



Detroit: Transforming an Aging Water Utility

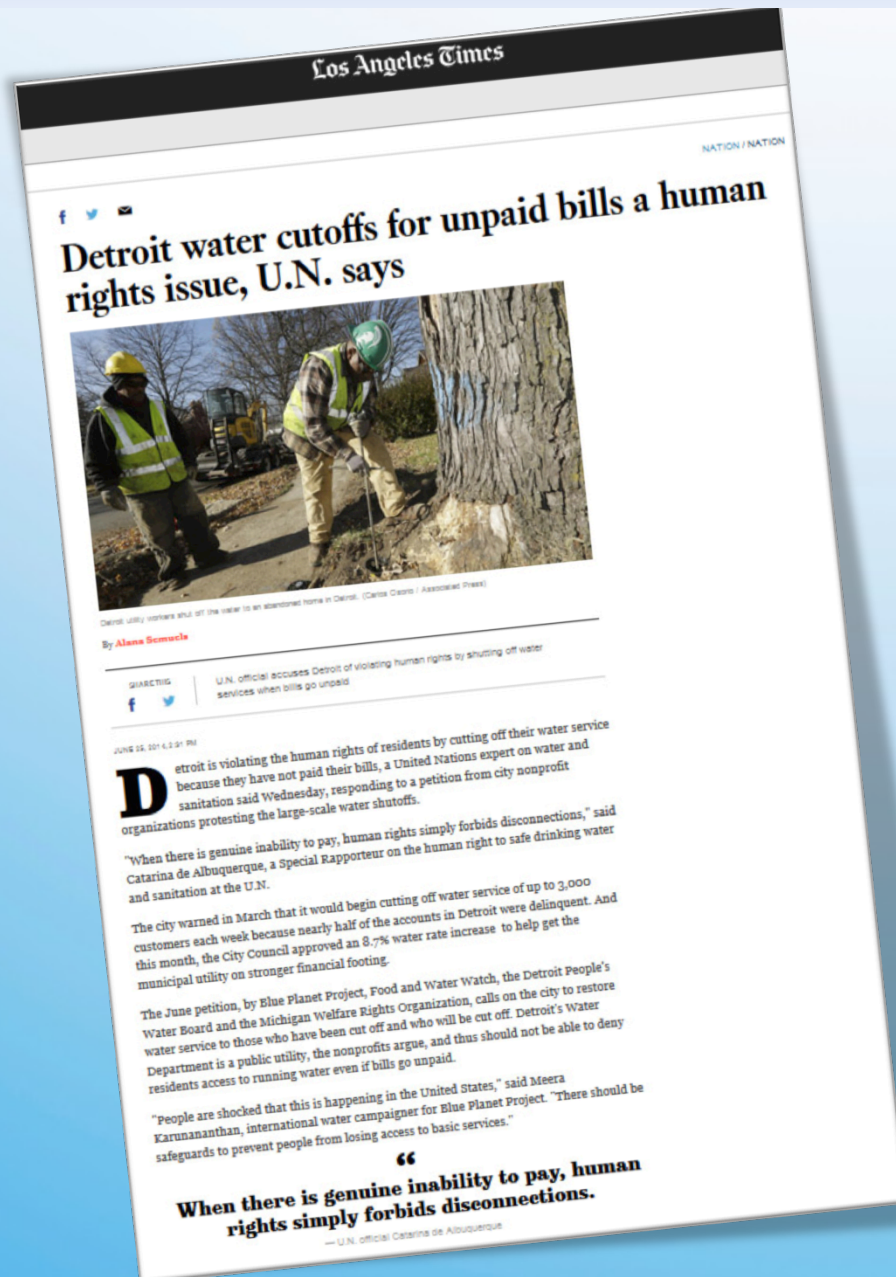
Presenter: Gary A. Brown, Director
Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

Activists Push for Water Affordability



- Detroit's poverty rate, at nearly 40%, is among nation's highest
- Since the early 2000s, Detroit City Council has reviewed and considered several water affordability options
- An income-indexed rate structure was proposed in 2005; however legalities were raised as a result of Michigan case law

