NEW MEXICO RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

Apprenticeship Program Information

Water Systems Operation Specialist | Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist

A detailed guide to how the Registered Apprenticeship Program works.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

NMRWA's Registered Apprenticeship Program combines paid employment, structured on-the-job training, related technical instruction, and guidance from an experienced operator. Apprentices develop occupational skills while working for a participating water or wastewater employer.

Occupation tracks	Water Systems Operation Specialist and Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist
Typical length	Approximately two years, depending on progress and completion of program requirements
On-the-job training (OJT)	Minimum 4,000 documented hours completed through paid employment with a participating employer
Related technical instruction (RTI)	288 documented hours of assigned technical instruction completed alongside employment
Work-based learning	Training is guided by an available qualified operator/mentor at the employer site
Certification pathway	Training supports progression toward New Mexico water or wastewater operator certification; state certification requirements and examinations apply

HOW OJT AND RTI WORK TOGETHER

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)

Paid work experience completed with the employer. OJT is where the apprentice practices the occupation under supervision and develops job competencies through real system operations.

RELATED TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION (RTI)

Technical learning completed alongside employment. RTI supports the knowledge, safety practices, and occupational understanding needed to perform the work and progress in the trade.

WHAT WATER AND WASTEWATER OPERATORS DO

- Operate and monitor treatment, distribution, or collection systems
- Inspect pumps, valves, meters, tanks, and other system equipment
- Collect samples and support testing and water-quality monitoring
- Perform routine maintenance, troubleshooting, and system inspections
- Keep accurate operating, maintenance, and regulatory records
- Help protect public health, the environment, and community infrastructure

WHO DOES WHAT?

APPRENTICE

- Work safely and reliably
- Complete assigned OJT and RTI
- Maintain communication and required records
- Work toward program and certification milestones

EMPLOYER / MENTOR

- Employ and supervise the apprentice
- Provide structured work experience
- Assign an available qualified mentor
- Conduct employer evaluations and make employment decisions

NMRWA

- Determine program eligibility
- Coordinate apprenticeship registration
- Assign and track program requirements
- Support apprentice, mentor, and employer throughout the program

Key point: Registered apprenticeship is both employment and training. An applicant must be selected by a participating employer before beginning the work-based apprenticeship.

Equal Opportunity Commitment New Mexico Rural Water Association Water/Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist 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 Water/Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist 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 and 11.2.2 NMAC.

SCAN TO APPLY

NEW MEXICO RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

Eligibility, Application & Placement

What applicants should know before entering the program

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants must meet NMRWA program requirements and any additional requirements established by the participating employer.

- ✓ Be at least 18 years old
- ✓ Have a high school diploma, GED, or qualifying equivalent
- ✓ Hold a valid driver's license and meet applicable employer driving requirements
- ✓ Be able to safely perform the essential duties of the occupation
- ✓ Have reliable access to a computer, email, and internet for online coursework
- ✓ Provide required application and education documentation

APPLICATION AND PLACEMENT PROCESS

1	**Apply through ATS**	Complete the Apprenticeship Tracking System application and upload the required documentation.
2	**NMRWA eligibility review**	NMRWA reviews the application and supporting documentation to determine program eligibility.
3	**Candidate screening**	Eligible applicants may complete additional NMRWA screening or interview steps as required by the program.
4	**Employer opportunity**	When a participating employer has an opening and appropriate mentor capacity, qualified applicants may be referred or considered.
5	**Employer interview and hiring decision**	The employer conducts its own selection process and makes the final hiring decision.
6	**Registration and apprenticeship start**	After selection and required program steps are complete, the apprentice is registered and begins structured OJT and RTI.

Employer selection matters. Eligibility for the apprenticeship does not guarantee an interview, placement, or employment. A participating employer must have an available position and makes all final hiring decisions.

VETERANS AND GI BILL® BENEFITS

Benefits may be available to eligible veterans participating in the apprenticeship.

GI Bill® benefit eligibility and use are subject to current program approval and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs requirements. Contact the NMRWA Apprenticeship Coordinator for current program status and benefit information.

Apply through the Apprenticeship Tracking System

Application portal: apprenticeship.nrwa.org/pub/unpw_signup.cfm
Learn more about NMRWA: nmrwa.org

Questions?
Monique Duran | Apprenticeship Coordinator
505-546-7414 | Monique@nmrwa.org

SCAN TO APPLY IN ATS

GI BILL® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

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