



*The Apprenticeship Program is a partnership between the Pennsylvania Rural Water Association and the National Rural Water Association and is registered through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.*



## Now Recruiting!

### Pursue an Apprenticeship

Receive practical training, earn a competitive wage, and progress toward professional licensure or certification as an operator.

### Employ an Apprentice

Public and private drinking water and wastewater systems in Pennsylvania can address workforce challenges by hiring qualified apprentices.

**Equal Opportunity Pledge:** The Pennsylvania Rural Water Association 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 Pennsylvania Rural Water Association 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.



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# Apprenticeship Program



*Earn while you learn to become a licensed operator in a stable, non-fluctuating industry.*

Serving the water & wastewater industry  
since 1988



Over the next decade, the drinking water and wastewater industry faces a significant challenge: up to 50 percent of its experienced workforce is expected to retire. This wave of retirements threatens not only the operational stability of essential water systems but also the loss of invaluable institutional knowledge built over decades. Without a new generation of skilled professionals stepping forward to learn from today's operators, communities risk losing the expertise required to maintain safe, reliable water and wastewater services.

To address this growing concern, the Pennsylvania Rural Water Association (PRWA) has established the Apprenticeship Program—a structured pathway that connects aspiring operators with seasoned mentors in the field. Through paid, hands-on training and professional development, the program ensures that critical knowledge is preserved and passed on, supporting the future sustainability of Pennsylvania's water infrastructure.



The PRWA Apprenticeship Program is thoughtfully structured for individuals who are new to the water and wastewater industry, including those with little or no prior experience. Recognizing the need for accessible and comprehensive workforce development, the program is divided into two specialized career tracks: Water System Operations Specialist and Wastewater Systems Operations Specialist. These tracks provide targeted training that aligns with the unique demands of each discipline, ensuring apprentices gain relevant, in-depth knowledge and practical skills.

A key component of the program is mentorship. Each apprentice is carefully matched with a qualified, experienced mentor who provides one-on-one guidance, shares real-world insights, and helps the apprentice navigate their professional development journey. PRWA works closely with participating utilities to identify and support mentors, offering resources and coaching to ensure a productive and meaningful mentorship experience. This collaborative approach helps build a strong foundation for apprentices while reinforcing the leadership role of experienced operators.

In addition to workplace training, apprentices receive structured classroom and technical instruction tailored to the core competencies required for industry success. This includes focused preparation for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) operator licensure exams. By combining hands-on experience with formal education, the program ensures that graduates are not only workforce-ready but positioned to thrive in long-term careers within the water and wastewater sectors.

## Become an Apprentice

The PRWA Apprenticeship Program is officially registered with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, ensuring it meets state and industry standards for workforce training. Each apprenticeship placement is a full-time, two-year commitment, during which participants are employed and earn a competitive salary. Over the course of the program, apprentices complete 288 hours of Related Technical Instruction (RTI), covering essential theoretical and regulatory knowledge, alongside 4,000 hours of structured On-the-Job Training (OJT), where they apply their learning under the guidance of experienced professionals. This balanced approach equips apprentices with the practical skills and academic foundation necessary for long-term success in the water and wastewater operations field.



## Who Can Apply?

- Be 18 years old or older
- Have a high school diploma or GED
- Have a valid driver's license
- Be physically capable of performing the essential functions of the apprenticeship program.

## Why Choose Apprenticeship?

- A proven strategy for effectively recruiting, training, and retaining skilled employees
- Addresses workforce shortages by preparing the next generation to replace retiring professionals
- Facilitates the transfer of critical institutional knowledge from seasoned technicians to new apprentices.
- Offers two years of immersive, hands-on training under the guidance of an experienced industry mentor