



NATIONAL  
RURAL WATER  
ASSOCIATION

NRWA *America's Largest Utility Membership*

## STANDARDS OF APPRENTICESHIP

DEVELOPED FOR



FOR THE OCCUPATIONS OF

OCCUPATIONS	O*NET-SOC CODE	RAPIDS CODE
<b>Water Systems Operation Specialist</b> (Wastewater Treatment - Plant Operator; Alternate Title: Water Treatment Specialist)	51-8031.00	0507
<b>Wastewater Systems Operation Specialist</b> (Wastewater Systems Operator)	51-8031.00	0507R

**REGISTERED AS PART OF THE NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BASIC STANDARDS OF APPRENTICESHIP ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF LABOR**

The legal requirements related to apprenticeship that apply to registered apprenticeship programs are contained in 29 U.S.C. 50 and 29 CFR §§ 29 and 30. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in the model apprenticeship standards is accurate and up-to-date.

May 2017



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## Procedure for Registering New Standards Or Amending Existing Standards

1. The State Rural Water Association (“SRWA”) or local water/wastewater system (“system”) will obtain a copy of the National Guideline Standards. Using these National Guideline Standards, the SRWA/system will indicate all appropriate local determinations where a specific entry is required. These areas are identified throughout the document by the following graphic symbol:



**INDICATES THE NEED FOR LOCAL ENTRY OR ACTION. DIRECTIONS ARE PROVIDED AS APPROPRIATE. THESE SECTIONS WILL BE FINALIZED AS INDICATED IN ITEM 4 BELOW.**

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2. When all local determinations are made, the SRWA/system will officially adopt the Standards. The date of adoption will be indicated when the Standards are submitted to the NRWA. The SRWA/system should send “marked-up” Standards to [apprenticeship@nrwa.org](mailto:apprenticeship@nrwa.org) for review and approval.
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3. If the SRWA/system wishes to amend the language contained within the National Guideline Standards in any manner whatsoever, they shall indicate same at the appropriate point in the marked-up Standards. Supportive documentation may also be included. All proposed modifications shall be clearly indicated.
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4. NRWA will review the submitted Standards including any proposed additions and/or modifications. When properly approved and signed by NRWA, the new Apprenticeship Standards will be emailed directly to the SRWA/system. The SRWA/system Chairperson and Secretary will sign and date (be sure to use the original adoption date shown at the top of the page) all original signature pages.
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5. The SRWA/system will then forward all required copies of the new Standards to the Registration Agency (either USDOL Office of Apprenticeship or the State Apprenticeship Agency) along with copies of the Selection Procedures and Affirmative Action Plan. NRWA will provide contact information for the appropriate Registration Agency. **[THE SRWA/SYSTEM SHOULD MAKE A DUPLICATE COPY OF THE SUBMITTED PACKAGE FOR THEIR RECORDS.]**
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6. The Registration Agency will review the submitted Standards. When approved, the new Standards will be signed by the Registration Agency Representative. The Registration Agency will retain at least one copy and return the remainder to the SRWA/system. The SRWA/system will forward one (1) copy to NRWA, one (1) copy to any other primary stakeholder that are recognized in the standards, and will retain the remaining copies in the local file in a secure manner for reference and use.
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7. Standards and modifications to the Standards shall not be implemented prior to the approval and registration of the Standards—first by NRWA and then by the Registration Agency.
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## **FOREWORD**

These Water/Wastewater System Operations Specialist apprenticeship standards have as their objective the training of utility workers skilled in all phases of the industry. The sponsor recognizes that in order to accomplish this, there must be well-developed on-the-job learning combined with related instruction.

This recognition has resulted in the development of these standards of apprenticeship. They were developed in accordance with the basic standards recommended by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, as a basis from which the sponsor can work to establish an apprenticeship training program that meets the particular needs of the area.

The water industry is unique in that it involves the daily responsibilities of public health protection, technical operations, and maintenance of critical but unseen infrastructure. In order to meet industry demands in an ever-evolving technological environment, the water industry must select individuals who have the aptitude to learn and develop the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to proficiently perform the individual job tasks associated with the work processes of the occupations. The industry must select and train individuals who will diligently work and study to stay abreast of current and future emerging technologies.

