an apprenticeship program has been completed in either Water or Wastewater within two (2) years, then 144 may be awarded) out of the 288 hours of RTI required to complete the Registered Apprenticeship Program. Documentation (such as certificates) must be provided to the Apprenticeship Coordinator for review.
 - a. For example, any certifications (i.e. OSHA/10 or First Aid/CPR/AED) cannot expire withing the two (2) year timeframe of the apprenticeship.
- C. No matter how many OJT hours have been awarded, if no prior RTI hours have been completed, then the apprentice must still complete the two (2) year program until all RTI hours have been completed.

III Assignment of Apprentices

- A. The Apprenticeship Coordinator will act for and under the policy of the National Rural Water Association and the Registration Agency in the administration of these procedures.
- B. A training assignment/job placement of an applicant by the Apprenticeship Coordinator will be based upon the utility employer's request and the training needs of the available applicant/apprentice. ***More training assignments may be available, if the applicant is willing to travel anywhere within New Mexico to work.***
- C. Each applicant will remain on the Applicant Pool list for two (2) years. However, if an applicant has not responded to emails or phone calls within two (2) weeks, or refuses a training assignment five (5) or more times, they may be removed from the Applicant Pool list. Once removed, if the applicant remains interested in the registered apprenticeship program, they may reapply.

- D. An apprentice training assignment and/or transfer (if necessary) will be made by the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director and in **NO** case will the NMRWA RAP be held responsible for placement of an apprentice when training assignments are not available.
- E. Any apprentice, who takes a training assignment and does not report, or reports and then declines, will be required to give an explanation to the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director. **See Policy Statement, G. below.**
- F. Should a utility employer have difficulty with an apprentice, they should notify the Apprenticeship Coordinator immediately. The Apprenticeship Coordinator and utility employer will endeavor to resolve the difficulty prior to the discharge of the apprentice. If the Apprenticeship Coordinator and utility employer do not resolve the problem after all efforts are made, the utility employer, before discharging the apprentice, will notify the Apprenticeship Coordinator immediately in writing by email and provide the applicable records involving the discharge, including but not limited to, the progression of discipline and attendance records.
- G. An apprentice who is terminated for “cause” shall contact the Apprenticeship Coordinator immediately. An apprentice who is terminated for “cause” by a utility employer twice, may be suspended or canceled from the Registered Apprenticeship Program.
- H. If an apprentice is discharged for cause, or quits a job without obtaining permission from the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director, the apprentice will:
1. Be **on-hold** for thirty (30) days.
 2. During the thirty (30) days, if the utility employer will not take the apprentice back **the apprentice** will need to find a job at another water/wastewater utility employer **that has a fully qualified mentor that is a level 2 or above that can train the apprentice.**
 3. If during the thirty (30) days the apprentice finds a job at a water/wastewater utility that has a fully qualified mentor that is a level 2 or above that will train the apprentice, the Apprenticeship Coordinator will schedule a **training webinar** with the utility employer and mentor to explain the NMRWA RAP and have them sign an Employers Acceptance Agreement.
 4. **If after the thirty (30) days the apprentice does not find a job at a water/wastewater utility that has a fully qualified mentor that is a level 2 or above that will train the apprentice, the situation will be evaluated by the Apprenticeship Coordinator to see if any possible water or wastewater systems have openings that may want to interview and hire the discharged apprentice. If all options have been exhausted and no systems are available to hire the Apprenticeship Agreement may be canceled.**

5. If after being removed from the program the apprentice finds a water/wastewater utility job **within two (2) years** and then remains interested in the registered apprenticeship program, the apprentice may reapply and be given previous credit.
- I. If an apprentice is laid off by the utility employer for any reason other than dissatisfaction with the apprentice, the NMRWA RAP will strive to reassign the apprentice to a new utility employer as quickly as possible.
- J. ***Apprentices, when unemployed, will report their status to the Apprenticeship Coordinator immediately by email.*** If the Apprenticeship Coordinator is not contacted within five (5) days, the apprentice will be considered self-terminated from the program.

