



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- **DEI Activities Report**

Summary

This report provides a summary of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion group activities for October 2025

Purpose

Informational

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion group activities for October 2025

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Business Outreach Activities

In October 2025, Metropolitan actively engaged with a wide range of business organizations and community partners to strengthen relationships and promote broad access to opportunity. These efforts supported Metropolitan's continued commitment to advancing opportunities to learn about government procurement and contracting for small, disabled veteran or regional business enterprises within the region.

Staff participated in the National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC SoCal) 30th Annual Awards Dinner. Metropolitan sponsored and staff attended the Asian American Architects and Engineers Association (AAa/e) 47th Annual Awards Banquet, where Metropolitan staff, including Mai Hattar, Keith Nobriga, Mickey Chaudhuri, Liji Thomas, Howard Lum, and Jennifer Fan, were in attendance.

Metropolitan also concluded its four-part Metropolitan Contractor Academy series, held in partnership with the Inland Empire Utilities Agency, with a graduation ceremony recognizing the program's most well-attended cohort since its launch two years ago.

Staff also attended the NAWBO-OC Remarkable Women Awards, honoring women entrepreneurs and spotlighting elected leaders' efforts to foster an environment where women-owned businesses can thrive. Metropolitan's outreach continued with participation in the California Public Utilities Commission Small & Diverse Business Expo, which provided opportunities to connect with small and diverse businesses, public agencies, prime contractors, and utilities about upcoming contracting opportunities.

A highlight of the month was the signature MetWorks Conference, Metropolitan's flagship small business event that brought together six (6) member agencies—including the cities of Glendale, Pasadena, Los Angeles, and Santa Monica, as well as the Inland Empire Utilities Agency and West Basin Municipal Water District. Metropolitan leadership, including Chairman Adán Ortega, Director Dennis Erdman, and Assistant General Manager John Bednarski, were present and engaged directly with business participants and partners.

Finally, staff represented Metropolitan at the West Basin Municipal Water District Public Works Small Business Conference and the National Latina Business Women Association–Inland Empire (NLBWA-IE) Latina BizMatch event. The BizMatch conference, themed “Smart Growth: Supercharge Your Business with AI,” focused on empowering Latina and women-of-color entrepreneurs to harness innovation and technology to expand their business impact.

Workforce Development Activities

Metropolitan advanced its education and career outreach efforts by engaging students, educators, and institutional partners to promote awareness of water industry professions and Metropolitan's diverse career pathways. These activities reinforced the organization's commitment to cultivating the next generation of water professionals and building a sustainable workforce pipeline.

Staff participated in the College of the Desert Career Fest in Indio, providing students with information on careers in water and sustainability. Staff was featured speaker during a panel discussion during Cal State Fullerton's Sustainable Career Day, sharing insights into Metropolitan's environmental and technical career opportunities.

Metropolitan hosted a National Millennial and Gen Z Community (NMGZ) Engagement Session, which brought together early-career professionals and college students from across the United States for a meaningful discussion with Metropolitan leaders. The purpose of the meeting was to engage younger generations in conversations centered

on three key themes – Public Trust in Drinking Water, Workforce Development, and Perceptions of Water Conservation, designed to help shape Metropolitan’s future direction. The goal was to gather candid feedback to inform future communications, outreach, and workforce strategies, ensuring the organization remains relevant and attractive to emerging talent in the evolving water industry.

Finally, staff attended the Long Beach Unified School District College & Career Expo and met with educators at Parker High School to learn about existing Career and Technical Education programs related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math and water-focused disciplines. Metropolitan staff participated in the GPS Your Future Career Discovery Day at Cal State Dominguez Hills, where they engaged high school and college students in conversations about the wide range of careers within the water industry. This was followed by a virtual presentation for the Inland Empire/Desert Regional Consortium, where staff spoke to community college students about Metropolitan’s mission, operations, and career pathways.