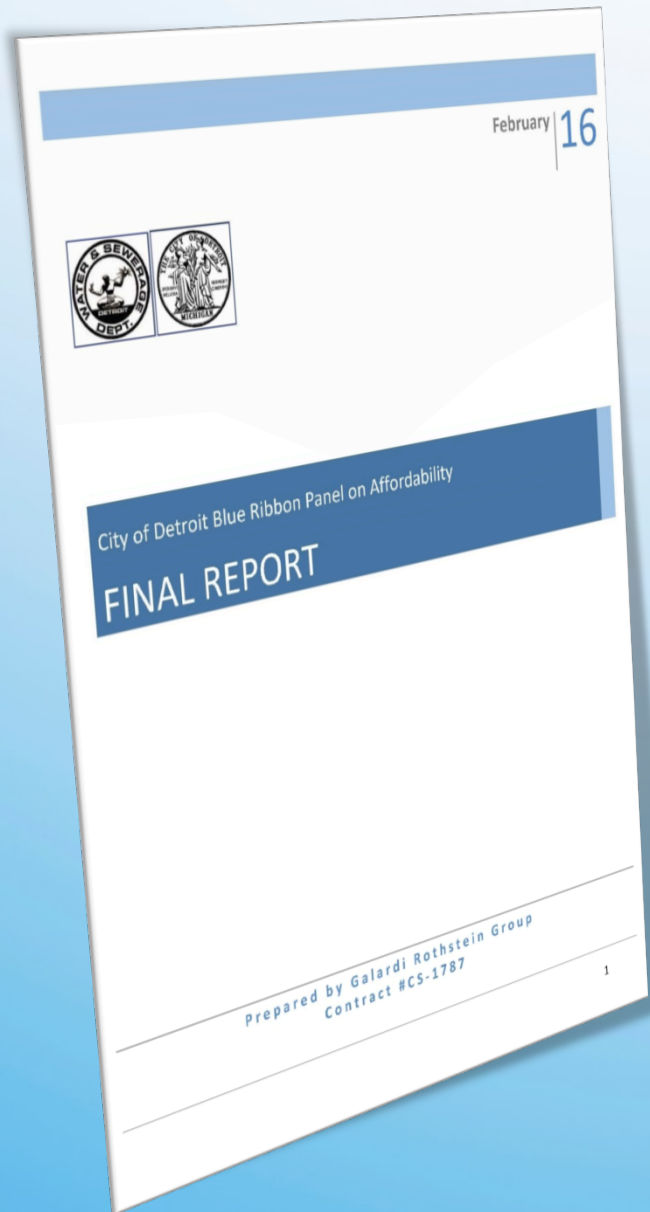
City of Detroit Water Department Seen as Uncompassionate



- Only 9,000 residential customers in payment plan arrangements in 2014
- Assistance plan was not comprehensive
- Public often confused about assistance and payment programs offered by city
- Activists persuaded the United Nations to declare “Water is a Human Right” in 2014; Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) urged to end shutoffs for delinquent accounts
- Across the city, there remained a backlog of repairs and restorations



Blue Ribbon Panel on Affordability Sets New Tone



- Detroit City Council convened the Blue Ribbon Panel on Affordability (BRPA) in October 2015, comprised of national experts and local stakeholders
- The Panel recommended DWSD:
 - Expand assistance programs;
 - Improve customer service and billing system;
 - Enhance business processes;
 - Advance universal access; and
 - Design and implement an inclining block rate

www.detroitmi.gov/brpa



Compassionate Assistance Program Launched March 1, 2024



*Income restrictions and eligibility requirements apply.

Program Benefits:

- Assistance up to \$1,000 per household per year. \$25 monthly bill credit + help with arrears.
- Home water audit for households above 120% of average usage
- Home repairs up to \$1,000 per household to fix minor plumbing issues leading to high usage
- Water saving kits and consumer training classes
- Supportive WRAP-Around Services

WRAP Participant Qualifications:

- ✓ Have income at or below 150% of poverty threshold
- ✓ Install a new automatic meter reading device or allow DWSD to install a new meter
- ✓ Provide proof of residency & income
- ✓ Provide renter's proof of responsibility for water on lease
- ✓ Stay current on monthly bill payment

WRAP funding is made possible by the Great Lakes Water Authority.

