

WATER WORKFORCE COALITION

Wastewater and Public Water Supply Combined Committee Meeting
August 9, 2023

Kari Gerwin, TMACOG

Water Workforce Coalition

Goal

- Develop a network of partners to support *recruitment, training, and employment* of future water sector workers to address workforce gaps in northwest Ohio

Intended outcomes

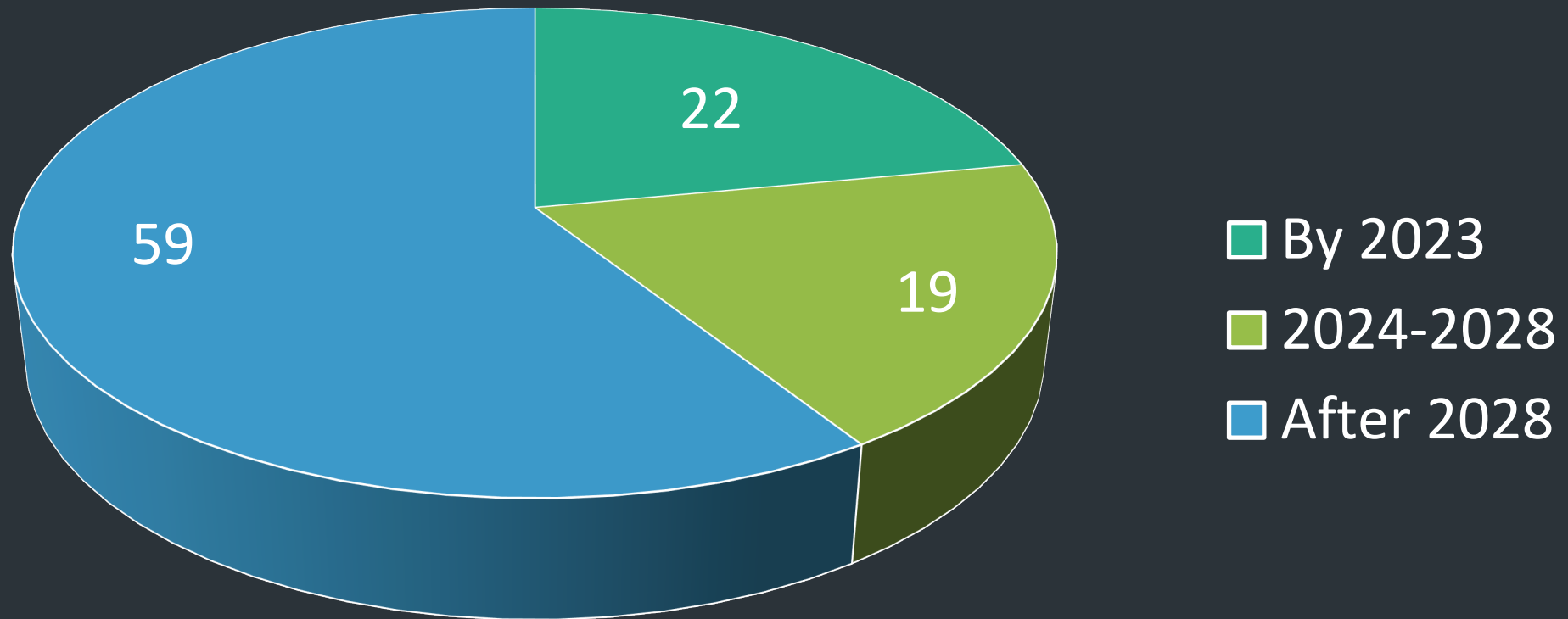
- Improve training opportunities for those entering the water utility workforce
- Expand pool of trainers - faculty and water utility employees
- Improve communications between water utilities and potential employees
- Strengthen collaborations among partners who may not typically work together
- More individuals entering the water utility workforce



