



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## African American Contractors Association recognized by MWRD Commissioners in commemoration of annual event

For their continuous work in creating fair business opportunities and business development training and technical assistance, the African American Contractors Association (AACA) was honored by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board of Commissioners.

The MWRD Board of Commissioners presented a resolution to Omar Shareef, president and founder of the AACA, and saluted him on his organization's 23rd Annual Membership Awards to be held on March 9, at the South Shore Cultural Center.

"The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago is an inclusive agency that works to ensure all firms have an opportunity to find business opportunities that allow them to grow and expand and play a role in improving our region's water quality," said MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan. "African American contractors play a critical role in ensuring our projects get completed on time and on budget. We thank the many men and women who are part of the African American Contractors Association, and wish them well at their Annual Membership Awards."

Founded in 1989, the AACA was created to advocate for small and disadvantaged African American businesses, such as contractors, trades persons, professional service providers and vendors. Each year, members and organizational partners come together to celebrate accomplishments and inroads made by the AACA at the Annual Membership Awards. MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila will be one of several honorees at this year's Membership Awards.

At the Board of Commissioners meeting, Omar Shareef thanked MWRD staff and representatives who have attended job fairs and linked minority owned firms and small businesses to new opportunities in the fields of water treatment and stormwater management. The MWRD has sought to be an advocate of policy that supports the

legitimate aspirations of minority communities and businesses within its jurisdiction.

"I stand on the shoulders of others who have come before me like Vice President McGowan and Commissioner Avila, who have done such a tremendous job representing us and showing us what clear water tastes like. It is a blessing if you understand what has been going on in Flint, Michigan," said Omar Shareef. "I really thank them for their efforts and the Board in dealing with affirmative action, job opportunity and fairness, and I thank staff for their outreach into many local communities. The presence of the MWRD in minority communities has led to many new opportunities for the African American Contractors Association."

For more information about the Annual Membership Awards, contact (312) 915-5960 or email [aacanatlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:aacanatlassoc@gmail.com).



*Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Chairman of Finance Frank Avila and MWRD Vice President Barbara McGowan presented African American Contractors Association President Omar Shareef (center) with a resolution honoring his organization on its 23rd Annual Membership Awards reception.*

**Recovering Resources, Transforming Water**

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