

Entry: 492

## Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority Inaugural Internship Program

Started at: 10/7/2021 01:12 PM - Finalized at: 10/18/2021 01:59 PM

**Page: NEAA Nomination Form**

APPLICATION DEADLINE: **Friday, October 22, 2021, 11:59 pm PST**

**All fields indicated by a red asterisk (\*) must be completed**

**Category**

Workforce Development Award

**NOMINATING AGENCY'S INFORMATION****Name & Title of Individual Submitting this Application**

Pamela M. Flasch, director of public affairs

**Submitting Agency's Name**

Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority

**State (2letters)**

SC

**Service Area Population of Submitting Agency**

220,000

**Social Media (Indicate all that applies)**

Communications Person's Name & Email, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

**Communications Contact**

Pamela M. Flasch

**Communications Contact's Email**

pamela.flasch@bjwsa.org

**Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/BJWSA> (<https://www.facebook.com/BJWSA>)

**Instagram**

<https://www.instagram.com/bjwsa/> (<https://www.instagram.com/bjwsa/>)

**Twitter**

<https://twitter.com/BJWSASC> (<https://twitter.com/BJWSASC>)

**Agency Logo - Hi-Res Picture (jpg; or .png)**

Download File ([https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/acd1a0ce-bdc5-4015-b05d-1b82c70955ad?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22bjwsa\\_lowcountry\\_blue.png%22&response-content-type=image%2Fpng&Signature=c4y4Q9Ibe%2FydPAIKDs8pFRQ8A3M%3D](https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/acd1a0ce-bdc5-4015-b05d-1b82c70955ad?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22bjwsa_lowcountry_blue.png%22&response-content-type=image%2Fpng&Signature=c4y4Q9Ibe%2FydPAIKDs8pFRQ8A3M%3D))

**PROJECT / INDIVIDUAL NOMINEE'S INFORMATION****Name of Nominated Project / Program or Nominee (as it will appear on the NEAA award)**

Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority Inaugural Internship Program

**Has this project / program ever been submitted for NEAA recognition in the past?**

No

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION****Narrative Description: Project / Program or Individual (attach pdf, limited to 4 pages, double-spaced, 12pt)**

Download File ([https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/c2b2c01a-d9cc-4f92-9c6d-ab3473d48258?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22BJWSA\\_Workforce\\_Dev\\_NARRATIVE.pdf%22&response-content-type=application%2Fpdf&Signature=dy1QNuVeolUBAGHphFZchSBUgZI%3D](https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/c2b2c01a-d9cc-4f92-9c6d-ab3473d48258?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22BJWSA_Workforce_Dev_NARRATIVE.pdf%22&response-content-type=application%2Fpdf&Signature=dy1QNuVeolUBAGHphFZchSBUgZI%3D))

**Supplemental Information Included - i.e. images, video, add'l document (Optional)**

Yes

**Supporting Material (PDF, limited to 4 pages)**

Download File ([https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/04097faa-7f2d-45fd-a5a7-144cd972879c?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22INTERN\\_winter22\\_BIFOLD.pdf%22&response-content-type=application%2Fpdf&Signature=GTft8HAnkdadq8AKTqU3e6Cdjw4%3D](https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/04097faa-7f2d-45fd-a5a7-144cd972879c?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22INTERN_winter22_BIFOLD.pdf%22&response-content-type=application%2Fpdf&Signature=GTft8HAnkdadq8AKTqU3e6Cdjw4%3D))

**Supporting Material - Video (provide link)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1DZ4qIQRsk> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1DZ4qIQRsk>)

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT**

Please attach a third-person article (350-400 words MS doc) - something that a layperson would understand, describing your project / program to be posted on the front page of NACWA's website as part of our "Member Spotlight" section.