The water industry, by its very nature, places a high degree of personal responsibility on each individual. While supervision is most often provided on the job, these workers are constantly called upon to make decisions concerning health and safety requirements and operational demands to keep these vital resources flowing.

To meet increased demand on our nation's water resources infrastructure, personnel and equipment have been operating at or beyond capacity to provide safe drinking water and environmentally responsible wastewater treatment for our growing population. Continuous operations and maintenance of existing facilities often prove to be extremely expensive and hazardous. The public must be assured of safety and uninterrupted service. This requires adequate skill and knowledge on the part of each person performing the work. The well-trained Systems Operations Specialist (mentor) takes pride in the appearance of his or her work, its technical correctness, and its structural soundness.

The National Rural Water Association (NRWA) has dedicated time and resources to develop an efficient training program so apprentices can, through a systematic program of related instruction and on-the-job learning, become a well-qualified System Operations Specialist. The degree of success NRWA will have with this apprenticeship program will depend entirely upon the willingness of State Rural Water Associations (SRWAs) and local water/wastewater systems to cooperate in achieving this common goal. Quality training has always been a top priority for NRWA.

## **SECTION I – PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

Program Sponsors are responsible for the administration of all aspects of a Registered Apprenticeship program. Sponsor means any State Rural Water Association (SRWA) or water/wastewater system (system) operating an apprenticeship program and in whose name the program is (or is to be) registered or approved. Program sponsors, at their discretion, may establish an Apprenticeship Training Committee (ATC) to carry out the responsibilities and duties required of a program sponsor as described in these standards of apprenticeship. While the Office of Apprenticeship recommends that program sponsors utilize the services of an ATC, North Carolina Rural Water Association has elected to administer the apprenticeship program without the services of an ATC and assumes full responsibility for the administration of the program.

### **Responsibilities of the Sponsor**

- A. Cooperate in the selection of apprentices as outlined in this program.
- B. Ensure that all apprentices are under written apprenticeship agreements.
- C. Review and recommend apprenticeship activities in accordance with this program.
- D. Establish the minimum standards of education and experience required of apprentices.
- E. Register the local apprenticeship standards with the Registration Agency.
- F. Hear and resolve all complaints of violations of apprenticeship agreements.
- G. Arrange evaluations of apprentices' progress in manipulative skills and technical knowledge.
- H. Maintain records of all apprentices, showing their education, experience, and progress in learning the occupation.
- I. Certify to the Registration Agency that apprentices have successfully completed their apprenticeship program.
- J. Notify, within 45 days, the Registration Agency of all new apprentices to be registered, credit granted, suspensions for any reason, reinstatements, extensions, completions, and cancellations with explanation of causes.
- K. Supervise all the provisions of the local standards and be responsible, in general, for the successful operation of the standards by performing the duties here listed. Cooperate with public and private agencies, which can be of assistance in obtaining publicity to develop public support of apprenticeship. Keep in contact with all parties concerned, including apprentices, employers, and System Operations Specialists.
- L. Provide each apprentice with a copy of these standards, along with any applicable written rules and policies. Require the apprentice to sign an acknowledgment receipt of same. Follow this procedure whenever revisions or modifications are made to the rules and policies.
- M. When notified that an apprentice's related instruction or on-the-job progress is found to be unsatisfactory, the sponsor will determine whether the apprentice should continue in a probationary status and may require the apprentice to repeat a process or series of processes before advancing to the next wage classification. Should it be found in the course of this determination that the apprentice does not have the ability or desire to continue the training to become a System Operations Specialist, the sponsor will, after the apprentice

has been given adequate assistance and opportunity for corrective action, terminate the apprenticeship agreement, as provided in 29 CFR § 29.7(h)(1)(2)(i) and (ii).

- N. The sponsor will provide each registered apprentice with continuous employment sufficient to provide the opportunity for completion of his or her apprenticeship program. If the sponsor is unable to fulfill its training and/or employment obligation in conformance with these standards, the sponsor will, per Section XXIII of these standards and with the apprentice's consent, make a good-faith effort to facilitate a transfer of the apprentice to another registered sponsor for completion of the apprenticeship.
- O. If conditions of business make it necessary to temporarily suspend the period of apprenticeship, apprentices suspended for this reason will be given the opportunity to resume their active apprenticeships before any additional apprentices are employed. The suspension and reinstatement of apprentices shall be done in relation to retention of the most advanced apprentice and in accordance with the company policy for breaks in seniority.