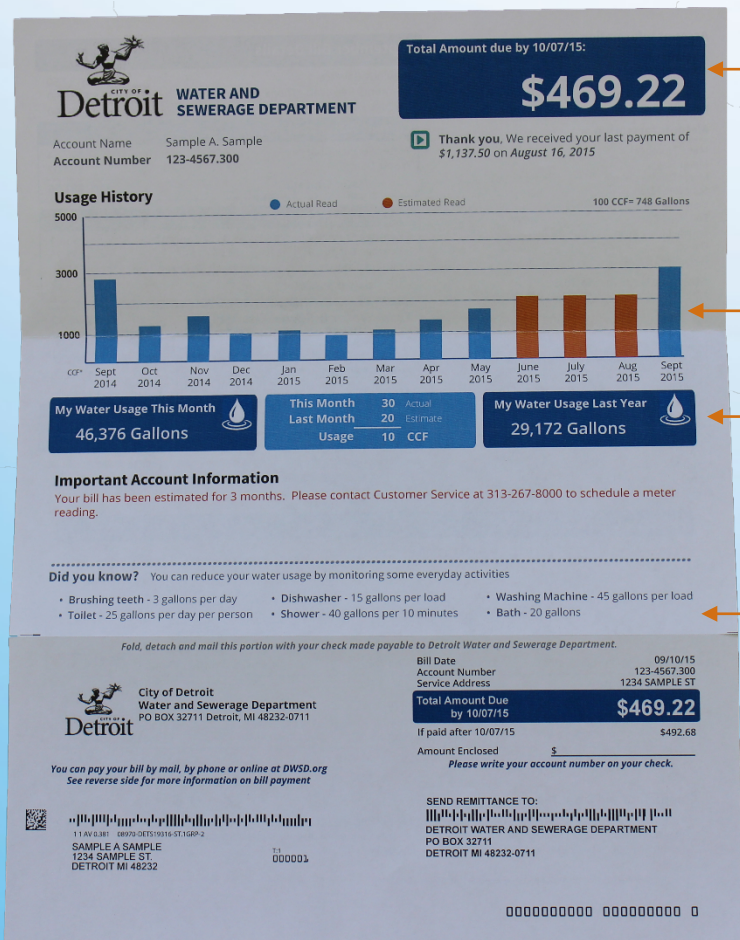
Call 313.386.WRAP (9727)
or visit www.waynemetrol.org/wrap



- Water Residential Assistance Program (WRAP) largely designed with input from the Blue Ribbon Panel on Affordability
- More than \$40M available over the next 10 years
- Includes five primary benefits delivered by a third-party administrator:
 - Freezes arrearages for 12 months;
 - Provides \$25 monthly bill credit for one year;
 - Offers up to \$700 toward past due balances;
 - Conducts water conservation audit with up to \$1,000 in minor home plumbing repairs; and
 - Identifies other needs and secures wrap-around social services as necessary



Implementing New Business Practices



Larger, more visible area & bigger font for amount due

12-mo trend analysis with comparisons by color


Usage data

Water conservation facts & tips

- Conducted new aggressive approach to collect on delinquent commercial accounts beginning January 1
- Reorganized staff based on skill assessments
- Modified business practices to enable management to implement immediate changes to improve Customer Care, e.g. Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system updates and mobile office
- Designed a new bill
- Currently identifying and securing payment kiosks



New Account Policies Began April 4, 2016



Detroit Water & Sewerage New Customer Care Policies

Effective April 4, 2016

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) is introducing **NEW** Customer Care policies for establishing **NEW** service.

New Identification Requirements

Acceptable Government-Issued ID with Social Security Number:

- Driver's License
- State Issued ID
- Passport
- Military ID

New Verification Requirements

- If your name is not registered on the account, Proof of Ownership or VALID lease is required to establish or re-establish water service at the property
- Landlords can no longer establish service in a tenant's name

New Deposit Requirements

Customers establishing new service may pay by the following methods:

- Cash
- Money Order
- Cashier Check
- Credit Card

Additional Information

- Detroit Water & Sewerage Website:
<http://www.detroitmi.gov/dwsd>

- Began attaching names to accounts rather than by parcels
- Goal is for account to follow customer, not remain with the property
- Require every customer with new service or reconnection to make a \$150 deposit
- Within 60 days of implementation, nearly 3,000 accounts had customer names attached



Customer Communication Significantly Improved



Stay Connected to DWSD
How you can keep your water on... avoid a disruption in service

Don't wait until you are disconnected.
DWSD wants to help you to stay connected.
Make a full payment by calling 313-267-8000 or logging onto detroitmi.gov/paymywaterbill, or visit a **Customer Care Center** to enter a payment plan arrangement:

Eastside Customer Care Center
13303 East McNichols
1-1/2 blocks west of Gratiot
Monday - Friday 8AM - 5PM

Westside Customer Care Center
15600 Grand River
One block west of Greenfield
Monday - Friday 8AM - 5PM

Downtown Customer Care Center
Water Board Building
735 Randolph Street, First Floor
Enter off Bates Street
Monday - Friday 8AM - 5PM
Saturday 8AM - 3PM

Documents to bring: Government-issued ID, such as a valid driver's license; social security number; and deed if homeowner or rental agreement if tenant.
If entering a payment plan arrangement, be prepared to make a deposit at that time.