IV Probationary Period

- A. For the first 1,000 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 by notifying the apprentice in writing. The Registration Agency shall be duly notified of such cancellation.
See Apprenticeship Standards, Section VIII – PROBATIONARY PERIOD, page 5, paragraph 2
- B. During the probationary period, the Apprenticeship Coordinator 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 has not been met. The apprentice, utility employer and Registration Agency will be notified of the cancellation.
See Apprenticeship Standards, Section VIII – PROBATIONARY PERIOD, page 5, paragraph 2
- C. After the probationary period, the apprenticeship agreement may be canceled at the request of the apprentice or may be suspended or canceled by the sponsor **for reasonable cause** after documented due notice to the apprentice and a reasonable opportunity for corrective action. In such cases, the sponsor will provide written notice to the apprentice and to the Registration Agency of the final action taken.
See Apprenticeship Standards, Section VIII - PROBATIONARY PERIOD, page 5, paragraph 4
- D. Before advancement to next wage rate, the apprentice may be placed back on probation by the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director for violation of policies, rules, and/or regulations.

V Periodic Advancement of Apprentices

Apprentices will be eligible for advancement providing the following requirements are met:

- a. **Period 1** apprentices must have completed 2,000 on-the-job training hours of satisfactory work experience, 144 related technical instruction class hours with satisfactory records and reports, two satisfactory evaluations AND have passed the New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) Water or Wastewater Level 1 certification exam to be advanced to Period 2.
- b. **Period 2** apprentices must have completed 4,000 on-the-job training hours of satisfactory work experience, 288 related technical instruction class hours with satisfactory records and reports, 4 satisfactory evaluations AND have passed the New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) Water or Wastewater Level 2 certification exam to graduate from the Registered Apprenticeship Program and be advanced to Mentor.
See Apprenticeship Standards, Section X - APPRENTICE WAGE PROGRESSION, page 5, paragraph 2
- c. On-the-job training work processes hours are due online, through the National Rural Water Association Apprentice Tracking System (NRWA ATS) **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 NRWA ATS website: <https://apprenticeship.nrwa.org/lib/ojt.cfm>

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

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

Select: **Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist**

Click: **Add New Entry**

Click: **View/Edit Hours**

Make sure to: **Save Log Entry**

- d. Any apprentice absent from related technical instruction will satisfactorily complete all coursework missed before being advanced to the next period. In cases of failure of an apprentice to fulfill the obligations regarding related instruction without due cause, the sponsor will take appropriate disciplinary action and may terminate the apprenticeship agreement after due notice to the apprentice and opportunity for corrective action.
See Apprenticeship Standards, Section XIII - RELATED INSTRUCTION, page 6, paragraph 4
- e. **PAY STUBS** – To verify each apprentice's pay rate is correct, every apprentice will email a copy of their pay stubs to the Apprenticeship Coordinator **every quarter (First of January, April, July and October) and two weeks after every advancement**. This also helps the Apprenticeship Coordinator prepare for a United States Department of Labor wage and hour audit compliance review from the State Agency.

- f. If you are receiving VA benefits, you will need to email your paystubs and claim form to susanp@nmrwa.org and log your on-the-job training work processes hours online.

VI Apprenticeship School

- A. The Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director shall act for and under the policies of the NMRWA RAP in the administration of the school.
- B. The apprentice will need access to a computer (laptop, notebook, etc.), internet access and an email address for virtual classes/meetings and homework online and must check their email daily.
- C. Apprentices **will not** be paid for hours spent attending related instruction classes. See Standards of Apprenticeship, Section XIII – RELATED INSTRUCTION, page 6, paragraph 2
- D. All apprentices are expected to respond to Apprenticeship Coordinators' emails and texts within seven (7) days. Those who do not respond will be emailed a **warning letter** explaining the importance of communicating with the Apprentice Coordinator that the communication and scheduled assignments were received. After the third warning letter, this may be cause for cancelation from the NMRWA RAP.
- E. All apprentices are expected to apply themselves to their homework and are required to maintain a grade average of 70% or better. Any apprentice scoring below a 70% on a test is required to explain to the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director why they scored below a 70% and the apprentice will not be advanced until the apprentice scores above 70% and meets all other advancement requirements. Unsatisfactory test grades and averages for these school years may be cause for cancelation from the NMRWA RAP.
- F. **At least** four (4) hours must be given to related technical instruction classes each week.
- G. The apprentice shall submit by email a **monthly online class progress report** to the Apprenticeship Coordinator susanp@nmrwa.org every first (1st) of the month to ensure on time class completion and advancement of related technical instruction.