**Member Spotlight Document (MS Word)**

Download File ([https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/8f51103c-c77b-4b35-9649-1bc9a166f574?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22BJWSA\\_Workforce\\_Dev\\_MEMBER-SPOTLIGHT.docx%22&response-content-type=application%2Fvnd.openxmlformats-officedocument.wordprocessingml.document&Signature=K%2B0udfOzQF4rjwFxy9dvxReRKn0%3D](https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/8f51103c-c77b-4b35-9649-1bc9a166f574?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22BJWSA_Workforce_Dev_MEMBER-SPOTLIGHT.docx%22&response-content-type=application%2Fvnd.openxmlformats-officedocument.wordprocessingml.document&Signature=K%2B0udfOzQF4rjwFxy9dvxReRKn0%3D))

**Member Spotlight Hi-Res Picture (jpg; or .png)**

Download File ([https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/aadc7410-464e-4d0d-a436-62993352f5c2?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22Jada\\_INTERN\\_Poster.png%22&response-content-type=image%2Fpng&Signature=BAonICqHr4OxZAr2B%2BH28zRgHp8%3D](https://vo-general.s3.amazonaws.com/1791819d-f6fc-46c3-b1b7-a1d38a2bd4d4/aadc7410-464e-4d0d-a436-62993352f5c2?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ4PRWO26HAX3IOCA&Expires=1723306026&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3D%22Jada_INTERN_Poster.png%22&response-content-type=image%2Fpng&Signature=BAonICqHr4OxZAr2B%2BH28zRgHp8%3D))

**Member Spotlight Hi-Res Picture (.jpg; or .png)**

No File Uploaded

**PROJECT POSTER or PROJECT WEBSITE**

Please include a hi-res PDF or website link of your Project to be displayed on NACWA's NEAA website (example of last year's honorees (<https://www.nacwa.org/about-us/awards/national-environmental-achievement-award-program/neaa-2021-honorees>))

**Project Poster / Website (indicate at least one)**

Project Website

**Project Website**

<https://www.bjwsa.org/intern-program/> (<https://www.bjwsa.org/intern-program/>)

**APPLICATION AUTHORIZATION**

Please contact [btrombino@nacwa.org](mailto:btrombino@nacwa.org) (<mailto:membership@nacwa.org>; [btrombino@nacwa.org](mailto:btrombino@nacwa.org)?subject=Who%20is%20Our%20NACWA%20Primary%20Contact%20for%20the%20NEAA%20application%3F).

if you do not know the name of your NACWA Representative (SUBJECT: Who is Our NACWA Primary Contact for the NEAA application?)

**Signature of Individual Submitting Application (pdf/jpg)****Name of Submitting Agency's NACWA Representative**

Joe Mantua

**Title of Submitting Agency's NACWA Representative**

General Manager

**Email of Submitting Agency's NACWA Representative**

joe.mantua@bjwsa.org

**Signature of Submitting Agency's NACWA Representative (pdf/jpg)**

**Does this Project/Program involve another NACWA Agency?**

No

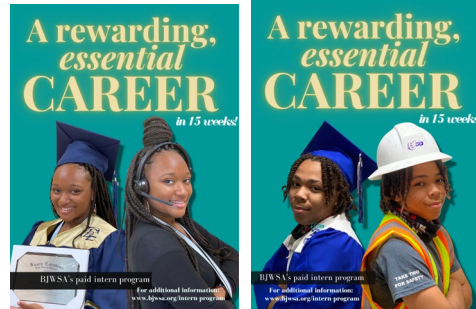
**Please review your application prior to finalizing it. All fields with a red asterisk (\*) must be completed. If you have any questions in regard to submitting your application, please contact Bredy Trombino (<mailto:btrombino@nacwa.org?subject=Application%20Questions%20-%20PreCompletion>) at 202.533.1820.**





**Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority  
Inaugural Internship Program**

<https://www.bjwsa.org/intern-program/>



## INTRODUCTION

Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority (BJWSA) is located in southern coastal South Carolina, between Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. The utility serves these two counties, and wholesales water to several barrier islands and military installations. With a staff of 210, the Authority provides water service to 60,000 customers and sewer service to 43,500 customers across a 1,420 square mile region.

