

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Quick Facts

FRWA is introducing a new workforce development program to help provide water and wastewater utilities with skilled and trained employees through apprenticeship. Apprenticeship is a tried and true method of enhancing employees' skills and technical knowledge.

- Our program is a **US Department of Labor and FL Department of Education approved program** that results in a nationally recognized Certificate of Completion.
- **Apprentices can be new hires (must apply using the FRWA application) or can be already employed workers.**
- **The program lasts 2 years**, requires 4000 hours of On The Job Training (OJT) and 288 hours of Related Technical Instruction (RTI)
 - Must pick a track: Either Drinking Water or Wastewater. If interested in doing both, can re-enter program as an incumbent worker for the other. Incumbent workers will receive advanced placement in the program as described below.
 - There are 4 periods within the program. Each period can be completed in 6 months (1000 OJT hours and 72 RTI hours).
 - OJT credit given if the apprentice has previous experience (Given 200 hours of OJT Credit per year of previous experience; they can appeal for more, documentation will be required.)
 - RTI credit given for certificates of completion for training from reputable sources; amount varies based on class. Topics are found in Appendix A.
- **The program costs \$2000 for a single apprentice**, there may be a discount for multiple apprentices from the same system. Program costs may change.
 - Includes all training classes and California State OWP Books and courses.
 - Apprentices finish with a Class C DW or WW License; the program cannot be completed without it. (Testing not included.)
 - Apprentices also receive CDL training (with some practice) and train with real equipment earning hands-on experience even in the classroom (Testing not included.)
 - **Employers can have apprentices sign a Scholarship-Loan Agreement**, which requires the apprentice repay the cost of the program if they fail to work for the employer for a certain number of years. An example will be provided upon request.
 - Refunds Partial refund based on non-recoverable costs (books, trainings already attended, etc.)
- Each apprentice must have a **Mentor**
 - Mentors are preferred to be someone with supervisor/management experience, an operator's license, and have knowledge of the system.
 - Mentors will file a monthly evaluation of the apprentice with FRWA and will sign off on OJT logs. This is a chance to let us know how your apprentice is doing.
- Each apprentice must be given **full time employment with benefits**
 - Wages will vary throughout the program (Current structure is 65% base wage for the first 6 months, then 75% for the next 6 months, then 85%, then 95%. Once program is completed the apprentice should be making the base wage for a Class C operator.)
 - Financial assistance can be sought through the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB); most documentation must be filed BEFORE the apprentice is hired.
- **Supervision of the apprentice is required at all times**, even during overtime hours or irregular hours:
 - Supervision is defined as: knowing where and what the apprentice is doing at all times while the mentor, or a supervisor, is available to the apprentice to answer questions; you don't have to stand over the apprentice's shoulder.
- There will be roughly **2 days a month of RTI** at a designated training facility.
 - The exact schedule will be available at a later date. Some RTI classes will be for one track only; some will be for both and held together.
 - Please pay for or reimburse your apprentices for travel expenses. Please pay them for attending training.
- **Employers must sign an agreement** prior to hiring apprentices or entering employees into the program (incumbent workers). (Appendix E)
- **Any other questions: email joni@frwa.net or apprenticeship@frwa.net**