**NRWA Program Management:** NRWA will oversee quality and consistency via a designated Apprenticeship Program Manager. NRWA may provide technical assistance to local program sponsors as needed, including but not limited to the following list:

- A. Be the point of contact for ensuring training courses and materials utilized in local programs meet acceptable criteria outlined in the Certified NRWA Apprenticeship Program and/or for acquiring NRWA standardized training materials.
- B. Provide specialized training, workshops, exams, certificates and certifications as needed through Water University.
- C. Provide standardized recordkeeping templates or database platforms necessary for local sponsors to uniformly administer local programs in accordance with NRWA criteria and provide, upon request, standardized NRWA apprenticeship application forms to the local sponsors.
- D. In coordination with local sponsors, provide technical assistance on program administration and operations. This may include working with the local sponsors to establish protocols for taking applications to the program, determining acceptable selection procedures that are in accordance with Equal Employment Opportunity hiring practices, or establishing a recordkeeping system capable of validating the quality and effectiveness of the training program.
- E. Accept and respond to inquiries from prospective apprenticeship applicants and affiliate members concerning registration processes.
- F. Assist and advise local sponsors on maintaining "good faith efforts" as outlined in the Affirmative Action Plan, as applicable, and ensure all participation is documented.
- G. Disseminate apprenticeship opening announcements throughout the year using NRWA communication platforms including the WaterPro Community and Career Center.
- H. Maintain a composite record of all registered apprentices in NRWA programs to include completion and cancelation rates, diversity utilization in the programs, and statistical norms for wages and benefits nationwide.
- I. Ensure related instruction and on the job learning requirements stay up to date with technology and industry practices.

## **SECTION II - EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLEDGE - 29 CFR §§ 29.5(b)(21) and 30.3(c)**

The North Carolina 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 North Carolina 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.

## **SECTION III - AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN AND SELECTION PROCEDURES - 29 CFR §§ 29.5(b)(21), 30.4, and 30.10**

Sponsors with 5 or more registered apprentices are required to adopt an affirmative action plan (Appendix C) and selection procedures (Appendix D), which will become part of these standards of apprenticeship. However, the Office of Apprenticeship encourages the development of these two plans for all programs regardless of apprentice numbers. For programs with fewer than 5 apprentices, these plans are not required, and the sponsor may continue to select apprentices in conformance with its current human resources and equal employment opportunity hiring policies.

## **SECTION IV - QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPRENTICESHIP - 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(10)**

Applicants will meet the following minimum qualifications. These qualification standards, and the score required on any standard for admission to the applicant pool, must be directly related to job performance, as shown by a statistical relationship between the score required for admission to the pool and performance in the apprenticeship program:

A. Age

Apprentices must not be less than 18 year of age. Proof of age is required.

B. Education

A high school diploma, General Educational Development (GED) equivalency or other high school equivalency credential is required.

Applicants must submit a DD-214 to verify military training and/or experience if they are a veteran and wish to receive consideration for such training/experience.

C. Physical

Applicants will be physically capable of performing the essential functions of the apprenticeship program, with or without a reasonable accommodation, and without posing a direct threat to the health and safety of the individual or others.

D. Drug screening

Apprentices will be required to take and pass a drug screening on acceptance into the program and prior to employment at an approved laboratory.

E. Background Check

Pursuant to federal guidance all employees of public water systems must pass a background check. Applicants will be required to pass a qualifying background investigation upon selection into the apprenticeship program and prior to employment based upon the participating employer policy.

F. Driver's License

Apprentices must possess a valid state issued vehicle operator license and be insurable at normal commercial rates on acceptance into the program and prior to employment.

**SECTION V - APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT - 29 CFR §§ 29.3(d), 29.3(e), and 29.5(b)(11)**

After an applicant for apprenticeship has been selected, but before employment as an apprentice or enrollment in related instruction, the apprentice will be covered by a written apprenticeship agreement (Appendix B) which can be submitted electronically through the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS), using the Apprentice Electronic Registration process by the sponsor and the apprentice and approved by and registered with the Registration Agency. Such agreement will contain a statement making the terms and conditions of these standards a part of the agreement as though expressly written therein. The sponsor shall provide a copy of the apprenticeship agreement to the apprentice, the Registration Agency, and the employer. An additional copy will be provided to the veteran's state approving agency for those veteran apprentices desiring access to any benefits to which they are entitled. Prior to signing the apprenticeship agreement, each selected applicant will be given an opportunity to read and review these standards, the sponsor's written rules and policies, and the apprenticeship agreement.

The Registration Agency will be advised within 45 days of the execution of each apprenticeship agreement and will be given all the information required for registering the apprentice.

**SECTION VI - SUPERVISION OF APPRENTICES AND RATIOS - 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(14) and 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(7)**

No apprentice shall work without proper or adequate supervision of the System Operations Specialist (mentor).

For the purpose of these apprenticeship standards, adequate or proper supervision of the apprentice means the apprentice is under the supervision of a fully qualified System Operations Specialist or supervisor at all times, who is responsible for making work assignments, providing on-the-job learning (OJL), and ensuring safety at the worksite.

To adequately or properly supervise an apprentice does not mean the apprentice must be within eyesight or reach of the supervisor, but that the supervisor knows what the apprentice is working on; is readily available to the apprentice; and is making sure the apprentice has the necessary instruction and guidance to perform tasks safely, correctly, and efficiently.



The sponsor shall establish a numeric ratio of apprentices to fully proficient System Operations Specialists consistent with proper supervision, training, safety, and continuity of employment throughout the apprenticeship. The ratio language must be specific and clearly described as to its application to the jobsite, workforce, department, or treatment plant. The ratio of apprentices to fully proficient System Operations Specialists will be as noted in Appendix A.

#### **SECTION VII - TERM OF APPRENTICESHIP - 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(2)**

The term of the occupation and on-the-job learning (OJL) attainment supplemented by the required hours of related instruction will be as stated on the Work Process Schedule and Related Instruction Outline (Appendix A) for each occupation.

#### **SECTION VIII - PROBATIONARY PERIOD - 29 CFR §§ 29.5(b)(8) and 29.5(b)(20)**

Every applicant selected for apprenticeship will serve a probationary period. The probationary period cannot exceed 25 percent of the length of the program or 1 year, whichever is shorter. The probationary period for this program shall be the first 1000 hours of on-the-job learning (OJL).

During the probationary period, either the apprentice or the sponsor may terminate the apprenticeship agreement, without stated cause, by notifying the other party in writing. The records for each probationary apprentice will be reviewed prior to the end of the probationary period. Records may consist of periodic reports regarding progression made in both the OJL and related instruction, and any disciplinary action taken during the probationary period.

Any probationary apprentice evaluated as satisfactory after a review of the probationary period will be given full credit for the probationary period and continue in the program.

After the probationary period, the apprenticeship agreement may be cancelled at the request of the apprentice or may be suspended or cancelled by the sponsor for reasonable cause after documented due notice to the apprentice and a reasonable opportunity for corrective action. In such cases, the sponsor will provide written notice to the apprentice and to the Registration Agency of the final action taken.

#### **SECTION IX - HOURS OF WORK**

Apprentices will generally work the same hours as fully proficient System Operations Specialists, except that no apprentice will be allowed to work overtime if it interferes with attendance in related instruction classes or exams.

Apprentices who do not complete the required hours of OJL during a given segment will have the term of that segment extended until they have accrued the required number of hours of training.

#### **SECTION X - APPRENTICE WAGE PROGRESSION - 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(5)**

Apprentices will be paid a progressively increasing schedule of wages during their apprenticeship based on the acquisition of increased skill and competence on the job and in related instruction. Before an apprentice is advanced to the next segment of training or to fully proficient (System

Operations Specialist) status, the sponsor will evaluate all progress to determine whether advancement has been earned by satisfactory performance in OJL and in related instruction courses. In determining whether satisfactory progress has been made, the sponsor will be guided by the work experience and related instruction records and reports.