Class progress reporting must include:

- a. Book/**assignment** name
- b. Start date
- c. Total pages attempted (example: pgs 15-40)
- d. Total pages completed (example: pgs 15-39)
- e. Estimated completion date of **assignment** or chapter(s) you are working on

- H. Each apprentice shall attend all required related technical instruction classes.
- a. All classes begin promptly. Apprentices are expected to plan wisely to read each chapter, take tests online, attend all zoom, online and in-person classes.
 - b. When notified that an apprentice's related technical instruction (RTI) or on-the-job (OJT) progress is found to be **unsatisfactory**, the sponsor may require the apprentice to repeat a process or series of processes before advancing to the next wage classification. Should it be found in the course of this determination that the apprentice does not have the ability or desire to continue the training to become a mentor, the sponsor will, after the apprentice has been given adequate assistance and opportunity for corrective action, terminate the apprenticeship agreement, as provided in 11.2.3.27 (H)(2)(a) and (b) NMAC (New Mexico Administrative Code)
See Standards of Apprenticeship, Section I – PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION, Responsibilities of the Sponsor, page 1, M.
 - c. The employer has a vested interest in the apprentice's success and therefore will be cc'd and included in all assignments that will be assigned to the apprentice as well as notification of any unsatisfactory progress in related technical instruction.
 - d. Any student leaving a zoom or in-person class after it begins, for any reason, will be marked absent for that class. Breaks will be given for personal time.
 - e. When attending class virtually:
 1. Each student shall have their own zoom sign-in with their **full names shown**.
 2. Cameras must remain on during class and apprentice present to be considered in attendance. This helps the instructor engage with each student to see from their facial expressions on their own camera if they are understanding the content of the class. **There can be no credit for classes if the student is not present in the camera of a zoom class. This is a New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) rule.**
 3. Each student should be focused only on the instructor(s) teaching and **not be talking with others in the same room**, unless there is a structured group exercise. This way we enhance the training experience.
 4. It will be understood that all phones must be muted and put aside during class. If someone gets a call during class, the call can be tended to during each break.

5. If the student needs to leave for a meeting or a job, that student should:

1. Click on the “Chat” button and

2. Type in the reason why they will be leaving

This gives us a time stamp documentation when that person left and why they left.

- f. Any student disrupting the class may be dismissed and will not be allowed back in class until they contact the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director to explain why the disruption happened.
- g. If an apprentice finds it necessary to miss class more than twice, the apprentice shall notify the Apprenticeship Coordinator immediately. Any student missing four (4) or more classes in one (1) year shall be required to explain to the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director why they were absent four (4) or more classes in one (1) year. Excessive absences and tardiness from classes may be cause for cancelation from the program or repeating the school year.
- h. If food and drink is allowed in an in-person classroom training, please pick up after yourself.
- i. Please do not sit on tables nor put your feet on walls. Destruction of equipment shall be cause for cancelation from the program.
- j. Class schedules will be at the discretion of the Apprenticeship Coordinator or Training Coordinator.
- k. Any person cheating on any test will be canceled from the NMRWA RAP.
- l. Any use of tobacco products must take place only in a designated smoking area. If one is not available, no use will be allowed.
- m. No cellular phone usage will be allowed during any class.

I. Books, lesson materials and classes.

- a. When funding is available, the NMRWA RAP will pay for books, lesson materials and classes for each apprentice.
- b. When funding is **NOT** available, the apprentice or utility employer must pay for books, lesson materials and classes in full. There will be no exceptions. Any apprentice or utility employer that does not pay may be subject to suspension and/or cancelation from the program.
- c. Any additional cost for **lost books** shall be the responsibility of the apprentice.

- d. Once books and/or online classes are purchased, there will be no refund of money. There will be no exceptions.

