



# Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Board of Commissioners

## **Kari K. Steele** President

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100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611



### **MWRD Committees**

#### **Chairman**

*Affirmative Action*

*Maintenance & Operations*

#### **Vice Chairman**

*Federal Legislation*

*Pension, Human Resources & Civil  
Service Committee*

#### **Trustee**

*Retirement Fund*

Kari K. Steele was elected November 6, 2012, to her first term as a Commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) and re-elected in 2018 and 2024. In January 2019, she became the first African American woman in the more than 130-year history of the MWRD to be elected by the Board of Commissioners to serve as President. She is currently serving her third term.

President Steele currently serves as the Chairman for the Affirmative Action and Maintenance & Operations committees. She is Vice Chairman of the Federal Legislation and Pension, Human Resources & Civil Service committees. In 2023, she was selected to serve as a board member on the Public Building Commission of Chicago.

President Steele is a chemist, environmentalist, licensed real estate broker, and a community leader. She has more than 11 years of experience working as a chemist. She started her career at MWRD as an intern, working as a water sampler and lab technician. She also has experience working as a water chemist for the City of Chicago Department of Water Management's Jardine Water Purification Plant. This background makes President Steele uniquely qualified to discuss and analyze proposed operational changes and operational efficiencies. She is the first and only chemist serving on the MWRD Board of Commissioners. President Steele was recognized by *Crain's Chicago Business* in the 2023 Notable Women in STEM feature.

President Steele is a diligent community servant who is often acknowledged for her vast public service. She has humbly been the recipient of the following awards and recognitions: the Richard Barnett Legacy Award (2007); City of Dixmoor's Humanitarian Award (2012); Outstanding Woman Elected Official (2014); Brookfield Zoo's Outstanding Community Partner (2015); Hometown Hero Award (2017); UIC Freshwater Lab Water Award (2017); Outstanding Public Official of the Year (2019); Congressional History Makers (2019); Trailblazers Award (2019); Black History Champion Award (2019) Women Making History (2019); Ida Platt Award (2019); Crescent Moon Award (2019); National Civil Rights Hall of Fame Inductee (2020); NWEA Public Official Award (2022); Phenomenal Woman Award (2022); and the Rich Township & Village of Matteson's History Makers Award (2023); Trailblazing Women in Finance Award (2024); National Baptist State Convention Certificate of Excellence (2024) and the God First Ministries Leadership Award (2024).

She is also a member of State Treasurer Michael Frerichs' African American



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Advisory Committee; the 8th Ward Women's Auxiliary Council; the Sierra Club; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc; the 27th Ward Regular Democratic Organization; Independent Voters of Illinois – Independent Precinct Organization (IVI-IPO); Southside Democracy for America; and the West Side Black Elected Officials. President Steele is proud to have served as past president of the 6th Ward Young Democrats; past Chairman and Treasurer of the Young Democrats of Cook County; and past member of the Society of Cosmetic Chemists.

President Kari K. Steele earned a Pre-Medicine Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Xavier University of Louisiana. She successfully completed the Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership Training Academy (2007); the University of Illinois Institute for Government and Politics Edgar Fellows Program (2014); and the Metropolitan Leadership Institute (2016).