

2026 Budget in Brief



**Metropolitan Water
Reclamation District
of Greater Chicago**

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Left and Right: The MWRD's aquatic ecology crew tracks the abundance and diversity of fish populations in an electrofishing boat in the Cal-Sag Channel near SEPA Station 3 in Blue Island.

2026 Budget in Brief

This 2026 Budget in Brief provides an overview of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (District) formal budget book and provides an overview of the organization's core mission, operations, and budget appropriations. The annual budget is the principal planning device for carrying out the mission of the District and accomplishing our operational goals. As a key communication tool, the budget shows how resources are acquired and allocated for current operations, long-range planning, and financing.

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January 2, 2026

To the Residents of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago:

I am pleased to present the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's 2026 Budget, a \$1.8 billion spending plan that invests in public infrastructure and considers the long-term environmental and financial implications of permit compliance. The District continues to maintain an aggressive Capital Improvement Program that addresses infrastructure needs and optimizes the life cycle of critical assets. Additionally, the District remains committed to providing advance funding to the MWRD Retirement Fund. The 2026 Budget includes an anticipated \$10.0 million transfer from the 2024 Property Tax Levy Adjustment to maintain the Retirement Fund's funded ratio.

The District serves 129 communities covering nearly all of Cook County, treating an average of 1.2 billion gallons of water each day, with a total treatment capacity of 2.0 billion gallons per day at seven water reclamation plants (WRPs). The District controls 76.1 miles of navigable waterways and owns and operates 34 stormwater detention reservoirs to provide regional flood protection. The District continues the decades long tradition of outstanding permit compliance as recognized by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. The goal remains 100 percent permit compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits at all seven WRPs. Additionally, the District is an industry and community leader, benefiting residents through innovative and future-focused programs.

The 2026 Corporate Fund Budget is \$532.8 million, an increase of \$9.1 million from the 2025 Adjusted Budget. Year-over-year increases to the Corporate Fund Budget are attributable primarily to increases in labor and health care costs, biosolids disposal, and a one-time computerized maintenance management system implementation cost. Looking ahead to 2026, as economic conditions stabilize, the District will continue to take a measured approach to managing the District's financial obligations.

Climate change and changing weather patterns with intense bursts of precipitation can quickly overwhelm systems throughout the region. The District has been proactive in addressing climate changes and on May 4, 2023, adopted a Climate Action Plan to outline a path forward for the agency to contribute toward reducing its carbon footprint and adapt to climate change-related impacts.

The District continues to be a world-leading wastewater and stormwater management utility focused on flooding mitigation, resource recovery, sustainability, resilience, and innovation. The 2026 Budget includes policies, objectives, and resources to allow the District to remain true to our mission of protecting our water environment and the health of the residents of Cook County. For the complete budget document, please visit mwwrd.org/what-we-do/budget.

Respectfully submitted,



Kari K. Steele
President of the Board of Commissioners

STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan concluded its fourth year in June 2025 and was approximately 90 percent completed as of July 2025. The MWRD's mission, vision, and values served as a high-level framework for the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. Additionally, the Strategic Plan includes specific goals, strategies, and success measures that provide a detailed roadmap for the MWRD's operations. This framework was used to prepare the 2026 Budget while the succeeding plan is being finalized.

Mission: The MWRD will protect the health and safety of the public in its service area, protect the quality of the water supply source (Lake Michigan), improve the quality of water in watercourses in its service area, protect businesses and homes from flood damages, and manage water as a vital resource for its service area.

Vision: We will continue to be a world-leading wastewater and stormwater management utility focused on flooding mitigation, resource recovery, sustainability, resilience, and innovation.

Values: Excellence, Respect, Innovation, Safety, Equity and Diversity, and Accountability

Strategic Goals

 STRATEGIC GOAL #1 Resource Management	Maintain a high level of performance on the core mission of protecting the public health and area waterways while pursuing opportunities to recover, reuse, and monetize resources.
 STRATEGIC GOAL #2 Stormwater Management	Continue to mitigate flooding across Cook County through a proactive, equitable stormwater management program, including implementation of gray and green infrastructure, enforcement of the Watershed Management Ordinance, and acquisition of flood-prone property.
 STRATEGIC GOAL #3 Workforce Excellence	Invest in the future by investing in employees; continue to recruit, develop, and retain best-in-class employees as the foundation of the District's ongoing success.
 STRATEGIC GOAL #4 Community Engagement	Engage with community stakeholders to position the District as a critical community asset and to ensure that the District is a responsive neighbor and inclusive business partner.
 STRATEGIC GOAL #5 Enterprise Resilience	Ensure ongoing services that are reliable, equitable and cost-effective; achieve climate change and environmental justice protections; prepare for other manmade and natural events; strengthen the District's operations and financial positions.

At the end of August 2025, staff participated in a current state assessment and completed an analysis of the MWRD's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to help identify potential priority areas for the new 2026-2030 Strategic Plan. Engaging external stakeholders was a critical component of the strategic planning to ensure that Strategic Goals are aligned with community needs and regulatory requirements. Using this feedback as a key input, the MWRD is finalizing a new Strategic Plan. The 2026-2030 Strategic Plan will succeed the previous 2021-2025 plan, guiding the MWRD's vision and core values for the next five years.

