New Jersey American Water's Water UP! Graduates Ready to Keep the State's Water Workforce Flowing

CAMDEN, N.J., Dec. 3, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Excitement filled the room at Essex County College today as 11 participants graduated from New Jersey American Water's fifth annual Water Utility Pipeline (Water UP!) program. The graduating class, consisting of New Jersey residents from Newark, Irvington, Belleville, Bloomfield, West Orange, Union, and Plainfield, proudly received their certificates, marking the completion of their training in the workforce development program.

"Water UP! is launching these graduates into meaningful careers while helping to ensure the future of safe, reliable water for our communities," said **Mark McDonough, president of New Jersey American Water**. "We're not just building a workforce; we're bolstering the foundation of public health and infrastructure for years to come. Water UP! will continue to grow and create opportunities that strengthen the communities we serve."

New Jersey American Water executives, Essex County College leadership, local elected officials, and family and friends attended the ceremony to celebrate the graduates' achievement. The paid 10-week initiative combines classroom instruction, hands-on field training, and professional development. Graduates also earned OSHA 30 certification and **technical elective college credits**, preparing them for entry-level roles in operations, mechanics, water quality, and customer service.

"When I first joined, I knew I would be learning new skills and exploring a career path, but I didn't realize how much this experience would shape my confidence and understanding of the water industry," said **Tiffany Muhammad, a 2025 Water UP! graduate**. "We learned the technical aspects of water operations and what it means to serve our communities with purpose. This program showed me that the water industry isn't just about infrastructure, it's about people, service, and stewardship. Because of Water UP!, I feel prepared and motivated to contribute to this essential work."

"At Essex County College, our vision is to change lives—and programs like Water UP! make that possible," said **Dr. Augustine A. Boakye, president of Essex County College**. "You have helped us fulfill that vision, and this is only the beginning. You will represent both Essex County College and New Jersey American Water wherever you go, and we expect to see you shine. This program will continue to grow, and we look forward to seeing even bigger and richer opportunities ahead. Congratulations again on this incredible achievement."

A cornerstone of the program was **immersive training at New Jersey American Water's Short Hills Operations Center**, where participants rotated through real-world scenarios in utility mechanic and field services representative roles. They practiced repairing water mains, operating specialized tools, and responding to service calls under the guidance of experienced professionals. This exposure gave participants a clear understanding of the technical demands of the job and built confidence in their ability to perform critical tasks that keep water systems running safely and reliably.

Community leaders also praised the program's impact on workforce development. "Thank you to New Jersey American Water for continuing this program for five cohorts and committing to its future," said **Karen S. Gaylord, executive director of the Newark Workforce Development Board**. "We need talented individuals in this career pathway, and you've chosen wisely. Have confidence in your decision—it will be fruitful. Keep investing in yourself and think globally, because access to safe drinking water is vital everywhere. Opportunities in this field are critical to preserving our natural resources and infrastructure. This is a journey, and I applaud your brilliance. Continue to be courageous, and congratulations again."

Since launching in 2021, Water UP! has trained more than 40 residents across Camden, Union, Atlantic, and Essex counties, many of whom have secured positions in utilities and construction. Graduates also participated in a career fair featuring recruiters from New Jersey American Water and industry partners.

Learn more about New Jersey American Water's workforce development programs at www.newjerseyamwater.com/waterup.

About New Jersey American Water
New Jersey American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest regulated water utility in the state, providing safe, clean, reliable and affordable water and wastewater services to approximately 2.9 million people. For more information, visit www.newjerseyamwater.com and follow New Jersey American Water on LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Instagram.

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