

GULF COAST AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE AND EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

NEAA26 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



National Environmental
Achievement
AWARDS





**Gulf Coast Authority
Protecting the Waters of Texas**

Gulf Coast Authority (GCA), created in 1969 by the Texas State Legislature, was originally established to clean up the waters of Galveston Bay. Over time, its mission and reach expanded statewide, supporting industrial and municipal partners in managing wastewater and protecting Texas waterways. Today, GCA continues that legacy of service with a forward-looking focus on workforce development through its Executive and Emerging Leaders Program.

Launched in April 2024, the program is a comprehensive leadership initiative designed to strengthen GCA's internal talent pipeline and prepare employees for the increasing demands of the clean water sector. With operations spread across multiple facilities and a growing range of regulatory and technical responsibilities, GCA recognized the need for a structured approach to developing future leaders who can support the Authority's continued success.

The program features a fifteen-part curriculum delivered through monthly half-day sessions that focus on communication, accountability, team building, conflict navigation, and strategic decision making. Sessions are interactive and practical, combining group discussion, real-world scenarios, and guided reflection to help employees apply leadership concepts immediately.

A key strength of the program is its two-cohort structure, which supports both executive-level managers and emerging leaders. This approach allows training to be tailored to different levels of responsibility while also strengthening collaboration across facilities. Participants gain a deeper understanding of the organization and build relationships that improve teamwork and communication.

The program also supports long-term workforce stability by helping retain and grow the specialized expertise needed within a modern utility. Participants are encouraged to strengthen their leadership skills, expand their understanding of operations, and build confidence in guiding teams during daily challenges.

By January 2026, GCA will have graduated 35 employees from the program and expects to continue leadership development at an intensive pace of at least 15 participants each year. These efforts reflect GCA's commitment to preparing the next generation of leaders who will support safe, reliable, and innovative clean water services across Texas.

GCA's Executive and Emerging Leaders Program demonstrates how a long-standing entity can continue to evolve, invest in its people, and uphold its responsibility to protect the waters of Texas for the communities and industries it serves.