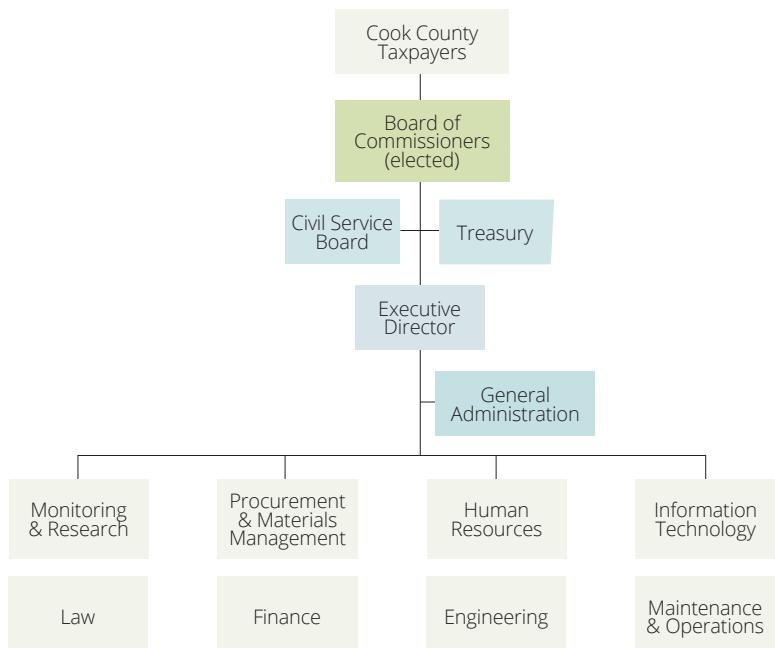
The updated Strategic Plan can be found in the Strategic Plan Dashboard at m wrd.org/what-we-do/strategic-plan.

MISSION & GOVERNANCE

The District is an independent government and taxing body operating primarily within the boundaries of Cook County, Illinois. The agency serves an area of 882.1 square miles, including the City of Chicago and 128 surrounding communities. Wastewater is collected from municipalities by the District and conveyed to one of seven water reclamation plants for full treatment. Clean water is then discharged to local waterways. The District is also responsible for Stormwater Management, which includes administering its Watershed Management Ordinance and implementing capital improvement projects with communities to address regional and local flooding issues. The mission of the District is to protect the health and safety of the public in its service area, protect the quality of the water supply source (Lake Michigan), improve the quality of water in watercourses in its service area, protect businesses and homes from flood damages, and manage water as a vital resource for its service area.

The District is governed by a nine-member Board of Commissioners (Board). Each commissioner is elected at large and serves on a salaried basis. Three Commissioners are elected every two years for six-year terms. The Board biannually elects from its membership a President, Vice President, and Chairman of the Committee on Finance.

Organization Structure



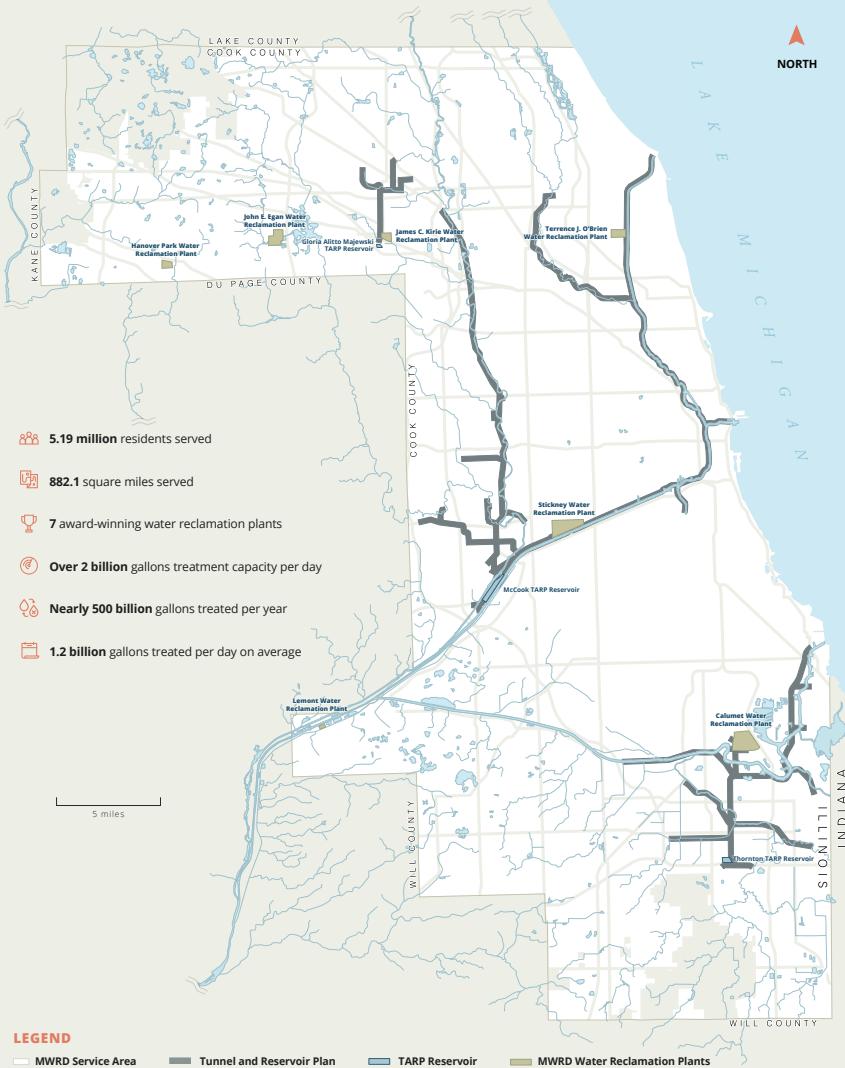
The Executive Director, who reports directly to the Board, manages the District's day-to-day operations. Eight appointed department heads report to the Executive Director. The Treasurer of the District, its chief financial officer, is appointed by and reports directly to the Board. General Administration, which includes the Administrative Services Division, Environmental Justice, Diversity, & Contract Compliance Section, and Public Affairs Section are direct staff and support units, reporting to the Executive Director.