- J. When an apprentice has a failing grade at re-evaluation, the apprentice must explain to the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director why they have a failing grade. In addition, the apprentice will *NOT* be advanced and may be canceled from the program. See Policy Statement, Section III – Probationary Period, C., page 6. See Standards of Apprenticeship, Section X – APPRENTICE WAGE PROGRESSION, page 5, paragraph 2.

- K. Overtime work will not exempt an apprentice from attending classes, completing assignments, or maintaining passing grades on all tests. See Standards of Apprenticeship, Section IX – HOURS OF WORK, page 5, paragraph 1.

- L. Disciplinary problems shall be referred to the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director.

- M. Any apprentice that violates the NMRWA RAP Standards or Policies three (3) times in a calendar year must explain to the Apprentice Coordinator and/or Executive Director why the Standards or Policies were violated and may be suspended from class, may have to repeat the school year, may not be advanced and may be suspended or canceled from the program.

- N. 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).

- O. 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 no contact from the apprentice for five (5) days, this may be cause for cancelation from the program.

VII Systems Operation Specialist One (WS1)/(WW1) Operator Certification

- A. Depending on the program you are signed up with, after successfully completing one-year, each apprentice is required to take, pass and download a copy of the following certification exam(s) onto the National Rural Water Association Apprenticeship Tracking System website:
 - a. Water Supply Level 1 (WS1), or
 - b. Wastewater Level 1 (WW1)

- B. Each apprentice is also required to submit their **certification number** to the Apprenticeship Coordinator via email to: susanp@nmrwa.org.
- C. 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/

D. Certification exams.

When funding is available, the NMRWA RAP will pay for the certification exams. Contact the Apprenticeship Coordinator for further information.

When funding is **NOT** available, the apprentice or utility employer must pay for the certification exams. There will be no exceptions. Any apprentice that does not complete their certification exams may be subject to suspension and/or cancelation from the program.

E. Repeat exams.

If apprentice fails any exams, the apprentice will be responsible to pay for repeat exam(s).

- F. If after one-year the apprentice fails the certification exam(s):
 - a. Water Supply Level 1 (WS1), or
 - b. Wastewater Level 1 (WW1)

The apprentice must continue to study and schedule repeat exam(s) with NMED (New Mexico Environment Department) and **will be responsible to pay for repeat exam(s)**.

VIII Completion of Registered Apprenticeship

- A. To be eligible for wage advancement and change of classification to Mentor, each apprentice shall have successfully:
 - a. Completed at least 4000 on-the-job training work processes hours,
 - b. Satisfactorily completed at least 288 related technical instruction hours,
 - c. Have received four (4) satisfactory evaluations
 - d. Completed all assigned classes/courses
 - e. Attended all conferences assigned and
 - f. Passed:
 - i. Water Supply Level 1 (WS1) and Water Supply Level 2 (WS2) Operator's Certification exams, or
 - ii. Wastewater Level 1 (WW1) and Wastewater Level 2 (WW2) Operator's Certification exams, and
 - g. Uploaded a copy of each certification onto the National Rural Water Association

Apprenticeship Tracking System

- B. If after two-years the apprentice has:
- a. Completed at least 4000 on-the-job training work processes hours,
 - b. Satisfactorily completed at least 288 related technical instruction hours,
 - c. Completed all assigned classes/courses
 - d. Attended all conferences assigned, but
 - e. **HAS NOT** obtained the:
 - i. Water Supply Level 2 (WS2) Operator's Certification, or
 - ii. Wastewater Level 2 (WW2) Operator's Certification...

The apprentice must continue to study, be conscientious in passing certification exam(s) and schedule and take repeat exam(s) with NMED (New Mexico Environment Department) until passed. The apprentice will be responsible to pay for repeat exams.

Apprentice must check in with the Apprentice Coordinator by the **first of each month** via email to report on progress of passing the WS2 or WW2 certification exam(s). If apprentice ceases checking in with the Apprenticeship Coordinator monthly, Apprenticeship Coordinator will try contacting the apprentice. If there is no response, apprentice will be canceled from the NMRWA RAP and apprentice, utility employer and Registration Agency will be notified of the cancelation.

