

Five Years of Water UP! Builds Pathways to Water Utility Careers

New Jersey American Water celebrates 61 graduates since launching the workforce development program in 2021

CAMDEN, N.J., Oct. 28, 2026 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- New Jersey American Water today celebrated the fifth graduating class of [Water UP!](#), a workforce development program that introduces participants to careers in the water and utility industry. The ceremony at the company's Camden headquarters recognized 10 members of the 2026 cohort alongside their families, community partners and employees. Since the program launched in 2021, Water UP! has graduated 61 participants.

"Celebrating five years of Water UP! is an incredible milestone, but what matters most is the opportunity this program creates for people to develop new skills and explore careers in the water industry," said **Mark McDonough, president of New Jersey American Water**. "We're proud to help prepare the next generation of utility professionals for an industry and a service that communities depend on every day."

Through Water UP!, participants spend 10 weeks building skills and exploring careers in the water and utility industry through classroom instruction, professional development, field experiences and hands-on training. The program covers financial literacy, customer service, leadership development, OSHA training and utility operations, giving participants a broad foundation as they consider their next steps.

That work also creates opportunities in the communities New Jersey American Water serves. Several members of this year's graduating class are Camden residents, making the program's return to the city especially meaningful.

[Hopeworks](#), a Camden-based organization focused on helping young adults build skills, gain real-world experience and prepare for long-term careers, has played a vital role in Water UP! from the program's beginning. Hopeworks partnered with New Jersey American Water for the inaugural class in 2021 and returned for the program's fifth year to support participant recruitment and workforce readiness for the 2026 cohort.

"We are proud to partner with New Jersey American Water for the 2026 Water UP! cohort and help connect participants to meaningful career opportunities," said **Dan Rhoton, chief executive officer of Hopeworks**. "Programs like Water UP! give young adults exposure to industries they may not have otherwise considered while helping them build skills and confidence that can support long-term career success."

The program's return to Camden also highlights the role local partnerships play in connecting young adults with career opportunities and resources in their community.

"I can't say enough about American Water and everyone who has played a part in making this happen," said **Camden Mayor Victor Carstarphen**. "We're all in this together, from the mayor on down. All of our partners are here for our young people and young adults, working together to create opportunities and help make them a reality."

The 2026 graduates capped their 10-week experience by receiving certificates recognizing their completion of Water UP! During the ceremony, graduate Mia Morales reflected on the skills, experiences and career opportunities she gained through the program.

"Water UP! has given us the skills to enter the utility field with confidence and competence," said **Mia Morales, a Hopeworks alumna and member of the program's 2026 graduating class, during her remarks at the ceremony**. "I've been able to practice networking, receive feedback, work on my resume and elevator pitch, and learn how to change water meters and repair water main breaks. The experience helped me strengthen my communication skills, step outside my comfort zone and grow as a young professional."

Over the past five years, Water UP! has demonstrated the value of workforce development programs that introduce participants to water utility careers, build practical skills and connect communities with opportunities in

an essential industry.

For more information about New Jersey American Water's workforce development initiatives, visit www.newjerseyamwater.com/waterup.

About American Water

American Water (NYSE: AWK) is the largest regulated water and wastewater utility company in the United States. With a history dating back to 1886 and celebrating 140 years in 2026, We Keep Life Flowing® by providing safe, clean, reliable and affordable drinking water and wastewater services to approximately 14 million people with regulated operations in 14 states and on 19 military installations. American Water's approximately 7,000 talented professionals leverage their significant expertise and the company's national size and scale to achieve excellent outcomes for the benefit of customers, employees, investors and other stakeholders. For more information, visit amwater.com and join American Water on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#).

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 with approximately 875 dedicated employees working to provide safe, clean, reliable and affordable water and wastewater services to approximately 3 million people. For more information, visit www.newjerseyamwater.com and follow New Jersey American Water on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

About Hopeworks

Hopeworks is a social enterprise that uses technology, healing and entrepreneurship to transform lives. Through high-demand technical training, paid work experience and real-world business experience, Hopeworks helps young adults build skills and pursue living-wage careers. The organization provides technology solutions in geographic information systems, revenue cycle management and web design.

SOURCE American Water

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