

If you are interested in registering as an
Apprentice or becoming a Participating
Member System contact our
Apprenticeship Program Coordinator:

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About ORWA

Since 1976, Ohio Rural Water Association (ORWA) has been providing free on-site technical assistance to Ohio's rural communities with water and wastewater systems. Nearly every day, ORWA's Field Technicians travel across the state to provide technical assistance and on-site training to the dedicated operators and staff at Ohio's rural water and wastewater systems.

Apprenticeship Program

Ohio Rural Water Association



Program Overview

Over the next decade, the water sector is expected to lose between 30 and 50 percent of the workforce to retirement. To combat disproportionate retirement ORWA has partnered with the National Rural Water Association and ApprenticeOhio to develop an Apprenticeship Program that will offer Ohioans two new career paths – Water System Operation Specialist and Wastewater System Operation Specialist.

Minimum Requirements for Apprentices:

1. At least 18 years of age
2. High school diploma, GED or equivalent
3. Physically capable of performing essential functions
4. Take and pass drug screen
5. Pass a background check
6. Valid state issued driver's license

Benefit for Apprentices

Water and Wastewater System Operators help provide safe drinking water to millions of Ohioans and protect our natural waterways. Operators are a vital part of our communities. Without properly trained personnel in these roles communities can suffer. During their training, apprentices will work alongside professional operators, learn skills that can be taken anywhere, and earn a wage while they learn.

Participating Apprentices will be expected to:

1. Meet the Minimum Requirements for Apprentices
2. Register as an Apprentice with ORWA
3. Be employed or be willing to become employed by a Participating Member System
4. Complete the 2-year program:
 - 4,000 on-the-job training hours
 - 288 related instruction hours (classroom hours)

Benefit for Systems

Many of Ohio's Water and Wastewater Operators have worked at the same utility for most of their career and they will depart with decades of valuable institutional knowledge. These training programs will offer member systems a way to pass down and retain critical skills and knowledge of their water and wastewater systems to the next generation of industry workers.

Participating Systems will be expected to:

1. Identify and support an experienced mentor to provide guidance and on-site training to apprentices
2. Utilize the on-site training standards
3. Take advantage of Program Coordinator to resolve concerns and ensure best outcome for apprentice
4. Strongly consider retaining apprentices following program completion