If apprentice **HAS NOT** obtained the WS2 or WW2 certification and no longer desires to continue in the registered apprenticeship program, apprentice must notify the Apprenticeship Coordinator in writing to convey their wishes. The apprentice will then be canceled from the registered apprenticeship program and apprentice, utility employer and Registration Agency will be notified of the cancelation.

If it has been found that the apprentice is no longer working with the assigned utility employer, the apprentice will be canceled from the NMRWA RAP and apprentice, utility employer and Registration Agency will be notified of the cancelation.

When apprentice passes the WS2 or WW2 certification exam, apprentice will be advanced to Mentor and the utility employer and Registration Agency will be notified of the advancement.

Per the NRWA Standards / Terms of Apprenticeship

Period	Completion Requirements	Wage Rate	Comments
1st	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Satisfactory Evaluation</u> 2. 2000 OJT hours 3. 144 *RTI Satisfactory class hours 4. Attend 2 Conferences 5. Level 1 Operator's License 	See *AARF	<p>Probationary Period (6 months) agreement may be canceled by NMRWA RAP or apprentice without a hearing.</p> <p>To advance to 2nd Period, apprentice must acquire 5 completion requirements.</p> <p>Apprentice will not be advanced until they are acquired.</p>
2nd	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Satisfactory Evaluation</u> 2. 4000 hours 3. 288 *RTI Satisfactory class hours 4. Attend 2 Conferences 5. Level 2 Operator's License 	See *AARF	<p>For wage advancement and change of classification to Mentor, apprentice must acquire 5 completion requirements.</p> <p>If apprentice has not obtained Level 2 Operator's License after 2 years, apprentice must check in with Apprenticeship Coordinator the <i>first of each month</i> and report on progress.</p>

*AARF = Apprenticeship Agreement and Registration Form

*RTI = Related Technical Instruction

To be advanced to the next wage rate/period, the following are also required:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Satisfactory school attendance -Satisfactory school grades (70% and above) -Satisfactory employment records/evaluations -Passing Hands-On assessment tests (WIOA requirement if this funding is used) -Passing grade on Hands-On Mentor assessment test at the end of 2nd year (if applicable)
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The wage rate is an hourly rate according to the Apprenticeship Agreement and Registration Form.

IX General

- A. If an apprentice loses their driver's license due to a DWI or other reason, it will be up to the discretion of the utility employer whether they will:
 1. Allow the apprentice to continue to work,
 2. Suspend the apprentice until a valid driver's license is obtained, or
 3. Lay the apprentice off.

If the utility employer:

1. Allows the apprentice to work, then the apprentice may continue Related Technical Instruction.
2. Suspends the apprentice from working, then the NMRWA Registered Apprenticeship will suspend the apprentice until a valid driver's license is obtained and the utility employer takes the apprentice back. If the utility employer will not take apprentice back...

See Policy Statement, II Assignment of Apprentices, G., page 5

3. Lays off the apprentice...

See Policy Statement, II Assignment of Apprentices, G., page 5.

- B. ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, OR EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION MUST BE ENTERED ONTO THE NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION WEBSITE IMMEDIATELY.**

Email addresses may be changed; **HOWEVER, GOING FORWARD, YOU MUST CONTINUE TO USE YOUR ORIGINAL EMAIL ADDRESS TO SIGN IN TO YOUR NATIONAL RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION APPRENTICESHIP TRACKING SYSTEM (NRWA ATS)**. The NRWA ATS will not change the sign in email address to a new one.

- C. The New Mexico Rural Water Association Executive Director shall select Training Coordinators.
- D. The New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship program shall have the right to discipline an apprentice as it deems necessary.
- E. Displays of disruptive behavior, fighting, or unlawful conduct on the job, to an instructor, on NMRWA property, or any other property the NMRWA uses for classes or training will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy must be explained to the Apprenticeship Coordinator and/or Executive Director and may be cause for an absence, suspension from class, repeating the school year, delayed advancement and/or possible suspension or cancellation from the program.
- F. Alcoholic beverages, illegal substances (such as drugs), or any weapon or firearm will not be permitted nor tolerated on-the-job, on NMRWA property, or any other property the NMRWA uses for classes or training. Violation of this policy shall be cause for discipline up to and including being canceled from the program.

