



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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For immediate release August 11, 2014

MWRD to update Affirmative Action ordinance, hosts public Study Session



MWRD Vice President Barbara J. McGowan

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) was the first area agency to institute an Affirmative Action ordinance in 1977. As the MWRD updates the current ordinance which is set to expire on Dec. 6, 2014, it is conducting a Disparity Study of its Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program for its construction and construction-related professional service contracts to ensure that this critical program remains successful.

More than 80 women and minority-owned business contractors and sub-contractors participated in a public study session convened by MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan in the Board room on July 24. Colette Holt & Associates has been reviewing program eligibility criteria, certification and program implementation policies among other aspects as it works to develop findings and goals.

“We will recommend race and gender approaches that can enhance the District’s already successful Affirmative Action program,” said Colette Holt, JD, lead consultant and legal counsel. “Once we have collected and analyzed the data, we will assist with goal setting and making future improvements.”

The study team is encouraging the participation of business owners, industry organizations and community groups to participate in the study. Data regarding their respective experiences in performing work for the MWRD will be captured and analyzed.

“We’ve had a strong program for over 40 years,” said Vice President McGowan. “We believe being inclusive in our Chicago community is an important characteristic of the District. This study is a valuable tool which will help continue this program.”

One of the speakers was Edward McKinney, President of Black Contractors United.

“Without a disparity study, there is no minority program. In 2014, this is still necessary,” said Mr. McKinney. “We consider the District’s program to be one of the best because of your aggressive payment schedule. That’s not a problem at the District as it is in other places, and we appreciate that.”

Additional information about the study can be found at www.mwrdd-disparitystudy.com.

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Our Water Environment: Take it personally

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrdd.org) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.