The progressive wage schedule will be an increasing percentage or schedule of wages of a fully proficient worker wage rate. The percentages or schedule of wages that will be applied to the applicable fully proficient worker rate are shown on the attached Work Process Schedule and Related Instruction Outline (Appendix A). In no case will the starting wages of apprentices be less than that required by any minimum wage law that may be applicable.

#### **SECTION XI - CREDIT FOR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE – 29 CFR §§ 29.5(b)(12) and 30.4**

The sponsor may grant credit toward the term of apprenticeship to new apprentices. Credit will be based on demonstration of previous skills or knowledge equivalent to those identified in these standards.

Apprentice applicants seeking credit for previous experience gained outside the supervision of the sponsor must submit the request at the time of application and furnish such records, affidavits, and other documentation to substantiate the claim. An applicant who is a veteran and who wishes to receive consideration for military training and/or experience must submit a DD-214. The request for credit will be evaluated and a determination made by the sponsor prior to completion of the probationary period. The amount of credit to be awarded will be determined upon review of the apprentice's previous work and training/education record and evaluation of the apprentice's performance and demonstrated skill and knowledge.

An apprentice granted credit will be advanced to the wage rate designated for the period to which such credit accrues. The Registration Agency will be advised of any credit granted and the wage rate to which the apprentice is advanced.

The granting of advanced standing will be uniformly applied to all apprentices.

#### **SECTION XII - WORK EXPERIENCE – 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(3)**

During the apprenticeship, the apprentice will receive on-the-job learning (OJL) and related instruction in all phases of the occupation necessary to develop the skill and proficiency of a skilled System Operations Specialist. The OJL will be under the direction and guidance of the apprentice's supervisor.

#### **SECTION XIII - RELATED INSTRUCTION – 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(4)**

Every apprentice is required to participate in coursework related to the job as outlined in Appendix A. A minimum of 144 hours of related instruction is recommended for each year of the apprenticeship. Apprentices agree to take such courses as the sponsor deems advisable. However, the course general content, and total yearly hours will remain consistent. The sponsor will secure the instructional aids and equipment it deems necessary to provide quality instruction. The sponsor may require apprentices to complete the related instruction requirement through electronic media or other instruction approved by the Registration Agency.

Apprentices may be paid for hours spent attending related instruction classes.

The sponsor will inform each apprentice of the availability of college credit, if available.

In cases of failure of an apprentice to fulfill the obligations regarding related instruction without due cause, the sponsor will take appropriate disciplinary action and may terminate the apprenticeship agreement after due notice to the apprentice and opportunity for corrective action.

To the extent possible, related instruction will be closely correlated with the practical experience and training received on the job. The sponsor will monitor and document the apprentice's progress in related instruction classes.

The sponsor will secure competent instructors whose knowledge, experience, and ability to teach will be carefully examined and monitored. The sponsor may require the instructors to attend instructor training to meet the requirements of 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(4)(i)(ii) or state regulations.

#### **SECTION XIV - SAFETY AND HEALTH TRAINING – 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(9)**

All apprentices will receive instruction in safe and healthful work practices both on the job and in related instruction that are in compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards promulgated by the Secretary of Labor under 29 U.S.C. 651 et seq., as amended, or state standards that have been found to be at least as effective as the federal standards.

#### **SECTION XV - MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS – 29 CFR §§ 29.5(b)(6), 29.5(b)(23), and 30.12**

Program sponsors are responsible for maintaining, at a minimum, the following records:

- summary of the qualifications of each applicant;
- basis for evaluation and for selection or rejection of each applicant;
- records pertaining to interview;
- the original application;
- records of each apprentice's on-the-job learning (OJL);
- related instruction reviews and evaluations;
- progress evaluations;
- record of job assignments, promotions, demotions, layoffs, or terminations, rates of pay; and
- any other actions pertaining to the apprenticeship

Program sponsors will also maintain all records relating to apprenticeship applications (whether selected or not), including, but not limited to, the sponsor's outreach, recruitment, interview, and selection process. Such records will clearly identify minority and female (minority and nonminority) applicants and must include, among other things, the basis for evaluation and for selection or rejection of each applicant. For a complete list of records that each sponsor is required to maintain under 29 CFR § 30, please refer to 29 CFR § 30.12.

All such records are the property of the sponsor and will be maintained for a period of 5 years from the date of last action. They will be made available to the Registration Agency upon request.

**SECTION XVI - CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF APPRENTICESHIP - 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(15), and Circular 2015-02**

Upon satisfactory completion of the requirements of the apprenticeship program as established in these Standards, the Sponsor will so certify to the Registration Agency and request the awarding of a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship to the completing apprentice(s). Such requests may be completed electronically using the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS) or in writing using the supplied U. S. Department of Labor, ETA, Office of Apprenticeship, Application for Certification of Completion of Apprenticeship Form in (Appendix B), accompanied by the appropriate documentation for both on-the-job learning and the related instruction as may be required by the Registration Agency.

**SECTION XVII - NOTICE TO REGISTRATION AGENCY - 29 CFR §§ 29.3(d), 29.3(e), and 29.5(b)(19)**

The Registration Agency must be notified within 45 days of any apprentice action - e.g., registered, reinstated, extended, modified, granted credit, completed, transferred, suspended, canceled - and a statement of the reasons therefor.

**SECTION XVIII - REGISTRATION, CANCELLATION, AND DEREGISTRATION - 29 CFR §§ 29.5(b)(18), 29.8(a)(2), and 29.8(b)(8)**

These standards will, upon adoption by the sponsor, be submitted to NRWA and then to the Registration Agency for approval. Such approval will be acquired before implementation of the program.

The sponsor reserves the right to discontinue at any time the apprenticeship program set forth herein. The sponsor will notify NRWA and the Registration Agency within 45 days in writing of any decision to cancel the program.

The Registration Agency may initiate deregistration of these standards for failure of the sponsor to abide by the provisions herein. Such deregistration will be in accordance with the Registration Agency's regulations and procedures.

The sponsor will notify each apprentice of the cancellation of the program and the effect of same. If the apprenticeship program is cancelled at the sponsor's request, the sponsor will notify the apprentice(s) within 15 days of the date of the Registration Agency's acknowledgment of the sponsor's request. If the Registration Agency orders deregistration of the apprenticeship program, the sponsor will notify the apprentice(s) within 15 days of the effective date of the order. This notification will conform to the requirements of 29 CFR § 29.8.

## **SECTION XIX - AMENDMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS – 29 CFR § 29.5(b)(18)**

These standards may be amended or modified at any time by the sponsor provided that no amendment or modification adopted will alter any apprenticeship agreement in force at the time without the consent of all parties. Such amendment or modification will be submitted to NRWA and the Registration Agency for approval and registration prior to being placed in effect. A copy of each amendment or modification adopted will be furnished to each apprentice to whom the amendment or modification applies.

## **SECTION XX - ADJUSTING DIFFERENCES; COMPLAINT PROCEDURE – 29 CFR §§ 29.5(b)(22), 29.7(k), and 30.14**

The sponsor will have full authority to enforce these standards. Its decision will be final and binding on the employer, the sponsor, and the apprentice, unless otherwise noted below.

If an applicant or an apprentice believes an issue exists that adversely affects his/her participation in the apprenticeship program or violates the provisions of the apprenticeship agreement or standards, the applicant or apprentice may seek relief through one or more of the following avenues, based on the nature of the issue:

### **29 CFR § 29.7(k)**

The sponsor will hear and resolve all complaints of violations concerning the apprenticeship agreement and the registered apprenticeship standards for which written notification is received within 15 days of the alleged violations. The sponsor will make such rulings as it deems necessary in each individual case within 30 days of receiving the written notification. Either party to the apprenticeship agreement may consult with NRWA and/or the Registration Agency for an interpretation of any provision of these standards over which differences occur. The name and address of the appropriate authority to receive, process, and dispose of complaints is:

Contact the sponsor via email at [carolynbynum@ncrwa.org](mailto:carolynbynum@ncrwa.org), or send complaint through standard mail to North Carolina Rural Water Association, attention: Carolyn Bynum. P.O. Box 540, Welcome, NC 27374 or Heather Somers, Executive Director North Carolina Rural Water Association PO Box 540 Welcome, NC 27374

### **29 CFR § 30.14**

Any apprentice or applicant for apprenticeship who believes that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex with regard to apprenticeship or that the equal opportunity standards with respect to his/her selection have not been followed in the operation of an apprenticeship program may, personally or through an authorized representative, file a complaint with the Registration Agency or, at the apprentice or applicant's election, with the private review body established by the program sponsor (if applicable).

The complaint shall be in writing and shall be signed by the complainant. It must include the name, address, and telephone number of the person allegedly discriminated against, the program sponsor involved, and a brief description of the circumstances of the failure to apply the equal opportunity standards provided in 29 CFR § 30.

The complaint must be filed not later than 300 days from the date of the alleged discrimination or specified failure to follow the equal opportunity standards, and in the case of complaints filed directly with the review body designated by the program sponsor to review such complaints, any referral of such complaint by the complainant to the Registration Agency must occur within the time limitation stated above or 30 days from the final decision of such review body, whichever is later. The time may be extended by the Registration Agency for good cause shown.

Complaints of discrimination and failure to follow equal opportunity standards in the apprenticeship program may be filed and processed under 29 CFR § 30 and the procedures set forth above.

The sponsor shall provide written notice of its complaint procedure to all applicants for apprenticeship and all apprentices.

#### **SECTION XXI - TRANSFER OF AN APPRENTICE AND TRAINING OBLIGATION – 29 CFR § 29.5(13)**

The transfer of an apprentice between apprenticeship programs and within an apprenticeship program must be based on agreement between the apprentice and the affected apprenticeship committees or program sponsors and must comply with the following requirements:

- i. The transferring apprentice must be provided a transcript of related instruction and on-the-job learning (OJL) by the committee or program sponsor;
- ii. Transfer must be to the same occupation; and
- iii. A new apprenticeship agreement must be executed when the transfer occurs between the program sponsors.

The apprentice must receive credit from the new sponsor for the training already satisfactorily completed.

#### **SECTION XXII - RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE APPRENTICE**

Apprentices, having read these standards formulated by the sponsor, agree to all the terms and conditions contained herein and agree to abide by the sponsor's rules and policies, including any amendments, and to serve such time, perform such manual training, and study such subjects as the sponsor may deem necessary to become a skilled System Operations Specialist.

In signing the apprenticeship agreement, apprentices assume the following responsibilities and obligations under the apprenticeship program:

- A. Maintain and make available such records of work experience and training received on the job and in related instruction as may be required by the sponsor.
- B. Develop and practice safe working habits and work in such a manner as to assure his/her personal safety and that of fellow workers.
- C. Work for the employer to whom the apprentice is assigned for the duration of the apprenticeship, unless the apprentice is reassigned to another employer or the apprenticeship agreement is terminated by the sponsor.

### **SECTION XXIII - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Technical assistance, such as that from NRWA, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship, recognized state apprenticeship agencies, and vocational schools, may be requested to advise the sponsor.

The sponsor is encouraged to invite representatives from industry, education, business, private organizations, and public agencies to provide consultation and advice for the successful operation of its training program.

### **SECTION XXIV - CONFORMANCE WITH FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

No Section of these Standards of Apprenticeship shall be construed as permitting violation of any Federal Law or Regulation.

## **SECTION XXV - DEFINITIONS**

**APPRENTICE:** Any individual employed by the employer meeting the qualifications described in the standards of apprenticeship, who has signed an apprenticeship agreement with the local sponsor providing for training and related instruction under these standards, and who registers with the Registration Agency.

**APPRENTICE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION (AER):** An electronic tool that allows for instantaneous transmission of apprentice data for more efficient registration of apprentices and provides program sponsors with a faster turnaround on their submissions and access to their apprenticeship program data.

**APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT:** The written agreement between the apprentice and the sponsor setting forth the responsibilities and obligations of all parties to the apprenticeship agreement with respect to the apprentice's employment and training under these standards. Each apprenticeship agreement must be registered with the Registration Agency.

**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF APPRENTICESHIP:** The credential issued by the Registration Agency to those registered apprentices certified and documented as having successfully completed the apprentice training requirements outlined in these standards of apprenticeship.

**ELECTRONIC MEDIA:** Media that utilize electronics or electromechanical energy for the end user (audience) to access the content. Includes, but is not limited to, electronic storage media, transmission media, the Internet, extranets, lease lines, dial-up lines, private networks, and the physical movement of removable/transportable electronic media and/or interactive distance learning.

**EMPLOYER:** Any person or organization employing an apprentice, whether or not such person or organization is a party to an apprenticeship agreement with the apprentice. A person, business, or company signatory to this sponsor's standards that is responsible for providing hours of work, supervision, wages, and/or benefits to apprentices in its employ as registered under these standards.

**MENTOR:** A worker who has attained a level of skills, abilities, and competencies recognized within an industry as mastery of the skills and competencies required for the occupation. The term may also refer to a journeyman, technician, specialist, or other skilled worker who has documented sufficient skills and knowledge of an occupation, either through formal apprenticeship or through practical on-the-job experience and formal training. See **System Operations Specialist**.

**O\*NET-SOC CODE:** The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) codes and titles are based on the new Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system mandated by the federal Office of Management and Budget for use in collecting statistical information on occupations. The O\*NET classification uses an 8-digit O\*NET-SOC code. Use of the SOC classification as a basis for the O\*NET codes ensures that O\*NET information can be readily linked to labor market information such as occupational employment and wage data at the national, state, and local levels.

**ON-THE-JOB LEARNING (OJL):** Tasks learned on-the-job in which the apprentice must become proficient before a completion certificate is awarded. The learning must be through structured, supervised work experience.

**PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION:** The 1-year initial provisional approval of newly registered programs that meet the required standards for program registration, after which program approval



may be made permanent, continued as provisional, or rescinded following a review by the Registration Agency, as provided for in 29 CFR §§ 29.3(g) and (h).

**REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PARTNERS INFORMATION DATA SYSTEM (RAPIDS):** A federal system that provides for the automated collection, retention, updating, retrieval, and summarization of information related to apprentices and apprenticeship programs.

**REGISTRATION AGENCY and FIELD REPRESENTATIVE:** The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship or a recognized State Apprenticeship Agency that has responsibility for registering apprenticeship programs and apprentices, providing technical assistance, conducting reviews for compliance with 29 CFR §§ 29 and 30, and conducting quality assurance assessments. The field representative shall mean the person designated by Registration Agency to service this program.

The Registration Agency is: ApprenticeshipNC

The field representative identified is: Kathryn Castelleos

**RELATED INSTRUCTION:** An organized and systematic form of instruction designed to provide the apprentice with knowledge of the theoretical and technical subjects related to the apprentice's occupation. Such instruction may be given in a classroom, through occupational or industrial courses, or by correspondence courses of equivalent value, electronic media, or other forms of self- study approved by the Registration Agency.

**SPONSOR:** Any person, association, committee, or organization that operates an apprenticeship program and in whose name the program is registered. The Sponsor assumes the full responsibility for administration and operation of the apprenticeship program. Eligible Sponsors of this program are State Rural Water Associations who are members in good standing of the National Rural Water Association, and local water/wastewater systems who are members in good standing of their State Rural Water Association.

**STANDARDS OF APPRENTICESHIP:** This entire document, including all appendices and attachments hereto, and any future modifications and additions approved by the Registration Agency.

**SUPERVISOR OF APPRENTICE(S):** An individual designated by the program sponsor to supervise or have charge and direction of an apprentice.

**SYSTEM OPERATIONS SPECIALIST:** A professional water and/or wastewater utility system worker who has attained a level of skills, abilities, certifications, and competencies recognized within the industry as mastery of the skills and competencies required for the occupation.

**TIME-BASED OCCUPATION:** An occupation using an apprenticeship approach that measures skill acquisition through the individual apprentice's completion of at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning as described in a work process schedule.

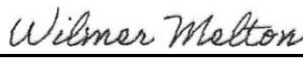
**TRANSFER:** A shift of apprenticeship registration from one program to another or from one employer within a program to another employer within that same program, where there is agreement between the apprentice and the affected apprenticeship committees or program sponsors.

SECTION X.00, OFFICIAL ADOPTION OF APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS

The North Carolina Rural Water Association hereby adopts these standards of apprenticeship on this 9 day of June, 2020.


  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Sponsor

\_\_\_\_\_  
NCRWA President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Sponsor

\_\_\_\_\_  
NCRWA Secretary  
Title

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of NCRWA Deputy CEO

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date