X Drug Screening

A. **Purpose:** The **New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship Program (NMRWA RAP)** has a strong interest in providing 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 RAP has implemented this policy governing drug 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., i.):
- 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 (may be legal, but may not be used due to safety on the job), 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 RAP and is grounds for denying an applicant entry into the NMRWA RAP, as well as termination of an apprentice from the program.
- b. Each applicant/apprentice will sign a consent form permitting a possible urinalysis of applicant's/apprentice'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/apprentice from further participation in the NMRWA RAP.
- c. The drug screening will analyze a urine specimen provided by the applicant/apprentice. 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 RAP or utility employer 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 applicant/apprentice testing positive shall have the right to request the secured portion of the urine or blood sample independently re-tested at the applicant's/apprentice's choice by a SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Certified Laboratory at their expense and bringing a cashier's check or money order made out to NMRWA, 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 a utility employer, as long as one is available with a level two (2) mentor or above that will train the apprentice and applicant/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/apprentices.
- g. 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.
- h. Apprentices may be suspended until completion of a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program, or may be terminated from the program.
- i. Drug testing results will be treated confidentially.
- j. As a term and condition of continued training, all apprentices may be subject to drug screening because of unusual behavior. The NMRWA RAP will pay for the cost of this test if the NMRWA RAP decides to send the apprentice for a drug screening.
- k. Applicants who fail to report to the designated Drug Screening Collection Site within twenty-four (24) hours will not be eligible for the NMRWA RAP.
- l. Apprentices who fail to report to the designated Drug Screening Collection Site within twenty-four (24) hours will be canceled from the program.

XI Personal Appearance and Safety

- A. The apprentice, while on the job, represents the utility employer, the New Mexico Rural Water Association and the NMRWA RAP to the public. With this in mind, the apprentice shall maintain a conscience effort of personal hygiene, including cleaning your body every day and washing your hands with soap and water after going to the toilet. The apprentice shall also 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 always be physically and mentally alert.

XII Expulsion from the New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship Program

Knowledgeable, dependable and safe Water/Wastewater Systems Operation Specialists "Operators" are of utmost importance in the Water and Wastewater Industry. With this in mind, any continuous or deliberate violation of the policies adopted by the **New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship Program (NMRWA RAP)** will be reason for cancelation of any Apprenticeship Agreement by the NMRWA RAP. I hereby give permission to the NMRWA RAP to review my records and release information contained in them when necessary, concerning my apprenticeship.

Individuals who have been suspended or terminated from the NRWA RAP shall not be assigned by the NMRWA RAP 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 RAP has determined that the individual is eligible after the apprentice has reapplied.

XIII Changes, Altering, Amending and Interpreting the Policy Statement

The NMRWA RAP reserves the right to change, alter, amend and interpret the Policy Statement. Whenever changes are made, the apprentices will be notified in writing. Situations not covered

in the Statements in these Policies will be addressed on an individual basis by the Executive Director and/or the Apprenticeship Coordinator of the NMRWA RAP.

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

XIV Equal Opportunity Employment Pledge

The New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship Program will not discriminate against apprenticeship applicants or apprentices based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), sexual orientation, genetic information, or because they are an individual with a disability or a person 40 years old or older.

The New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship Program will take affirmative action to provide equal opportunity in apprenticeship and will operate the apprenticeship program as required under Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 30.

XV Advice from the New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship Program

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 Registered Apprenticeship Program and I will abide by such policies approved and adopted by the New Mexico Rural Water Association July 30, 2024.

(Print your name here)

(Sign your name here)

(Last four numbers of Social Security Number)

(Date)

(Emergency contact name)

(Emergency relationship)

(Emergency contact telephone number)

(Emergency contact email address)

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Policy Statement

NMRWA RAP 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 SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) (formerly NIDA-National Institute on Drug Abuse) certified medical laboratory selected by the **New Mexico Rural Water Association Registered Apprenticeship Program (NMRWA RAP)**. 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 RAP. 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 RAP, 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)

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