



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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MWRD received Supplier Diversity Advocate of the Year from LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois



(L-R): Matt Phillips, LGBT Chamber Board Chair, with MWRD President Kari K. Steele, Chairman of Finance Marcelino Garcia, MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos and MWRD Commissioner Eira L. Corral Sepúlveda.

The Board of the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois has honored the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) with the 2021 Supplier Diversity Advocate of the Year award.

The MWRD was recognized at the Chamber's 25th Anniversary Gala for its inclusive business practices that allow vendors of all backgrounds to have a chance to apply for MWRD contracts and business opportunities to partner in protecting the regional water environment.

"The MWRD is being recognized for your ongoing commitment and partnership in supporting LGBTQ+ businesses in accessing your supplier diversity program," said LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois Executive Director Jerome' Holston. "We appreciate your commitments and the ongoing efforts that we know are to come."

"This award shows that hard work can lead to results," said MWRD Chairman of Finance Marcelino Garcia. "I would like to thank the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois for their continued partnership to improve our economy and their shared commitment to protecting our water environment."

In 2007, the MWRD Board of Commissioners enacted fair treatment policies for employees and their domestic partners, ensuring equal access to health care benefits for same-sex couples. In 2017, they championed measures to ensure that same-sex spouses of MWRD employees who had retired before marriage equality became law in Illinois were assured the same retirement benefits as opposite-sex spouses. In June 2020, the Board approved a policy to promote opportunities for small business enterprises owned and operated by members of the LGBT community. *(continued)*

MWRD received Supplier Diversity Advocate of the Year, *cont.*

“Steps that we have taken at MWRD to ensure LGBT inclusion reflect our commitment to addressing issues of inequity,” said Commissioner Garcia. “We are opening opportunities for LGBT-owned businesses and through strong partnerships such as the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, we strive to engage and learn from our partners and communities. The future success of our agency depends on these inclusive changes.”

“Being Black, Woman, and Lesbian has allowed me to see the issues from many perspectives,” said Roxanna Daniel, Founder and CEO of Taj Development Co, Inc. “With that in mind, MWRD has been very open and receptive to making inclusivity a priority across the

board. This shows care and compassion, which is imperative in times like we live in today.”

“The LGBTQIA+ community in Chicago and Cook County has made wide-ranging contributions in numerous fields to strengthen our economy and environment,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “The MWRD and commissioners have been advocates in assuring equal access to clean water services and opportunities for employees and MWRD contracts.”

The LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois was established 25 years ago to promote economic development in the LGBT community by being an advocate and resource for all member businesses that encourage equality. The award was presented on Dec. 7 at the LGBT Chamber’s 25th Anniversary Gala at the Old Post Office, Chicago.

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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.