SERVICE AREA - DISTRICT MAP

The District owns and operates seven water reclamation plants (WRPs), 560 miles of intercepting sewers and force mains, 34 stormwater detention reservoirs, 23 pumping stations, and the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP). Unmatched in size, TARP's 110 miles of tunnels and three cavernous reservoirs mitigate flooding and protect waterways from pollution by holding water until it can be cleaned at the WRPs. The District has the capacity to treat over 2.0 billion gallons per day.

Summary of Wastewater Treatment Services

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago



DISTRICT FAST FACTS



**MWRD
STRATEGIC
PLAN**
2021-2025

In 2026, **\$12,904,600** is allocated to new projects that support one of the five Strategic Plan Goals:

Stormwater Management

\$8,276,400

Resource Management

\$4,013,000

Enterprise Resilience

\$301,000

Community Engagement

\$284,200

Workforce Excellence

\$30,000

COMMUNITIES SERVED

129
communities



5.19 million
individuals

A commercial and industrial equivalent of **5.3 million** people

A combined sewer overflow equivalent of **2.2 million** people

WASTEWATER TREATMENT



An average of **1.2 billion gallons** treated per day



Treatment capacity of **over 2.0 billion gallons**



LABORATORY ANALYSES PER YEAR

452,000

INFRASTRUCTURE



Seven water reclamation plants



560 miles of intercepting sewers and force mains



23 pumping stations



34 stormwater detention reservoirs



Three Tunnel and Reservoir Plan reservoirs



Controls **76.1 miles** of navigable waterways



Employees from the Monitoring & Research Department perform monthly pressure differential monitoring at the Egan Water Reclamation Plant that serves 185,213 residents in a 44-square-mile area in northern Cook County and has been in operation since 1975.

2026 TAX RATE

34.34 cents per \$100 of assessed property value, a 0.31 cent increase from the 2025 Adjusted Tax Rate.

2026 TAX LEVY

\$755.7 million, a 4.5% increase as compared to the 2025 Adjusted Tax Levy of \$723.4 million.

2026 ESTIMATED DISTRICT TAX

\$104.74
for a
\$100,000
home

DESCRIPTION OF FUNDS

The District uses the following funds to control its financial activities:

CORPORATE FUND: Accounts for property tax levies and other revenues used for the operations and payments of general expenditures of the District not specifically chargeable to other funds.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS BOND FUND: Accounts for bond sale proceeds authorized by the Illinois General Assembly, government grants, and other revenues used for improvements, replacements, and additions to the District's facilities.

CONSTRUCTION FUND: Accounts for a specific property tax levy and other revenues used as a pay-as-you-go capital fund for the acquisition of infrastructure assets or the rehabilitation of existing structures, increasing the efficiency, or extending the useful life of the structure.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FUND: Accounts for property tax levies and other revenues, such as interest on investments and permit fees, used for pay-as-you go capital projects and for planning, implementing, and financing stormwater management activities throughout all of Cook County, including stream maintenance in areas that currently lie outside the District's boundaries.

RETIREMENT FUND: Accounts for a specific property tax levy to fund pension costs in accordance with statutory provisions. The taxes are collected by the District and paid to the MWRD Retirement Fund, a pension trust fund.

BOND REDEMPTION & INTEREST FUND: Accounts for property tax levies and interest on investments for the payment of principal and interest of general obligation bond issues. A subfund is created for each bond issue.

RESERVE CLAIM FUND: Accounts for a specific property tax levy and other revenues and pays for claims, awards, losses, judgements, or liabilities that might be imposed against the District and for the emergency replacement or repair of damaged property. The accounts of the Reserve Claim Fund are included in the General Corporate Fund for financial reporting purposes.

Revenues

Property Taxes	User Charges	Grants and Government Funding	Bond Sales	Investment Income	Other
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Funds

Each individual fund has designated sources of revenues and specifications for allocated uses to ensure public money is spent appropriately.



Allocations

General Operating Expenditures	Capital Expenditures	Principal and Interest on Bond Issues	Payment for Claims and Damages	Pension Fund	Stormwater Management Expenditures
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SOURCES OF REVENUE

Tax Sources

All District funds, with the exception of the Capital Improvements Bond Fund, derive their revenues primarily from property taxes. Approximately 66.1 percent of the 2026 appropriation is supported by property taxes. Taxes levied in one year are collected in the next year. Working Cash Funds for the Corporate, Construction, and Stormwater Management Funds provide temporary financing while awaiting property tax receipts.

A personal property replacement tax provides tax revenue from corporations, partnerships, and the invested capital of public utilities to replace the personal property taxes that were once received from these sources. These revenues, received directly from the State of Illinois, ended the year at \$52.7 million and are estimated at \$57.2 million for 2026, a decrease of \$9.4 million from the 2025 Original Budget. Personal property replacement tax will continue to decrease due to adjustments made by the Illinois Department of Revenue to more accurately estimate future allocations.

Bonds, Grants, & Loans

The District's Capital Improvement Program is financed through a combination of funding methods, including general property tax revenues, State Revolving Fund (SRF) loans, federal grants and reimbursements, and general obligation or alternative revenue bond sale proceeds. State law provides authority to issue debt, but also limits the amount that the District can borrow.

Currently, the District's statutory debt limit is estimated at \$11.8 billion. Actual net outstanding debt applicable to the debt limit totals \$2.5 billion. The debt margin, the difference between issued debt applicable to the debt limit and the statutory limit, is \$9.3 billion, or 78.8 percent of the limit. In 2022, the District prepaid \$43.0 million in State Revolving Fund loans at a taxpayer savings of \$12.7 million over 15 years. In 2026, the District anticipates receiving \$50.0 million in low-interest SRF loans based on the current capital project schedule and will also seek other low cost financing options, including Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loans for future project funding needs.

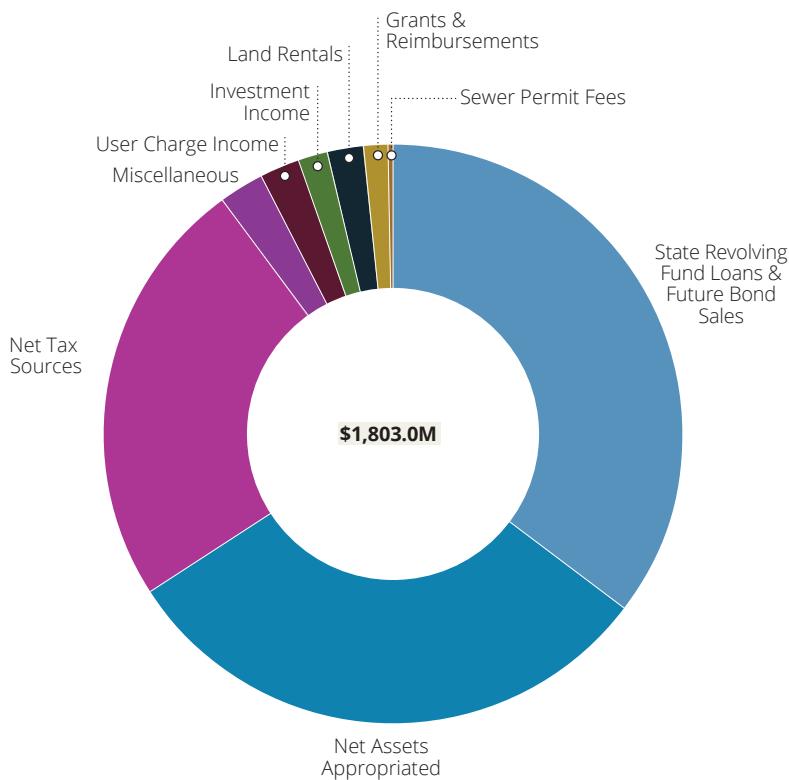
The District has been successful in obtaining grant funding and will continue to pursue grants for stormwater and other capital projects. In 2024, the District secured \$10.0 million from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the Addison Creek Channel Improvements project and \$20.0 million from the Army Corps of Engineers as reimbursement for the District's work on the design and construction of the Thornton Composite Reservoir. The District is also partnering with Cook County to invest up to \$18.0 million over four years to support local stormwater management projects utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funding. Over 2025 and 2026, the District anticipates \$18.9 million and \$27.3 million in total grant and reimbursement funding, respectively, with additional funding to be received over the following four years.

User Charges, Property, Services, & Miscellaneous

A major revenue source for the District is the user charge system, which imposes a surcharge above property tax payments for commercial, industrial, and tax-exempt users of the sewerage systems. Estimated user charge revenues in 2026 are \$40.0 million. Land rentals, investment income, sewer permit fees, connection impact fees, and other revenues will provide an estimated \$105.2 million in 2026.

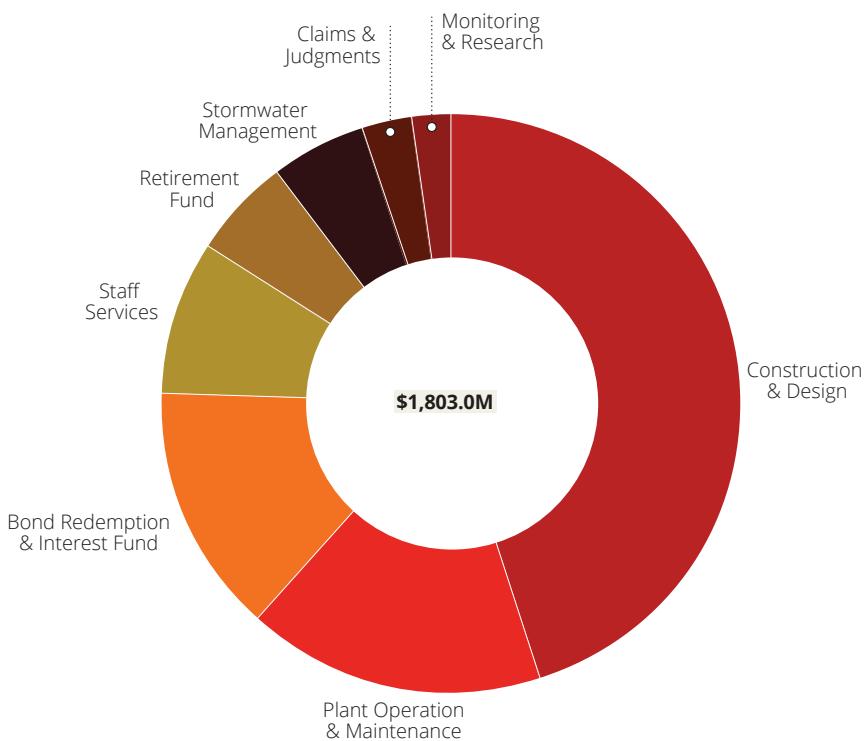
WHERE DISTRICT MONEY COMES FROM

\$1,803.0 Million			
State Revolving Fund Loans & Future Bond Sales	\$ 639.6M	35.5%	
Net Assets Appropriated	\$ 552.2M	30.6%	
Net Tax Sources	\$ 433.6M	24.0%	
Miscellaneous	\$ 42.5M	2.4%	
User Charge Income	\$ 40.0M	2.2%	
Investment Income	\$ 33.9M	1.9%	
Land Rentals	\$ 32.9M	1.8%	
Grants & Reimbursements	\$ 27.3M	1.5%	
Sewer Permit Fees	\$ 1.0M	0.1%	
TOTAL	\$ 1,803.0M	100.0%	



WHERE DISTRICT MONEY GOES

\$1,803.0 Million		
Construction & Design	\$ 813.6M	45.1%
Plant Operation & Maintenance	\$ 301.9M	16.7%
Bond Redemption & Interest Fund	\$ 248.0M	13.7%
Staff Services	\$ 156.5M	8.7%
Retirement Fund	\$ 100.8M	5.6%
Stormwater Management	\$ 96.7M	5.4%
Claims & Judgments	\$ 48.3M	2.7%
Monitoring & Research	\$ 37.2M	2.1%
TOTAL	\$ 1,803.0M	100.0%

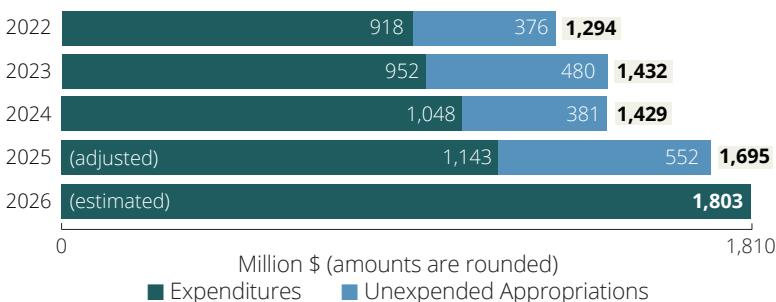


2026 APPROPRIATIONS

The 2026 Budget is a \$1.8 billion spending plan that invests in public infrastructure and considers the long-term environmental and financial implications of permit compliance. The budget invests in the District's water reclamation plants and addresses flooding, while prioritizing sound fiscal management. The 2026 Corporate Fund Budget is \$532.8 million, an increase of \$9.1 million, or 1.7 percent, from the 2025 Adjusted Budget. The operating budget prepares the District for increases in labor and health care costs, biosolids disposal, and a one-time computerized maintenance management system implementation cost. Looking ahead to 2026, as economic conditions stabilize, the District will continue to take a measured approach to managing the District's financial obligations.

Appropriations are allocated to seven separate funds. Each fund maintains a self-balancing set of accounts that are reported separately in their own financial statements. The funds are created to account for the different types of activities and legal restrictions associated with a particular function. In 2026, there is an increase of \$168.6 million planned in the Capital Improvements Bond Fund, which is appropriated on an obligation basis and based on project schedules, and an increase of \$0.3 million in the Bond Redemption & Interest Fund. Additionally, the Stormwater Management Fund will decrease by \$38.0 million, there will be a decrease of \$8.4 million in the Construction Fund, and the Reserve Claim Fund will decrease by \$5.3 million. The Retirement Fund appropriation will decrease by \$18.0 million and includes \$10.0 million transfer from the 2024 Property Tax Levy Adjustment to maintain the Retirement Fund's funded ratio.

Appropriations & Expenditures, 2022 - 2026



Summary by Fund

	2026 Budget	2025 Adjusted Budget	Dollar Increase (Decrease)	Percent Change
Corporate Fund	\$ 532,820,200	\$ 523,694,700	\$ 9,125,500	1.7%
Construction Fund	74,711,400	83,143,600	(8,432,200)	(10.1)%
Capital Improvements Bond Fund	701,627,900	532,997,200	168,630,700	31.6%
Stormwater Management Fund	96,748,200	134,723,100	(37,974,900)	(28.2)%
Retirement Fund	100,776,000	118,736,000	(17,960,000)	(15.1)%
Reserve Claim Fund	48,273,800	53,586,800	(5,313,000)	(9.9)%
Bond Redemption & Interest Fund	248,020,300	247,726,274	294,026	0.1%
TOTAL	\$ 1,802,977,800	\$ 1,694,607,674	\$ 108,370,126	6.4%

APPROPRIATIONS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The District has a long history of proactive and responsible financial management. The graph below displays the allocation of the 2026 appropriation and the personnel assigned to each operational objective across all funds. In 2026, a total of 1,957 positions are budgeted across all operational objectives. The District's mission is achieved daily through six main operational functions:

Collection

\$185,341,810 • 302 Personnel

Operation and maintenance of pumping stations, force mains, and intercepting sewers.

Treatment

\$650,870,676 • 443 Personnel

Treatment of influent at water reclamation plants.

Solids Processing

\$169,887,006 • 256 Personnel

Processing of primary, secondary, and tertiary sludge.

Flood & Pollution Control

\$187,661,178 • 449 Personnel

Programs for the design and construction of flood and pollution control projects and waterways control.

Solids Utilization

\$45,043,290 • 43 Personnel

Drying and beneficial utilization of secondary and tertiary solids from the treatment process.

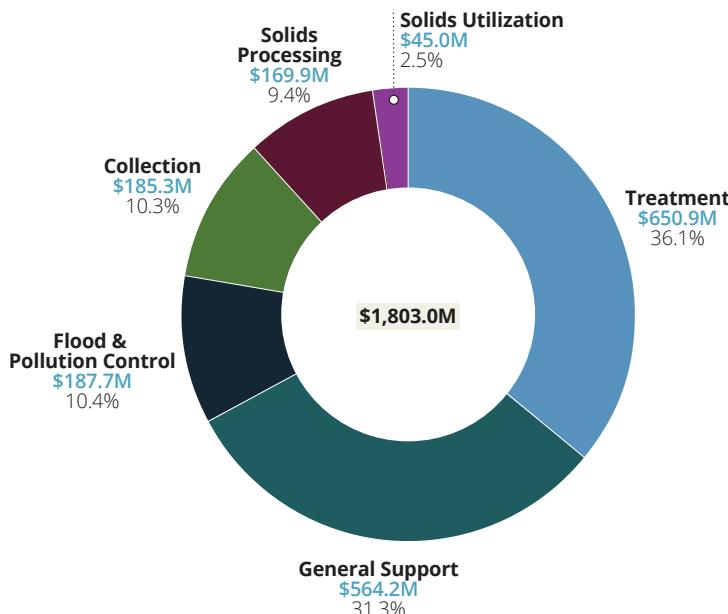
General Support

(Debt Service, Retirement, Reserve Funds, & Support Departments)

\$564,173,840 • 464 Personnel

Indirect costs essential for achieving operational goals.

Appropriations by Program Objective



WATER RECLAMATION PLANT OPERATIONS

The District treats an average of 1.2 billion gallons of wastewater per day, with a total treatment capacity of over 2.0 billion gallons per day. In 2026, the District expects to collect and treat approximately 446.4 billion gallons of wastewater at its seven water reclamation plants. The District's reclaimed wastewater, along with runoff from rainfall, is returned to the Chicago Area Waterway System, which includes local canals, rivers, and streams that serve as headwaters of the Illinois River system.

The District provides reclamation for residential and industrial wastewater, meeting permitted discharge limits virtually at all times. The water reclamation process is protected by a pre-treatment program to guard against hazardous substances and toxic chemicals. These are strictly regulated pursuant to federal and state requirements. The District routinely monitors industry and non-residential sources to ensure that those wastes are disposed of in an environmentally responsible and lawful manner.

The collection and treatment processes are performed in compliance with discharge permits issued by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates the quality of the effluent as it leaves the treatment plants. The District's high rate of compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System requirements at all seven water reclamation plants produces consistently excellent results.

As regulatory requirements continue to evolve and permit requirements limiting the levels of phosphorus discharged from wastewater become progressively more stringent, the District is implementing innovative technologies and processes in order to maintain its record of compliance. In 2023, the District was recognized as one of industry and community leaders who are benefiting their residents through innovative, future-focused, and transformational programs by the Utility of the Future Today program.

Steel spandrel beams are rehabilitated for the pump and blower house at the O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant.



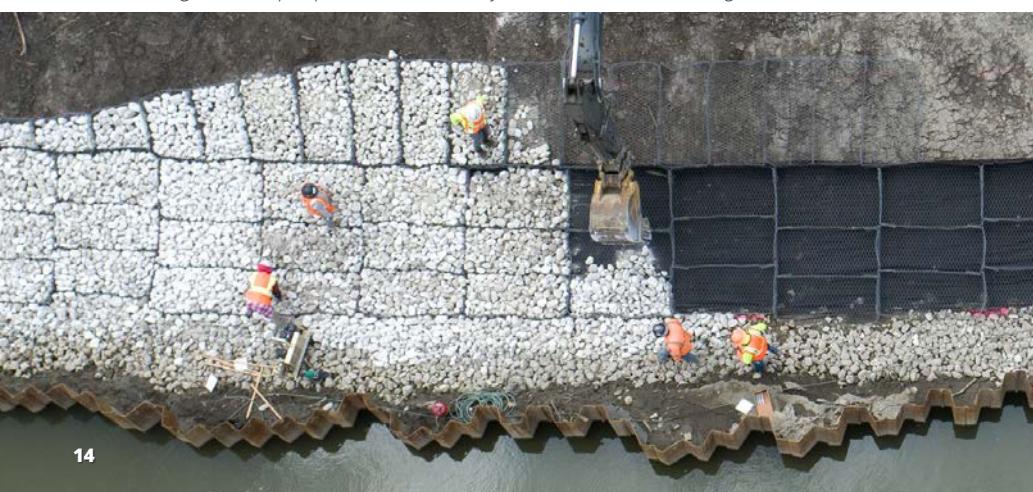
INDUSTRIAL WASTE MONITORING & POLLUTION CONTROL

The District effectively eliminates offensive or dangerous discharges into the public sewer system through the administration of the Sewage and Waste Control Ordinance. It specifies limits on the quantity and quality of wastes discharged by industrial users with the potential to significantly impact the District's treatment facilities as required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The discharges, unless properly controlled and treated, could interfere with the District's treatment processes and adversely impact waterways. These industrial sources are routinely monitored by the District to ensure wastes are disposed of in an environmentally responsible and lawful manner. The District also operates a user charge system based on ad valorem taxes which directly charges commercial, industrial, and tax-exempt facilities for their discharge to the sewerage systems.

The District is designated by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency as an official response unit for chemical and hazardous waste spills in Cook County, and in that capacity is expected to respond to approximately 100 calls in 2026 from fire and police officials, citizens, and other federal and state agencies. The Citizen Incident Reporting Application, found on mwwrd.org/contact-us, allows citizens to report odors, water pollution, waterway blockages, or other incidents. Dispatchers monitor both the online reporting system and a telephone hotline 24 hours per day.

The District also conducts chemical and biological monitoring of District service area waterways and has developed, through external collaborators, water quality models of portions of the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) to assess the operation of the waterway to continually improve water quality and protect aquatic life. On a daily basis, the District monitors multiple critical control points of the liquid and solids process trains at each of the seven WRPs to ensure effective operations and the quality of effluents and biosolids to protect water quality in the CAWS. Nutrient enrichment of the water environment is an increasing national concern, and in 2023 the District completed a comprehensive four-year CAWS phosphorus assessment and reduction study to guide future phosphorus reduction planning at the District's three largest water reclamation plants. This study was conducted in close collaboration with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and environmental advocacy groups.

The MWWRD reduced the frequency of combined sewer overflows into Addison Creek by completing the connection of a diversion sewer from the Westchester Pumping Station to the Roosevelt Road leg of the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) on May 9, 2025. Originally constructed in 1951, the Westchester Pumping Station no longer needs to pump combined sewer overflows into Addison Creek during wet weather events.



TUNNEL AND RESERVOIR PLAN

The District's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan is one of the country's largest public works projects for pollution and flood control. The Tunnel and Reservoir Plan has been successful in preventing flooding and pollution caused by combined sewer overflows by capturing and storing combined stormwater and sewage that would otherwise overflow into waterways in rainy weather.

Phase I, completed in 2006, consists of 110.4 miles of deep rock tunnels, eight to 33 feet in diameter, and 150 to 300 feet underground. The tunnels provide crucial protection and can capture up to 2.3 billion gallons of the first flush of sewage contaminated stormwater from combined sewers that previously flowed into area waterways.

Phase II, the reservoir component, provides an additional 15.0 billion gallons of storage of combined sewer overflows for flood damage reduction and additional pollution control. This phase is composed of three separate reservoirs:

The Gloria A. Majewski Reservoir, located in Elk Grove Village, was built by the Army Corps of Engineers and completed in 1998, providing 350.0 million gallons of storage. Since its completion, the reservoir has captured approximately 8.0 billion gallons of polluted water while yielding over \$824.6 million in flood damage reduction benefits to three communities.

The Thornton Composite Reservoir was completed in 2015. It provides 7.9 billion gallons of storage, and through December 2025, has captured approximately 64.9 billion gallons of polluted water while yielding over \$713.7 million in flood damage reduction benefits to 14 communities. To date, the District has received a total of \$39.2 million from the Army Corps of Engineers as reimbursement for its work on the design and construction of the Thornton Composite Reservoir.

The McCook Reservoir is comprised of two stages. The first stage was unveiled on December 4, 2017 and provides 3.5 billion gallons of storage. The second stage, expected to be completed in 2032, will provide 6.5 billion gallons of storage. The McCook Reservoir is projected to bring more than \$175.0 million annually in flood reduction benefits to the 3.1 million residents of 37 communities. Through September 2025, approximately 137.9 billion gallons of combined sewer overflow have been captured.

A new 20-foot diameter inflow tunnel and gate shaft was constructed to connect the existing Des Plaines Tunnel system directly to the McCook Reservoir. The new tunnel provides a greater benefit to the communities served by the Des Plaines Tunnel. By connecting the Des Plaines Tunnel System to the McCook Reservoir, improved conveyance and additional flood water storage capacity are made available.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The District's Stormwater Management Program has completed Detailed Watershed Plans for all seven major watersheds in Cook County, initiated a Stormwater Management Capital Improvement Program, initiated a Small Streams Maintenance Program (SSMP), and adopted and implemented the Watershed Management Ordinance. Through both green and gray engineered solutions, and flood-prone property acquisitions, the District's Stormwater Management Program addresses flooding problems throughout Cook County.

Some of the program's initiatives include advancing stormwater partnerships for green infrastructure, local stormwater projects, and flood-prone property acquisitions with local communities and other agencies and providing technical guidance to property owners interested in constructing offsite stormwater detention and volume control facilities in accordance with an ongoing pilot study to be completed in 2026. The 2026 Budget includes \$40.8 million in the Stormwater Management Fund for intergovernmental agreements for stormwater improvements.

Through the management of the SSMP, the District works to reduce flooding in urbanized areas. The SSMP's top priorities are removing blockages such as log jams, beaver dams, and other debris from streams and preventing future blockages by removing dead and unhealthy trees and invasive species, such as buckthorn and honeysuckle, which choke out native vegetation from the streambanks.

Many Stormwater Capital Improvement Program projects focus on regional waterways in highly urbanized areas and on using natural methods for addressing streambank erosion, including vegetated geogrids, geocells, turf reinforcing mats, and native vegetation. This program uses various financing methods, including grants. In 2025, the District received a total of \$6.1 million in Stormwater Fund grants and reimbursements, including \$1.0 million through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Section 319(h) grant program for the Flood Control Project on Midlothian Creek in Robbins, and \$0.5 million as reimbursement from the Army Corps of Engineers for the District's work on the design and construction of the Lyons Levee. Partnering with Cook County, a total of up to \$18.0 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding to address localized flooding will be received over four years, including \$4.5 million received in 2025 and \$9.7 million projected for 2026. Additional grants are also being pursued for the Suburban Green Schoolyard pilots and other flood mitigation projects.

The District's statutory authority for Stormwater Management in Cook County allows for the acquisition of flood-prone properties. The District solicits applications from municipalities and townships for assistance with the acquisition of flood-prone structures located throughout Cook County and enters into intergovernmental agreements to partner with communities to acquire flood-prone structures. Since 2014, the District has partnered on 18 projects targeting the voluntary acquisition of 156 properties, resulting in 129 acquisitions under this program to date. Based on the success of the District's program, additional solicitations will be made to identify opportunities to assist local communities with additional flood-prone property acquisitions in the future.

The MWRD partnered with the Village of Willow Springs for construction of a series of green infrastructure improvements, such as permeable pavers, aimed at enhancing flood protection and sustainability.



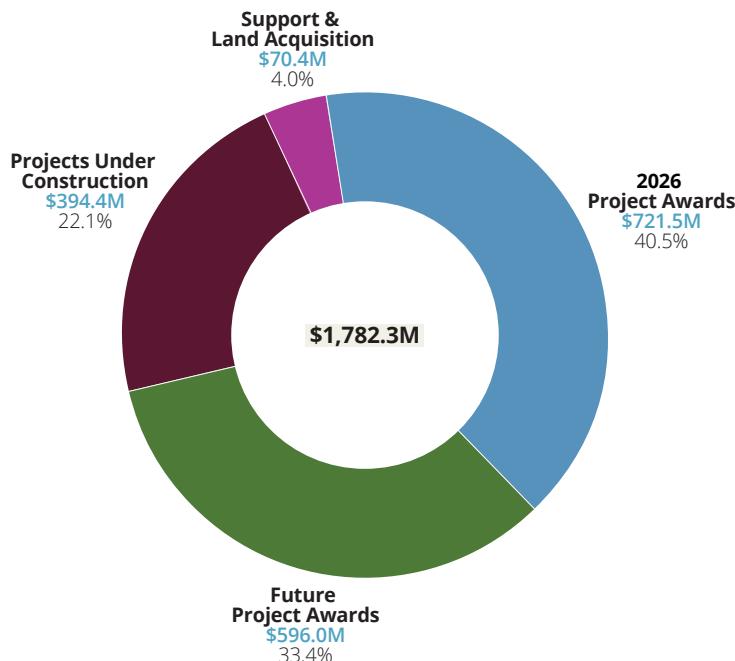
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Capital improvements preserve the useful life or increase the capacity or efficiency of District facilities. Capital projects involve the acquisition, improvement, replacement, remodeling, completion, alteration, construction, and enlargement of District facilities.

Sources of funding for the Capital Improvement Program includes the sale of capital improvements bonds, general property tax revenues, State Revolving Fund loans, and federal grants and reimbursements. The 2026 appropriation for the Capital Improvement Program, which includes capital projects funded by the Construction, Stormwater Management, and Capital Improvements Bond Funds, is \$855.3 million. The District's ambitious Capital Improvement Program invests in modernizing aging infrastructure, prepares for changing effluent permit conditions, and addresses stormwater management capital projects.

The District's overall Capital Improvement Program includes 2026 project awards, land acquisition, project support, future project awards, and the construction value remaining on projects currently under construction. A total of 178 capital projects will be under planning, design, or construction in 2026 with a total cost of approximately \$1,782.3 million, as displayed in the graph below.

Overall Capital Improvement Program





Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

FRONT

The second phase of the Robbins Heritage Park and Midlothian Creek Restoration project is approaching completion. Located near 137th Street and Kedzie Avenue, it includes a stormwater park, a pond, and conveyance improvements. The project is designed to mitigate flood damage for approximately 100 homes, businesses, and other structures in the surrounding area.

BACK

The MWRD uses a biological process to treat wastewater at its seven water reclamation plants. Microorganisms, such as this free-swimming ciliate, consume soluble and insoluble solids, helping to ensure that clean water is returned to the environment.