

Drinking Water Operator

Water Reclamation Operator

Water operators provide one of the most important services in a community: delivering safe water to every person.

Water operators are the backbone of any community. Without water operators, there would be no safe water to drink, shower, wash, cook, flush or swim in. Life as you know it would stop. Do you have the time and strength to walk to the nearest stream to get all 88 gallons (734 pounds) of water you use everyday? Luckily, you don't have to because there is a water operator at work in your community!

There are two types of water operators:

Uses chemistry to make sure water from the environment is purified and safe to drink. Works to make sure the equipment that receives and delivers water for the community to use is healthy, affordable and reliable.

Uses biology to clean and sanitize wastewater from our homes and businesses so that it can be recycled back into the environment where

Water operators work for a [water utility](#). It is the business of a drinking water utility to provide clean drinking water to all the homes, businesses, hospitals and schools in a community.

Then, once the water is used (in sinks, showers, toilets or drinking fountains) it flows down the drain and is taken to a water reclamation utility to be cleaned.

Once the wastewater is cleaned and sanitized, the [water reclamation utility](#) sends the water back into local rivers so that it can be used again downstream. Water utilities can be found in every community across the country.

Water utilities are diverse in size and complexity. Some utilities serve small communities of a few hundred people, while others serve large cities with millions.

Small utilities may only have a few miles of buried pipe and have a simple treatment processes. The largest utilities have pumps capable of filling an Olympic-sized swimming pool in a few minutes, and can have complex, highly automated treatment plants.

There may be only one water operator in a small water utility, who takes on varied job responsibilities across the community. In large utilities, it takes multiple water operators in order to manage the utility's immense demand for clean water.

Small or large, all water utilities must know and meet the water quality standards set by the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#).

work for the good of the community

do something different everyday

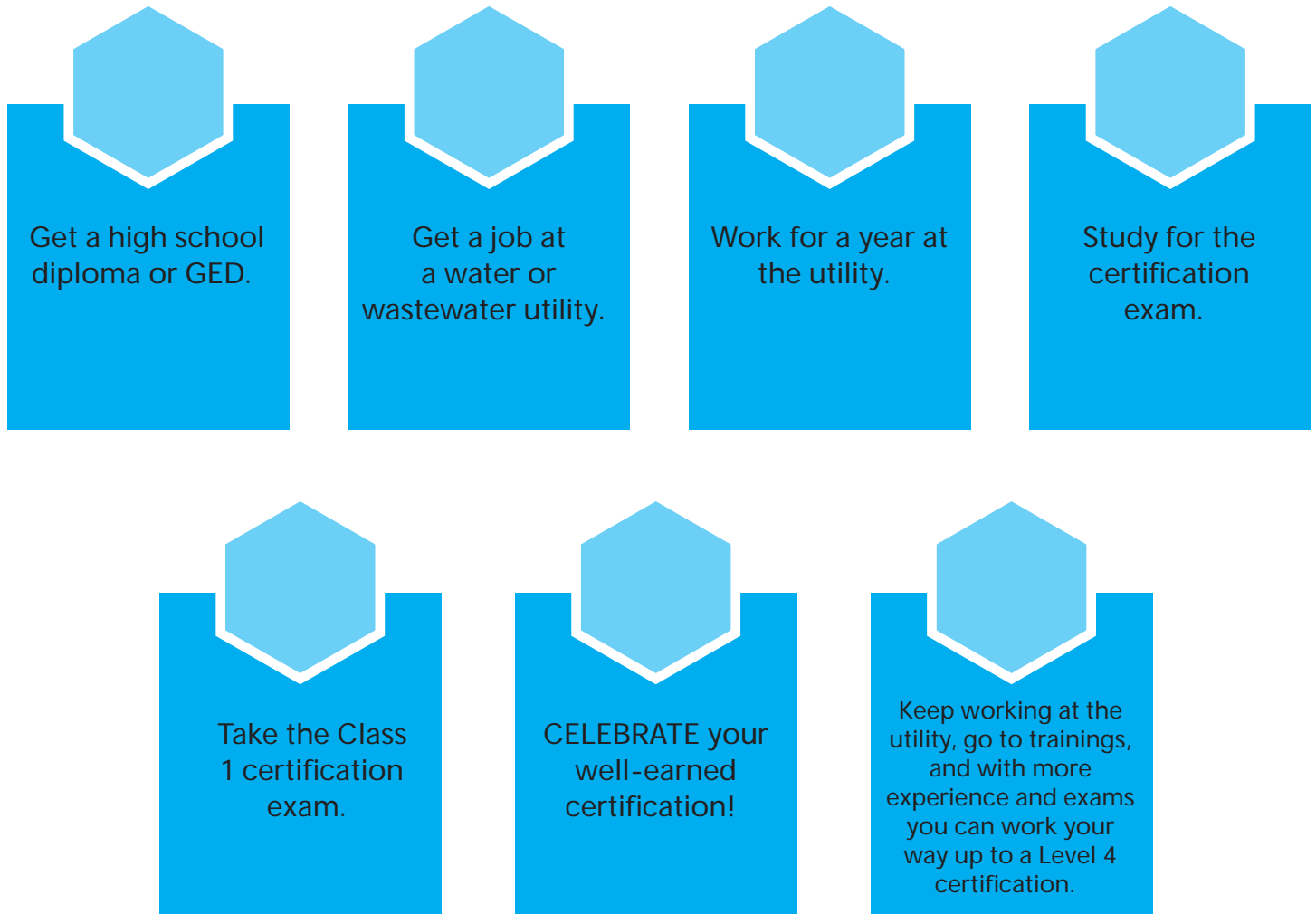
build or fix mechanical things

use tools and heavy machinery

work outside and inside

use different types of technology

find answers to problems



[KDHE's Operator Certification: Education, Training & Experience Requirements brochure](#)
[KDHE's Water and Wastewater Operator Certification webpage](#)

There are many water operators that will retire in the next 10 years. In the US, the water industry will need 29,700 new water operators to replace these retirees. Then, due to growth and development, 7,020 new water operator jobs will be needed to serve new and larger communities (6% job growth rate). This job is recession proof! No matter what the economy does, everyone still needs reliable and clean water.