

# Information for Apprentices

In order to help develop tomorrow's water and wastewater work force, Florida Rural Water Association (FRWA) has partnered with Florida's Department of Education (DOE) and the US Department of Labor (DOL) in creating an apprenticeship program for water and wastewater operations. The goal of this program is to provide the future work force the technical training and on-the-job learning needed to become effective operators.

Apprenticeship offers many benefits to both future operators and systems. The apprentice gets full-time employment from an established system that offers on-the-job learning. This apprentice learns about the system that employs them, picking up critical knowledge about the system's assets. The apprentice also gets the chance to learn from a mentor, an operator already licensed and with experience in the field. This mentor can offer helpful information on how to advance within the industry.

Apprentices receive technical instruction in addition to their on-the-job learning. This instruction helps to strengthen and round out the knowledge base of the apprentice, making them a more valuable employee. This training is provided by FRWA staff with assistance from our associate members and vendors to ensure the apprentices receive the highest quality training. The program also includes the coursework required for receiving a Class C operator's license for water or wastewater. Since apprentices are also full-time employees of a water utility, they will earn the required hours for their license.

The apprenticeship program is registered with the US Department of Labor and completion of the program grants the apprentice national recognition for their training in the water industry. This recognition can help the apprentice find employment in other states across the nation. It also shows that the apprentice is now a trained System Operations Specialist.

Applications can be requested from the FRWA office, in person, by mail, or by e-mail. Applicants are required to complete the application prior to being admitted into the program. Applicants are required to meet the following criteria in order to be considered for the program:

- A. Age: Apprentices must be at least 18 years old; proof of age is required (driver's license, birth certificate, etc.)
- B. High School Diploma or equivalent
- C. Driver's License: Apprentices are required to have a valid, current, driver's license.
- D. Drug Test: Apprentices must take and pass a drug test
- E. Background Check: Apprentices must pass a background check

The completed application and supporting documents will be kept on file until either the apprenticeship is complete, or the applicant/apprentice is removed from the program. Applications and supporting documents may be shared with partnered employers pursuant to employment as outlined in the Standards for Apprenticeship, available on the FRWA website or by request from [apprenticeship@frwa.net](mailto:apprenticeship@frwa.net).