DWSD #CustomerCare

313-267-8000 | detroitmi.gov/dwsd

ATTENTION DWSD CUSTOMER!
Your water is scheduled to be shut off in approximately 7 days.
Last Service Date:

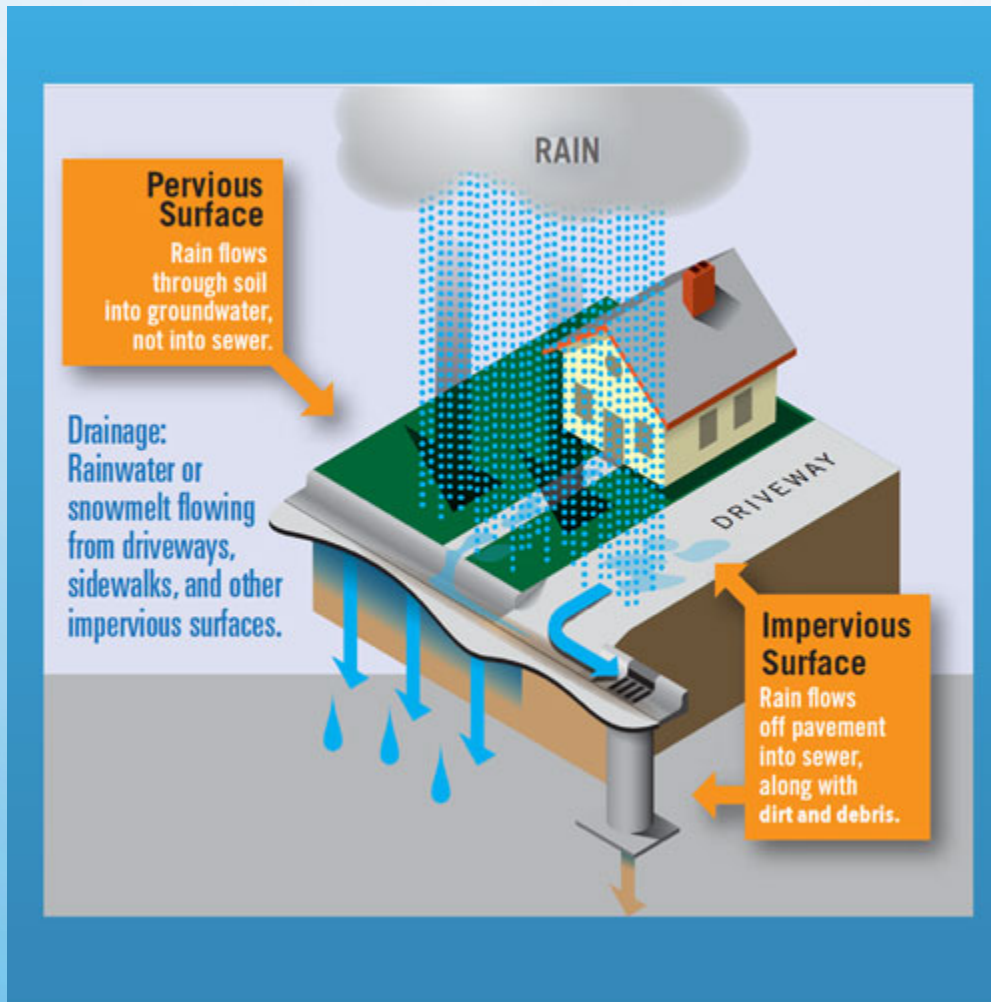
Help is available to help you pay your bill and keep your water on.
Please call (313) 267-8000 immediately or stop by one of our customer service offices to make payment arrangements.
If you do not arrange to pay your past due amount, your water will be shut off.

PLEASE - Avoid having your water shut off!