Two entry-level departments – customer service and field operations – often provide a stepping stone to internal promotions, leaving these sections in a constant state of hiring, and HR had looked at an internship program to alleviate the burden. Add six months of impediments brought on by COVID-19, and the situation worsened.

The Human Resources Department, under the direction of Allena Lee-Brown, began making inquiries with the Career and Technical Education (CTE) offices for both Beaufort and Jasper County school districts. More than 60 students attended two open houses to solicit interest in March 2020; these included an overview of the organization and facility tours. Over the course of several months, a plan emerged for BJWSA to host high school seniors in a 15-week paid internship program in the spring of 2021. Part of the local and state mission for CTE is to encourage students to be career-ready through vocation pathways that help students learn technical and employability skills and earn industry credentials.

School counselors and career development facilitators used an initial internship application to pre-screen; referencing any career interest inventories and students' graduation plans. The next steps involved allowing students to experience BJWSA's regular application/interview process. Once a student was selected, he/she and a parent/guardian signed the work-based training agreement along with BJWSA to delineate expectations.

In a region where high school graduates can expect to make little better than minimum wage, a paid internship at \$12.00 an hour is an attractive prospect. The possibility of employment with retirement and generous benefits is even more desirable. And the cost of living in these counties – home to Hilton Head Island and other popular tourist areas – is high. Of course, jobs in the service and hospitality industry are plentiful, but not lucrative.

## EXECUTION

The two districts and the Authority conducted a joint effort at recruiting from the class of 2021, with a final pool of eight applicants. Linda Tillery, chief of customer care, and Travis Barnes, pump stations supervisor, interviewed the candidates, asking 10 standardized questions and scoring each prospect based on overall competencies. There was no guarantee of employment after the internship; the promise was *full consideration* for employment depending on how well they performed during the internship.

The four finalists exceeded expectations during the interview process and made the choices very clear with two chosen from each county. Two recruits were placed in field operations, and the other two in customer service. Both departments report to Mrs. Tillery. "I was pleasantly surprised and impressed with the preparation and the

interviewing skills from the applicants. It was very evident that they were prepared and had put in the necessary time in order to make a good impression.”

From the beginning, it was clear that all four interns were solid in their skills, intellect and work ethic. They adapted well to their professional environments, and in some cases, supervisors were eager to formally hire well in advance of the end of the fifteen weeks. High school graduation is a requirement for employment, and one intern had actually graduated early, in December of 2020.

### **SUPERVISOR EVALUATIONS & OTJ Training**

Training began immediately after orientation, with guidelines for supervisors to set expectations and metrics for achievement. During the 15-week curriculum, HR’s role was to monitor the interns’ progress and ensure their performance reviews were completed timely and followed state requirements. CTE requires a minimum of 40 practical experience hours or 120 hours if a student is to earn a unit of credit.

Reviews from supervisors provide insight into the evaluation process. The four were found to be “Very eager to learn,” and exhibiting initiative and curiosity about their work and the associated tasks. By learning on the job, the interns were “solving problems as they arise” and “identifying and resolving issues when they come up.” They gained an appreciation for the importance of effective communication – especially when it comes to relaying important information to colleagues.

The field operations trainees were given the opportunity to work in all three departments within field ops – pipeline, compliance and pump stations, giving them a “broad generic knowledge of how water and sewer lines are installed and maintained.”

## HIRED!

Three of the four interns were hired at the end of the 15-week cycle. Two employees work in Field Operations – both in the pipeline department, but in different service areas and supporting different supervisors. The other employee is a customer service representative. Linda Tillery is enthusiastic about the program, and finds that the interns – now employees – are contributing to their departments. “Their desire to succeed did not stop with being chosen for the program. They took advantage of their opportunities despite their youth, and proved that they could handle the work and be successful with BJWSA.” See the website and video here: [www.bjwsa.org/intern-program/](http://www.bjwsa.org/intern-program/)

## TAKEAWAYS & NEXT STEPS

The program met the needs of the emerging workforce as well as BJWSA. Linking student achievements to real world outcomes answers the question: “*Why am I learning this?*” It gives students opportunities to practice skills in real-world scenarios, helps them develop soft skills, allows them to observe professionals in action and network with potential employers. Hiring qualified, trained employees saves time and resources.

