



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD hosts second annual vendor event to connect small, minority and women businesses to contract opportunities

Over 200 contractors, consultants, subcontractors and potential vendors had the opportunity to network and possibly find new business as the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) hosted its second vendor outreach event at the University of Illinois at Chicago on Aug. 14.

In addition to the MWRD, other community organizations and businesses facilitated roundtable discussions to learn from or educate others about potential contract opportunities.

The event theme, "Meet and Greet: Preparation + Opportunity = Success," was echoed throughout the program which was emceed by MWRD Vice President Barbara J. McGowan, Chairman of the Affirmative Action Committee.



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Vice President Barbara J. McGowan, Chairman of the Affirmative Action Committee, speaks with Aisha Jakes, Administrative Assistant at the Chatham Business Association, during the vendor outreach event held at the University of Illinois at Chicago on Aug. 14.

"The Board of Commissioners felt it would be helpful to invite other businesses and organizations to participate in this event," said Vice President McGowan. "These other organizations might have current or upcoming contract opportunities that could potentially be lucrative to minority, women and small business enterprises."

Besides Vice President McGowan, MWRD speakers included Executive Director David St. Pierre, Diversity Administrator Thomas Savage, Buyer II Michael Simkhin, Assistant Director of Maintenance and Operations Sergio Serafino and Commissioners Frank Avila, Mariyana T. Spyropoulos and Kari Steele. They all encouraged participants to register and to monitor the MWRD website for contract opportunities.

"We are dedicated to achieving fairness, inclusion, transparency and diversity in our commitment to serving the residents of Cook County and in working with contractors and subcontractors," said Vice President McGowan. "The Board adopted its first affirmative action program almost 40 years ago to ensure minority participation on MWRD contracts, and awards since that time have been diligently vetted, we make sure of it."

The affirmative action program is periodically reviewed during public study sessions in order to gain insight on discriminatory barriers that minority-owned, women-owned and small business enterprises encounter representatives encounter. The Board examined the program last October.

Additional information and contract opportunities can be found at www.mwr.org.

*Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwr.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. **Our water environment, take it personally.***