

CONSIDER A CAREER IN THE WATER INDUSTRY

FALL 2023: WATER WORKFORCE INITIATIVE AT HUDSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

If you're looking for a new career and you live in or close to Hudson County, check out this excellent opportunity. You can earn a stipend while completing a 50-hour program that spans eight weeks.

NEW JERSEY WATER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The Water Workforce Development Initiative is a program designed to educate, train, and introduce participants to careers in the water sector. It is currently in its pilot phase.

A career in the water sector has a meaningful mission: purposeful work to ensure that the public has access to safe and reliable drinking water, as well as properly treated wastewater, in order to protect our rivers, streams, and groundwater. Careers in water offer good benefits, a stable career, and excellent training.

WHAT DOES THE WATER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE ENTAIL?

The Water Workforce Development Initiative will recruit participants beginning in spring 2023 and commence training in September 2023 with an 8-week, 50-hour-long program introducing participants to a career in the water workforce. Participants will be trained through classroom and field experiences and have the opportunity to connect with utility companies for opportunities after completing the program. Participants will also receive a stipend upon completion.

Entry-level jobs in this industry are simply a first step along a well-paying career ladder in the water sector.

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WHY THIS INITIATIVE?

In New Jersey, there are more than 500 water utilities—both municipal and private—that handle drinking water and wastewater management. To ensure that these utilities work efficiently and address long-standing issues with aging water infrastructure such as replacing lead pipes and upgrading combined sewer overflow systems, frontline workers are crucial. These services are essential, and the agencies and utilities providing them need staff who are dedicated, well-trained, and qualified.

The initiative aims to tackle the potential shortage of skilled workers in New Jersey's water agencies and utilities. About half of the nation's water utility employees are expected to retire in the next 10 years, so it is crucial that the upcoming generation of water workers receive proper training and support to have successful careers in the vital field of water management.

WHAT OUTCOMES ARE EXPECTED?

The possible results for participants may vary depending on their experience, interests, and opportunities available at the end of the session. These include applying for entry-level positions to secure a job, looking for internships with water and wastewater utility companies, and pursuing an educational pathway by applying to the NJ Water Association Apprenticeship, other apprenticeships, or taking additional courses.

The pilot water workforce initiative aims to showcase career opportunities in the water sector, with a focus on water-centric utility jobs such as Water Resource Recovery (Wastewater Treatment) Operator, Drinking Water Treatment Operator, Wastewater Collections Operator, or Water Distribution Operator. However, there are numerous opportunities available as well.

This pilot program pulls together the expertise and support of advocates, educators, the financial sector, and water companies. Bank of America has funded this pilot version of the water workforce program. Hudson County Community College will recruit the applicants, deliver the curriculum, and support the placement of graduates. Veolia, a global environmental services company, has committed to providing internships for some of the graduates in its New Jersey drinking water operations. Informed by lessons learned from the pilot initiative, New Jersey Future and the Jersey Water Works (JWW) Water Workforce Task Force will collaborate to create a water workforce pathway with an aligned curriculum through the NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities initiative led by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. New Jersey Water Association is also partnering to connect graduates from this program with their Apprenticeship program.

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