Based on need, BJWSA will add two positions for Water or Wastewater Operations to the intern offerings for Winter 2022, for a total of six prospective new employees. These interns will be paid \$15.00/hour to compete with the current local market.

Linda Tillery sums up the benefits for both BJWSA and students, “I think that the internship program is wonderful and provides a win-win for all parties. Those students who are not heading off to college have an opportunity to begin a career with a great company that provides stable benefits and pay. BJWSA gets employees that are junior, motivated with fresh perspectives and a potential ‘pipeline’ for the future.”

# APPLY for Winter 2022

We have expanded the scope of our Winter 2022 program by adding positions for two interns in Water/Wastewater Operations. We are recruiting for two interns each for Field Operations, Customer Service, and Water/Wastewater Operations.

Ideally, one student from each school district would fill a spot in each department. *For example,* one student from Beaufort and one student from Jasper would be selected for Field Operations.

*Work with your guidance/career counselor to provide the necessary documentation for application.*

Application deadline: **November 19, 2021**

Interview period: **December 6 – 10, 2021**

Internship start date: **January 18, 2022**

Starting Pay: \$15/hour



# A rewarding, *ESSENTIAL* CAREER *in 15 weeks!*



BJWSA's paid intern program



# A "pipeline" of talent from the community

Through this multi-week program, high school seniors or recent graduates are paid to work while learning marketable career skills on the job. BJWSA seeks to fill winter and summer sessions, leaving fall as an exploratory and recruitment period.

I saw it as a really good opportunity! I was in a welding class before this. I like to use my hands and get dirty. With the benefits and everything being offered as an internship so I could actually get in there and learn and figure everything out, it was a great opportunity, so I took it!

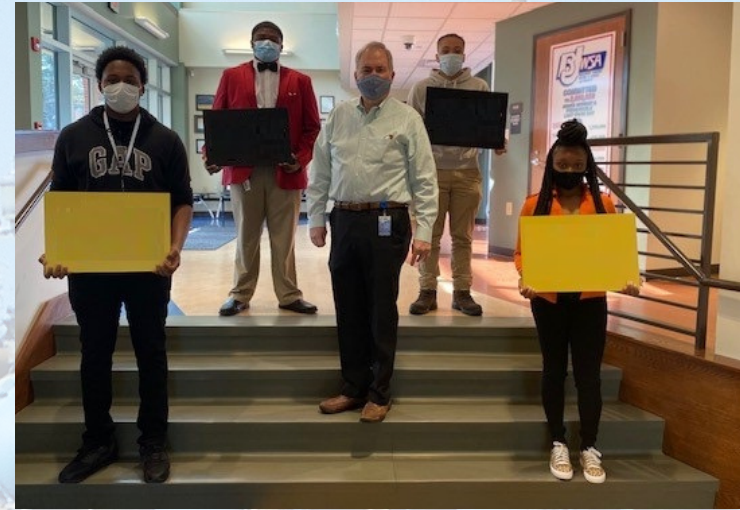
– **Kyler Marshburn-Foushee**

I was interested because (this program) was in customer service and I wanted to further my experience in customer service.

– **Jada Garvin**

I've always liked hands-on work since I was little. I was basically raised doing hands-on work and my grandfather always told me how to do stuff. Pipeline is more of a response to fixing something – whether it's putting in meters or fixing a leak or a sewer cleanout.

– **Travis Cogswell**







<https://www.bjwsa.org/intern-program/>

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority (BJWSA) in South Carolina, has two entry-level departments – customer service and field operations – that often provide a stepping stone to internal promotions, leaving these sections in a constant state of hiring.

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*in 15 weeks!*



BJWSA's paid intern program

For additional information:  
[www.bjwsa.org/intern-program](http://www.bjwsa.org/intern-program)