

from Classroom to Career



Please raise your hand if ...

... you grew up wanting to be a water worker?

... you found the water sector all by yourself (without any word-of-mouth referral)?

... you see yourself staying in the water sector or water sector-adjacent now that you've found it?



HRSD Strategic Plan 2030: Cement Workforce Development into your Operational Strategy



HRSD

Fast Facts:

- Year created: 1940
- Agency Type: Political subdivision
- Service Area: 20 counties & cities
- Population Served: 1.9 million
- Governing Body: Governor-appointed
- Pump Stations: more than 100
- Treatment Plants: 8 large + 6 small
- Combined Capacity: 225 MGD





HRSD Strategic Plan 2030





TALENT

We attract, develop, and retain an exceptional and diverse workforce that reflects our principles.



INNOVATION

We lead the industry by boldly innovating in every aspect of our business to enable continuous improvement.



EMPOWERED EMPLOYEES

Our employees are empowered to do the right thing.

We encourage decision making throughout the organization and support each other.



Workforce Development Strategy

- Invisibility
 - Community Engagement
 - Community Alliances
- Recruitment
 - Leverage Current Approach
 - Implement Innovative Strategies
- Retention
 - Succession Planning
 - Reskilling/Upskilling

1. High School Level

2. College-Level

3. Adult-Level



High School Programs:
How do we reach youth before they graduate?
What barriers are we helping them overcome?



High School Cadet Program





2-year program for vocational studies high school students



Requires application, teacher recommendation, and interviews





32 courses in public works and utilities skill areas



Paid summer internship with a member organization



Youth Summer Intensive (YSI)



- Alliance with local workforce board
 - HRSD = technical expertise
 - HRWC = recruitment + wrap around
 - HRSD + HRWC = eliminate barriers
- Focused on career readiness, soft skills, industry visibility
- Delivered during summer break

YSI is a collaborative initiative hosted by the following sponsors:









College-Level Programs:

How do we support students in applying their education in the real world?

How do we get them to stay?

College Internships

- Professions that require entry-level experience
- Alliance with college student associations
- Connected to real-world experience
 - —Project-based tasks
 - Résumé building experience
- Transition to full-time employment

ENGINEERING DATA ANALYSIS ASSET MANAGEMENT INFORMATION **TECHNOLOGY**







Introducing Future Leaders to Opportunities in Water

VWEA & VA AWWA InFLOW Program

- Enhancing the InFLOW experience
 - Community service projects
 - Résumé and branding workshop
 - —Networking 101
 - —Treatment plant tour
 - Leadership Academy mentor
 - Personal connection
 - Conference buddy
 - Professional mentor







Adult-Level Programs: How do we handle continuous learning and professional development?

HRSD Apprenticeship Program





Calioval
APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

To YEAR ANNIVERSARY

NOVEMBER 17-23, 2024

Toin Learning & Development in recognizing the commitment and hard work of our apprentices and instructors as we celebrate National Apprenticeship Week!

- Established in 1979 as the nation's first registered wastewater apprenticeship
- Nationally award-winning
- Continuously evolves based on needs and goals
- Enhances recruitment, knowledge development, and employee retention

Workforce Development Specialist

- New position hired March 2025
- Responsibilities include:
 - —Career pathways
 - —Career transitions
 - Succession planning
 - Mentoring Program
- Helps employees understand how they can grow at HRSD





Workforce Development Success Metrics:
How do we know it's working?
What are the stories behind the stats?



Success Metrics

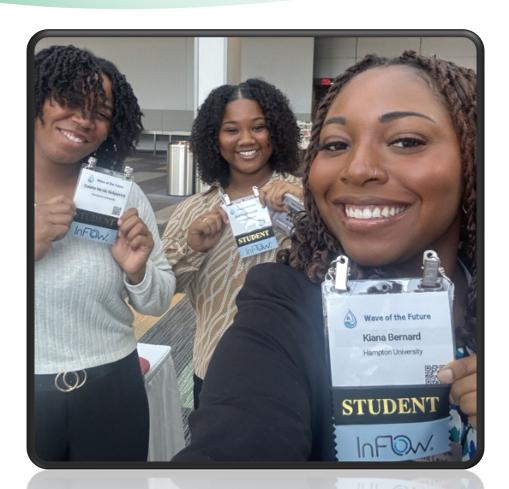


High School Programs (10 years)

- 97% completion rate
- 18 returned as second-year interns
- 6 hired part-time
- 16 hired full-time
- 9 promoted
- 5 utilized continuing education to advance into higher-level positions



Success Metrics





- 90% completion rate
- 25% returned for second year
- 3 family members/friends hired fulltime
- Increased enrollment each year
- Increased requests to include additional schools



Success Metrics



Apprenticeship Program (45 years)

- 600+ graduates
- 97% graduate retention rate
- Graduates make up 70% of Ops
- Graduates have promoted to Directorlevel positions



Vision Forward: What are we doing for adults already in the workforce or looking to reenter it?

Virginia Collaborative Apprenticeship Model



- Alliance with state member association
- Scale reach and pool resources
- Increase visibility, access, and development
- Builds equity for rural and underserved communities



Summary

- What specific challenges do we face, and how can we creatively solve them?
- How do the initiatives align and integrate into our operational strategy?
- How do we reasonably engage in building solutions?



We're not just building a workforce.

What we do today will echo in the careers, communities, and families of tomorrow.



Thank you!



DR. CHRISTINA PEREZ
HRSD DIRECTOR OF
LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



CONNECT WITH ME!