NEXT STEPS
If you would like to become a Utility Partner or have any questions, please contact:

Laurie Dougherty, CAE
Executive Director
Illinois Section AWWA
545 S. Randall Road -St. Charles, IL 60174
Email: Laurie@isawwa.org
Ph: 866-521-3595 ext. 1
UTILITY PARTNERS WANTED
The Illinois Section American Water Works Association (ISAWWA) is seeking Utility Partners interested in hosting high school students that are enrolled in local Operator-In-Training (OIT) programs. Participating Utility Partners will provide paid or unpaid hands-on training opportunities to the OIT students during the summer months (5-8 weeks) or academic year to increase the student’s overall knowledge, provide some of the required IEPA hands-on training experience for operator certification, improve OIT program success, promote the entry of post high school students into the water and wastewater profession, and complement existing UTILITY SUCCESION PLANNING STRATEGIES.

WHY YOU SHOULD BECOME A UTILITY PARTNER
Participation creates positive press opportunities for the utility and the schools in the community.

Utility participation increases student’s interest, awareness and knowledge of key elements in the water industry.

Interaction with students allows a broader learning experience and gives the utility an opportunity to assess hiring potential.

Hosting interns helps develop leadership skills among the organization’s full-time employees. The acts of teaching, directing, and mentoring interns serve to motivate full-time employees and elevate their quality of work and job satisfaction.

INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES
“It’s been estimated that almost 50% of today’s water and wastewater operators will retire within the next five to seven years. They’ll need to be replaced. Because qualified operators are expected to be in short supply, those with ambition may see more opportunities for advancement, a choice of locations and utility size, work schedule flexibility, employer-supported training, and negotiable wages and benefits” – The American Water Works Association (2014)

WHAT IS THE HIGH SCHOOL OIT PROGRAM?
The OIT program provides opportunities for high school juniors and seniors to learn in-depth principles regarding operations and maintenance of water distribution systems via an on-line self-study course accessed through the ISAWWA website. Hands-on training with Utility Partners during the summer or school year complements the on-line learning component and gives students a preview of careers in utility operations. The high school OIT program will prepare each student for the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Class D OIT examination.

PUBLIC OUTREACH
Participation in the OIT program is an opportunity for increased civic engagement, innovative educational programming, enhanced community partnerships and support for an at-risk portion of the population.

UTILITY RESPONSIBILITIES
- Provide oversight for the OIT student
- Determine job tasks (assistance from ISAWWA is available), schedule and wages (if paid)
- 5-8 week commitment to intern supervision and training during the summer (alternative training schedules during the academic year can also be established)

Student trainee activities to oversee could include (but are not limited to):
- Participating in operator rounds
- Collecting distribution system samples
- Learning chemical analysis
- Collecting meter readings
- Observing water system excavation and repairs
- Performing JULIE locates
- Completing special projects

50%

Don’t let funding limitations get in the way of your participation.
Grants may be available from state and municipal organizations to cover or reduce the cost of hiring interns.
Unpaid internships can also be considered.