- Inform customers of assistance programs through social media and e-newsletters
- Utilize news media to report on new assistance programs and Customer Care improvements
- Launched a \$50,000 radio, print and social media advertising campaign to educate customers on payment solutions
- Hosted a Water Assistance Fair prior to shuts to avoid disruption of service for delinquent account holders

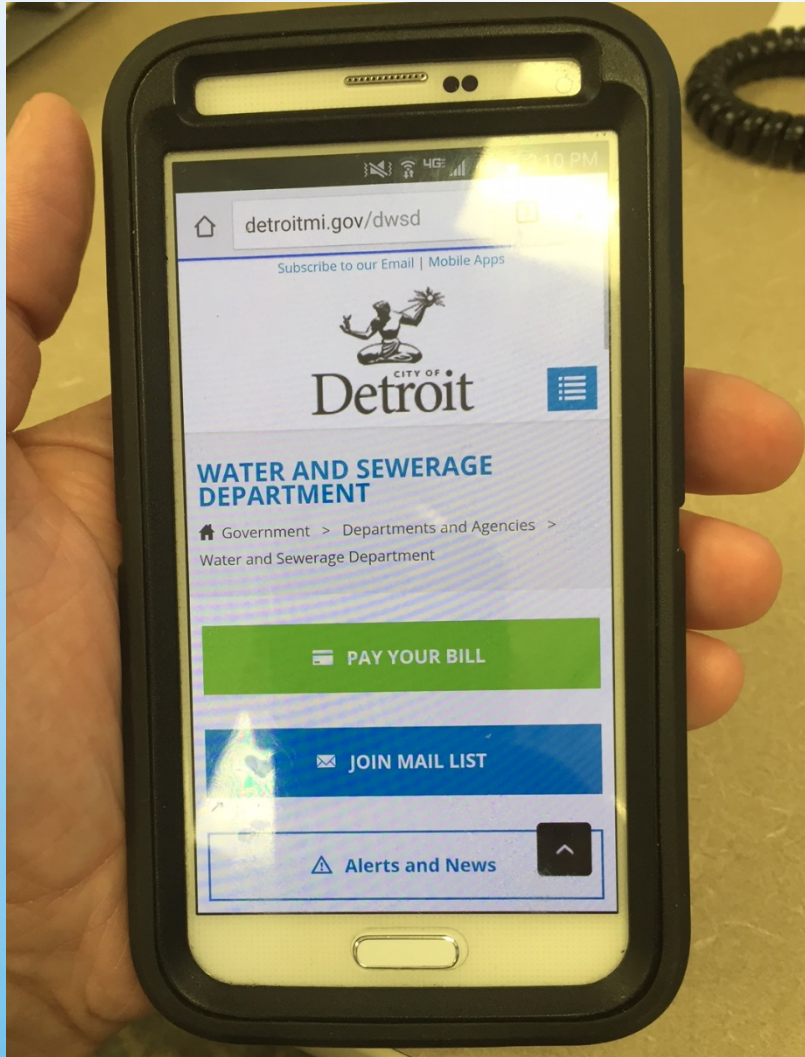


Spreading the Cost of Service Among All Customers



- More than 20,000 properties currently do not pay drainage charges as they have no water usage (e.g., parking lots)
- Utilizing a customer outreach approach coupled with a phased-in timeline to communicate the drainage rates

Innovative and Proactive Workforce Embraces Technology



- Transforming a public utility from an unapproachable, bureaucratic department to a organization that solves problems for its customers
- Assembling a talented leadership team which embraces technology and compassionate customer service
- Training frontline staff to adapt to a new model for customer service



Thank You



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facebook.com/DWSDDetroit



@DetroitWaterDep



@detroitwatersewerage

For more information on the
Blue Ribbon Panel on Affordability
visit:
www.detroitmi.gov/brpa

Building the Next Generation Workforce at Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans



**Association of Metropolitan
Water Agencies**

**Cedric S. Grant
Executive Director**

October 2016

Sewerage & Water Board Profile

Our mission is to provide safe drinking water to everyone in New Orleans; to remove waste for safe return to the environment; to drain away storm water; to provide water for fire protection; to provide information about products and services; and to do all this continuously at a reasonable cost to the community.

- 2015 Population: 396,048
- 2015 Customer Accounts: 133,904
- Land Area: 169 mi² (438 km²)
- Facilities: 2 Water Plants, 2 Sewer Plants, Nearly 100 Pumping Stations
- Aging Infrastructure Damaged by Hurricane Katrina

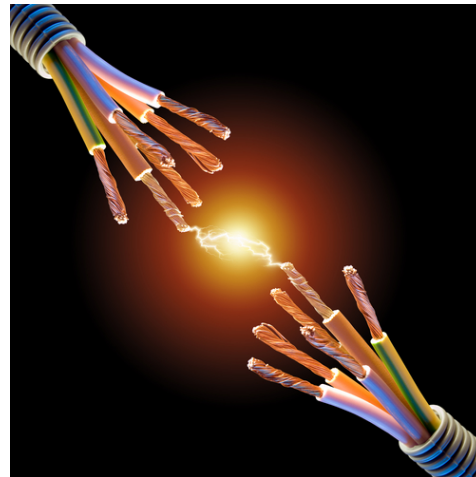
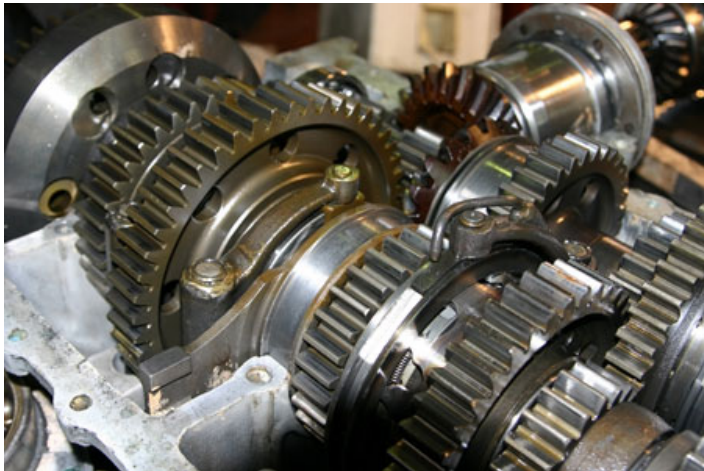
Workforce Profile

as of Oct 1, 2016

- ⦿ Budgeted Positions: 1,334
- ⦿ Vacancies: 249
- ⦿ Eligible for Retirement: 143
- ⦿ DROP Program: 132

Critical Positions to Fill

- ⦿ Machinists
- ⦿ Mechanics
- ⦿ Plant Operators
- ⦿ Electricians



Workforce Challenges

- Out dated technology systems
- Civil Service
- Untrained Workforce
- Defined Benefit Program Funding



Overcoming Challenges

- Delegated Hiring Authority for SWBNO
- Timely processing of new hires
- Streamlining the recruitment and hiring process
- Goal – 6 months to 60 days
- Leadership Academy in partnership with Community college

Joint SWBNO/DPW Capital Program

- Over \$2.4B worth of work in the next 8 years across the City
- Joint program with the City's Department of Public Works
- Created 200 Unclassified Professional Workforce
- On average, one construction bid opening per week beginning in 2017 thru 2020.
- Aggressive project schedules coordinated to minimize construction-related impacts.

Take a comprehensive and programmatic approach to the work.

Example Area – Marlyville/Broadmoor



Re-engineer Workforce Management Processes

- ⦿ Ensure Regulatory Compliance
- ⦿ Improve Productivity
- ⦿ Enhance Brand Credibility
- ⦿ Create Healthy Work Environment



Re-engineer Compensation Processes

Classification/Compensation /Organizational Study

- ◉ Workforce “Rightsizing”
- ◉ Appropriate Job Classes/Position Titles
- ◉ Market Competitiveness
- ◉ Succession Planning



Workforce Opportunities

- Partnership with General Electric and Delgado Community College
- Senior Staff Reorganization
- Economic Opportunity Initiative
- Delegated Hiring Authority
- Recovery Management Staffing

Partnerships – GE & Delgado Community College

- The GE Foundation announced a \$1.5 million grant to help fill the advanced manufacturing and water management skills gap in New Orleans.
- The grant will support Delgado Community College's ongoing efforts to train certified water infrastructure personnel to work at the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO).
- This partnership will create career pathways in advanced manufacturing for hundreds of jobseekers over three years.

Partnerships – GE & Delgado Community College

- The objective of program is to train 75 entry-level workers and to train 60 advanced level workers for Sewerage and Water Board's Facility Maintenance division over a two-year period.
- In July 2016, 14 participants graduated from cohort I
- To date, 15 participants are currently enrolled into cohort II.



Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans