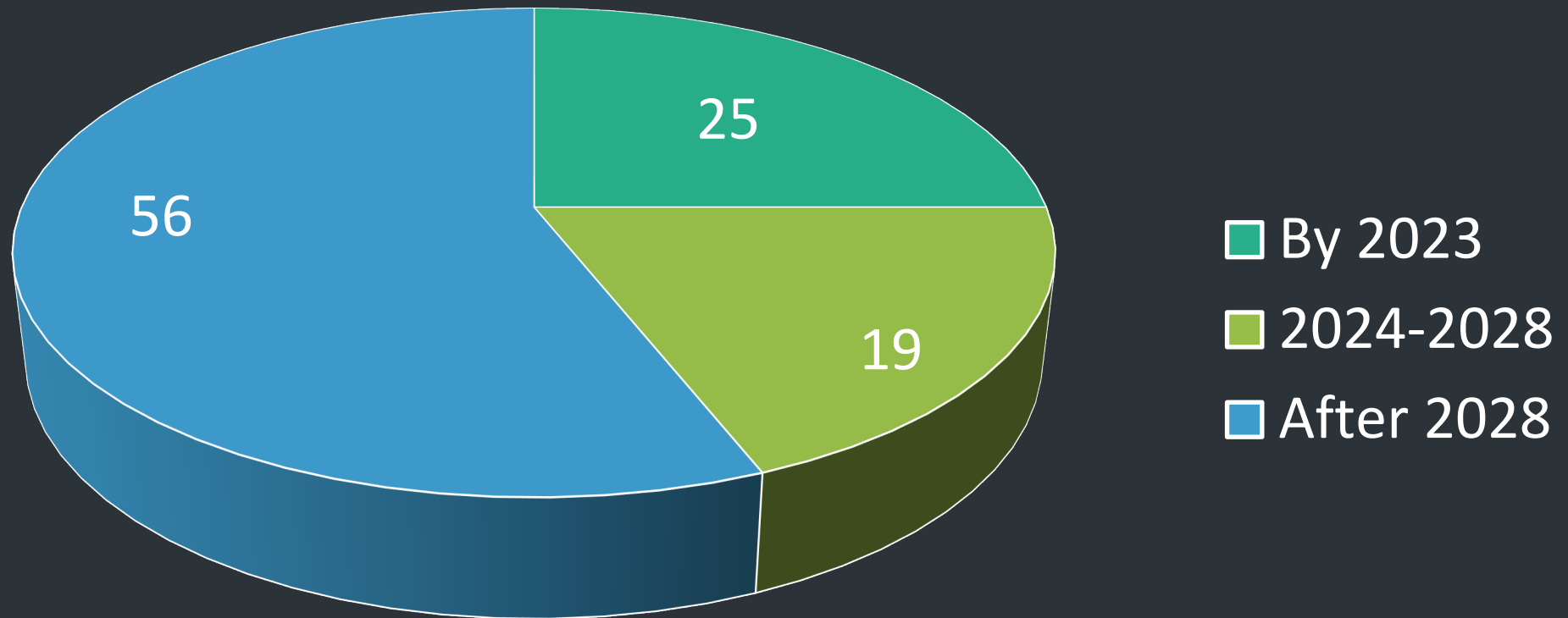
OWENS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Ohio *Water* Operators Eligibility for Retirement – 2018 Data



Ohio *Wastewater* Operators Eligibility for Retirement – 2018 Data



**WATER
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[PROGRAM](#)

[ADMISSIONS](#)

[WORKPLAC](#)

WATER WORKS FOR YOU

DIVE IN

Fast-track a new career through this grant-funded, hands-on program in Northwest Ohio.

[APPLICATION INFORMATION](#)



Average starting pay is \$23/hr
with competitive benefits



Tap into high-demand job
openings



Flex your STEM skills with a range
of career opportunities



Help keep your community
flowing

Program Activities

1. Develop collaborative partnerships to address water workforce needs
2. Develop *Water Treatment Professions Certificate* Program to prepare participants to pass Ohio EPA operator exams
3. Recruit trainees through targeted and innovative approaches
4. Provide training through intensive 16-week program
5. Connect trainees with local utilities
6. Make the program available to other areas of Ohio and the U.S.

Develop Partnerships

Successes

- Commitment and investment by key partners
- Awareness of potential barriers we didn't know existed
- Growing list of potential training facilities, trainers, and mentors

Next Steps

- Re-engage recruitment partners
- Long-range goal – develop program sustainability and address issues of competition among employers

MAKE WAVES



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Develop training program

Successes

- State-approved technical certificate – *Water Treatment Professions*
- Students may continue to higher degree programs in the future
- 16-week training program that includes classroom, lab, and on-site learning
- Program tailored to Ohio EPA’s “need to know” criteria

Next Steps

- Identify specific facilities for onsite training
- Identify mentors
- Continue addressing barriers to passing Ohio’s Class 1 operator exam (80% failure rate)



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Example training by week

Weekly Schedule	First 8 Weeks			Friday OTJ Experience (full cohort)	Second 8 Weeks			Friday OTJ Experience Wastewater	
	ENV 101	ENV 103	ENV 124		ENV 230	ENV 235	ENV 110		
Week 1	Understanding environmental systems, science, sustainability	Introduction, the Water Treatment Professional, Operator Licensing Requirements and Testing Advanced career opportunities in the Water field Education, training and certification requirements for Operators Overview of Water Treatment vocabulary Tour of Water Treatment Plant / Guest Speakers in Profession	Intro to sampling; regulations; types of samples; sampling plans; QC samples; lab and chemical safety	Water Treatment plant: tour of plant sampling points and operator duties	Week 9	Operator requirements and duties; treatment objectives, facilities; volume, flow velocity calculations; unit conversions	Operator requirements and duties; treatment objectives, water sources and treatment; volume, flow velocity calculations; unit conversions	*Tentative topics Intro to OSHA; Emergency Plans, Exit Routes, Fire Prevention and Protection	Safety overview of plant; review operator duties specific to WW; SCADA system
Week 2	Biological communities, human population impact	Overview of Wastewater Treatment vocabulary Tour of Wastewater Treatment Plant / Guest Speakers in Profession Solving math problems and the unknown value; approaches; presented in context of water and wastewater applications Measurement and Unit Conversion Addition and Subtraction of Signed Numbers	Surface Water sampling; parameters/tests; sampling procedures	Visit Water Treatment Laboratory: cover sampling requirements and types of analysis; chemical handling and safety	Week 10	Preliminary treatment (screens, comminutors, grit removal); TSS determination; loading rate calculations; screenings math; weighted averages	Source water protection; watershed management; reservoirs; coagulation and flocculation; chemical addition	Walking and working surfaces; PPE, Fall protection, hearing protection	Operation, inspection and maintenance associated with preliminary treatment (screens, grit)

Recruit trainees

Successes

- Development of high-quality branding and marketing (Madhouse contracted)
- Developed early recruitment partnerships with organizations serving target audiences

Next Steps

- Press Conference mid-September
- Owens Recruitment event September 25
- Facility Tours October and November
- Owens Orientation



What's Next?– Provide Training

First cohort will begin in January 2024

- 16 weeks (8 weeks introductory/8 weeks focused on water OR wastewater)
- Students enroll and attend class as a cohort
- Classroom instruction and in-facility training provided by a combination of faculty, operators, and other industry professionals
- Students paired with mentors

3 planned semesters

- Spring 2024
- Fall 2024
- Spring 2025



Get Involved!

- Complete survey (Matt will follow up individually)
 - Facilities for OTJ
 - Mentorship
 - Employment needs (listed on website)
- Attend Press event September 18
- Share the program www.waterworksforyou.org
- Provide input

Thank you!

Kari Gerwin

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