

# Student Essay Contest

## Filling the Water Workforce Reservoir

Water is life. As such, it takes a workforce of thousands to operate and manage local water systems. Unfortunately, a massive wave of retirements is depleting employee ranks and leaving critical jobs unfilled. Institutional knowledge and skills are disappearing without passing on vital information to the next generation of the water workforce.

This year's essay theme is: **Revitalizing the Water Infrastructure Workforce for a Sustainable Future.**

Mojave Water Agency is accepting essays that explore the potential for turning the current workforce crisis into an opportunity for the next generation. Investigate the factors leading to the decline in water infrastructure personnel, including demographic shifts and job perception issues. Propose strategies to attract and retain new talent, such as offering competitive wages, creating career advancement opportunities, and improving workplace conditions.

*A winning essay will demonstrate creativity, be well-sourced, and offer realistic solutions that water agencies can put into practice.* Three finalists will be chosen to rework their essay into a speech that will be presented live to a panel of judges.

### **Contest Rules:**

1. Open to high school students living in the Mojave Water Agency boundaries enrolled in grades 9-12 in public, private, or home school. (Past finalists are not eligible.)
2. All essays must be submitted via the Google Form by **5 p.m. on October 18, 2024**. Please submit in Word or pdf format. Make sure your name, contact information and school name are on the top of your essay.
3. The body of the completed essay must be between 550 and 900 words.
4. To participate, you **must** fill out a [short on-line application](#) and submit your essay with a short video with your name, city/town, school, grade and what you learned while writing your essay. (Cell phone video is fine.)
5. The top three finalists will be assigned a community mentor/coach to polish their presentation for a verbal presentation on **Thursday, November 14** to a selection panel in front of a small audience, which may include family.
6. The essay contest winner must present the essay at the 2025 Innovators High Desert Water Summit on **February 7** at the High Desert Church campus in Victorville.

7. Essays will be judged on writing skill (quality, clarity, organizational structure and style), contextual knowledge about jobs in water, and the innovation and feasibility of the proposed solutions.
8. The winner will receive a scholarship of \$3,000 and the remaining two finalists will each receive a scholarship of \$1,000.
9. The top three finalists must agree to participate in an MWA produced video.
10. All entries become the property of the Mojave Water Agency.

→[Click here to fill out the on-line application](#)←

Or visit: <https://forms.gle/RLzmn2KKyMoyQLQg9>

Or scan the QR code:

