



The ACWA Foundation exists to serve Californians by advancing opportunity for all within the water industry through education, research, and workforce development.

Meet the Foundation

The ACWA Foundation was established in 2022 by the Board of Directors the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) as the statewide nonprofit serving ACWA member agencies. As the Foundation has evolved, its mission has expanded to reflect the interconnected workforce needs of California's public, private, and nonprofit water sector.

Guided by Strategic Priorities and delivered through Core Programs, the Foundation works to ensure that water agencies—large and small, rural and urban—have access to a skilled, diverse, and future-ready workforce. We partner with water employers to strengthen career pathways that support the building, operation, and long-term sustainability of critical water infrastructure, while also supporting career advancement through training and the Bette Boatman Emerging Leaders Award.

The Foundation's Board of Trustees and partners reflect a statewide, systems-level approach. By coordinating research, developing shared tools, and fostering cross-sector partnerships, the Foundation advances scalable solutions that benefit all agencies and strengthen the talent ecosystem on which a safe, reliable water system depends.

COLLABORATION, PARTNERSHIP, SHARED RESOURCES

Strategic Priorities

- Promote careers in the water industry
- Equip agencies with workforce and staff development resources
- Build partnerships to expand capacity and collaboration
- Connect Students to water industry (public and private)
- Connect students and educators to water careers

2026 Core Programs

- Student Engagement Studies
- High School Internship Toolkit
- Internships and Scholarships on Interactive Maps
- Water career promotion for educators and career counselors
- Career pathways webinars and training

For more information, please visit acwa-foundation.org

The ACWA Foundation and its Board of Trustees operate separately and independently from ACWA and its Board of Directors.

The ACWA Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3). Tax ID # 92-785873

Student Studies: Ventura College & Palo Verde College

These studies form the research backbone of the Foundation's workforce strategy, generating California-specific insights into how students discover the water sector, what motivates entry, and what supports persistence and completion into a water career.

The Palo Verde College study focuses on second-career students and skilled trades—critical talent pools for agencies facing retirements and hard-to-fill operational roles.

Value

- Provides data-driven guidance for outreach, internships, and program design
- Reduces trial-and-error for agencies investing in workforce efforts
- Provides evidence to support funding, policy, and program decisions

Workforce Impact

Establishes a shared, statewide evidence base to align workforce investments and strategies.

High School Internship Toolkits

The High School Internship Toolkits convert research into action by making it easier for agencies to host student interns—especially agencies with limited HR, legal, or risk management capacity.

Core Components

- **Delivers** legal templates and sample agreements
- **Offers** structured curricula and learning plans
- **Develops** outreach materials informed by student research
- **Outlines** employer-of-record and risk management options
- **Equips** agencies with sample board resolutions to streamline approvals

Value

- Expands the future talent pool without increasing agency burden
- Improves consistency and quality of early-career preparation
- Strengthens feeder pathways across the state

Workforce Impact

Enable more opportunities for employers to participate while broadening and diversifying access to water careers.

Glendale College / Crescenta Valley Water District / Glendale Water Pilot

This pilot tests a more holistic approach to showcasing water careers by engaging faculty, student services, and job placement staff—key influencers in student career decisions.

With Glendale College developing a new water program, this pilot highlights both direct and indirect water careers, connecting students in fields such as engineering, chemistry, accounting, and communications to water sector opportunities.

Value

- **Establishes** replicable models for deeper college–utility collaboration
- **Clarifies and standardizes** communication of career pathways
- **Increases** visibility for mid- and late-career roles

Ecosystem Impact

Demonstrates how education and utilities can align more effectively to connect interests, education, and employment statewide.

Second Careers in Teaching (Exploratory / Long-Term)

Role: Capacity Building and Sustainability

This exploratory project examines whether a shortage of instructors with real-world water experience is limiting workforce development—particularly in community colleges and high school Career Technical Education (CTE) programs.

If a need is confirmed, the Foundation could convene agencies, colleges, and credentialing bodies to support second-career transitions into teaching.

Value

- Long-term investment in instructional capacity
- Stronger alignment between industry practice and education
- Reinforces water as a career with multiple advancement phases

Ecosystem Impact

Addresses a structural constraint by ensuring qualified educators are available to train the next generation.



2026 SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

PLATINUM \$10,000

Prominent logo recognition on website

Linked logos on ACWA Foundation website and newsletter

Up to two sponsor articles and ads in ACWA Foundation Newsletter

Premier Internship placement opportunity

Logo included in training presentations

GOLD \$5,000

Logo recognition on website and newsletter

Linked logos on ACWA Foundation and newsletter

One sponsor article and ad in ACWA Foundation newsletter

Premier Internship placement opportunity

SILVER \$2,500

Name recognition on website and newsletter

Linked logos on ACWA Foundation and newsletter

Other Opportunities: Bette Boatman Emerging Leaders Award
Contact Lisa Mealoy, Executive Director, for details at lmealoy@acwa-foundation.org

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