**Operator Scholarship FAQ**

**I am new to the water sector; how do I begin?**
The water sector is a great place to be. A job in water provides a stable career with good benefits as well as a chance to preserve our most important resource while protecting public health. Entry level positions often require a high school diploma and can provide the experience and training you need to get certified. States each have specific certification requirements. College and vocational schools across the country also provide certificates or degrees in water technology, which can help kickstart your career. For information on certification in your state, as well as career and technical education programs near you, visit your state page on [WorkforWater.org](http://WorkforWater.org) in the Get Started section. Also, try contacting your local utilities to see if they have apprenticeship or operator-in-training programs for those new to the sector. These programs are often perfect ways to get the initial on-the-job experience as well as training for your certification.

**I currently work in operations and want to further develop my career in field, but I’m not sure where to start?**
Start by looking at the [Operator resources](http://Operator resources) provided by WEF. If you have not already gone through the [Wastewater Treatment Fundamentals](http://Wastewater Treatment Fundamentals) series, those are great training tools.

Browse through the Get Started resources for your state and surrounding region on [WorkforWater.org](http://WorkforWater.org). Your local [member association(s)](http://member association(s)) (MA) may also provide trainings and tools as well as annual meetings or conferences that would be of interest.

As the largest annual water conference, [WEFTEC](http://WEFTEC) is another great event to consider, with more than 100 technical sessions and close to 1000 exhibitors, it’s perfect for education and networking as well as getting your education credits.

[Operations Challenge](http://Operations Challenge), the sectors premier skills competition for operators is an annual event held at WEFTEC, and is another way to gain leadership, networking, and on the job skills. Qualifying competitions are often held at the local MA events so talk to your facility and your local MA to see about starting an Operations Challenge team. Competition event descriptions and equipment specs can be found on the [Team Resource](http://Team Resource) page.

**My employer pays or reimburses my current training needs, may I still apply?**
We would like to ensure that these funds are used for the people who will benefit most. If your employer will cover your training expenses, please do not apply for funds for those programs. If there are professional development needs that will help advance your career in operations which your employer will not cover, you may apply for the scholarship for those funds.

**May I use the scholarship toward a bachelor’s or master’s degree?**
The scholarship is intended to help progress your career specifically in water resource recovery operations. If your degree is directly related to advancement in the water sector, you may apply for the funds. Examples of accepted college programs are Water Technology to enter or
advance in the sector or a degree in Business Administration to help with promotion to a management role. Funds cannot be used for degree programs in other sectors. For example, a degree in English Literature or Psychology would not be appropriate.

**Could I use the scholarship toward attending a training or conference?**
Yes, please provide adequate justification for how this training or conference will help to advance your career in your application. Also, remember to break out any fees, required resources, and/or associated travel costs as separated lines in your cost documentation.

**Could the scholarship cover travel expenses?**
Yes, you can include directly related travel expenses in the cost documentation. An example would be hotel and airfare to travel to a conference or training. Please break out each expense in your cost documentation.

**When do the scholarship funds need to be spent?**
The scholarship fund must be spent within one calendar year.

**What information should I include in the required written material?**
A list of the application requirements can be found here. We highly recommend a clear description of how the training, certification, resource, or program will directly serve to advance your career within water resource recovery operations. If there are multiple costs associated with your funds request, such as program fees, books/resource fee, travel costs, etc., please make sure to outline the cost of each item in your cost documentation. Including any affiliation you currently have with WEF, your MA or other water or environmental programs (Operations Challenge, InFLOW, committee activity, volunteering, etc.) will also help to strengthen your application.

**I am a member of my state member association, do I need to be a member of WEF as well?**
To be eligible for the scholarship you must be a current member of the Water Environment Association and your state member association.

**Are Canadian members eligible to apply?**
Yes, Canadian members are eligible to apply for the Operator Scholarship.

**When will the scholarship award be announced?**
All applicants will be notified of the review committee’s decision in June.

**Are there multiple scholarships?**
Multiple scholarships are awarded. The number of scholarships awarded is at the discretion of the reviewing committee.

**I forgot my WEF member information and/or am not sure if I am a current WEF Member, how do I find that information?**
You can call WEF Customer Service at 1.800.666.0206 or email at csc@wef.org and they can provide you your WEF Member number and current membership status.

I am interested in applying but am not a current WEF Member?
Find out more about WEF Membership on our website, www.wef.org/JoinWEF. Depending on your qualifications you will likely want a Professional Operator or Student membership. You can either join online or call WEF customer service at 1.800.666.0206.