



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## Solidarity, equality, fairness and clean water: MWRD honors Pride Month with flag raisings, resolution, virtual roundtable



Commissioners and staff at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) kicked off Pride Month with a flag raising ceremony at its Main Office Building and all seven water reclamation plants on June 1 to affirm its commitment to the LGBTQIA+ community and opportunity for all in protecting the region's water environment.

To view the MWRD pride flag raising events visit the MWRD YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAmN3WSp7wY>.

In addition to the LGBTQIA+ flag raising at eight locations, the MWRD will host a Virtual Business Roundtable on June 23, designed to offer LGBTQ businesses information regarding contracting (*continued*)

## MWRD honors Pride Month with flag raisings, *cont.*

opportunities and also honor a pillar in the LGBTQ community. This Pride Month the MWRD Board of Commissioners chose to present a resolution to Howard Brown Health for its continued leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Established in 1974, Howard Brown Health is one of the largest LGBTQ health organizations in the United States. In 2020, Howard Brown Health conducted approximately 64,320 novel coronavirus tests and contributed significantly to the testing and vaccination of LGBTQ people living in vulnerable communities, offering services in English and Spanish and assisting a broader range of patients.

“We continue the tradition we started last year and raise the flag at the Main Office building and at all seven water reclamation plants in honor of Pride Month,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “This demonstration of unity among our staff and our continued expansion of contracting opportunities for members of the LGBTQIA+ community are hallmarks of our commitment to inclusion and diversity. We thank Howard Brown Health for their services in the community and the many LGBTQ business partners that make our economy and environment stronger.”

Pride Month pays homage to the June 28, 1969, raid at the Stonewall Inn, a place of celebration and community for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in New York City. The uprising became the catalyst for a developing LGBT rights movement and the first Pride celebrations. The rainbow flag (also known as the gay

pride flag or LGBTQIA pride flag) is a symbol of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer and/or questioning, intersex, and asexual and/or ally (LGBTQIA) pride and LGBTQIA social movements. The colors reflect the diversity of the LGBTQ community, as the flag is often used as a symbol of gay pride during LGBTQ rights marches.

“We at the MWRD have an obligation to proactively reach out to members of the LGBTQ community to know there are opportunities to partner and engage the residents and visitors of Cook County,” said MWRD Chairman of Finance Marcelino Garcia. “The pandemic has made a devastating impact on our mental health, and we want to make our presence known in the community, allowing everyone an opportunity to help us protect our water environment and know that we are here working diligently to protect the public health.”

The MWRD has a long history of advocacy in assuring equal access opportunities for employees and contracts. The MWRD expanded the benefits and healthcare coverage for same sex couples and approved a policy that will promote opportunities for small business enterprises owned and operated by members of the LGBTQ community. Under this policy, LGBT business enterprises have the opportunity to attend District vendor fairs, events, meetings and other activities that foster business opportunities.

The virtual round table, set for Thursday, June 23 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., will include MWRD commissioners, staff and partners. To register visit [here](#).

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### *Recovering Resources, Transforming Water*

*Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at [mwrdd.org](#).*