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Louisville Leaders Release First Ever Water Equity Roadmap

Report Describes Strategies for Expanding Opportunity in Louisville's Infrastructure Workforce

LOUISVILLE, KY — Today, Louisville Metro Mayor Greg Fischer and leaders from Louisville MSD, Louisville Water Company, Transit Authority of River City (TARC) and the Louisville Urban League, in partnership with the US Water Alliance, released *An Equitable Water Future: Louisville*. The report is a roadmap for building equity in Louisville's infrastructure workforce and contracting practices, so that all residents have an opportunity to enjoy the economic and social benefits resulting from investments in the city's infrastructure. The report is available online [here](#).

An Equitable Water Future: Louisville was collaboratively developed by leaders from the MSD, Louisville Water, TARC, Louisville Urban League, Louisville Metro Government, Where Opportunity Knox, and Jacobs Engineering, with support from the US Water Alliance. This work builds on Louisville's participation in the 2018 Brookings Institution study, [Renewing the Water Workforce](#), which outlined infrastructure workforce challenges and general recommendations for addressing them.

"As we continue investing in our infrastructure, it's important to make sure all citizens have opportunities to benefit from those investments. That's what the recommendations in this report are intended to do. I'm proud of how our local agencies have collaborated to seize the workforce opportunity tied to investing in our infrastructure, and I appreciate their continued efforts toward implementing these recommendations," said Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer.

Louisville's vulnerable communities face a range of challenges related to water, from aging infrastructure and affordability. Low-income people and communities of color in Louisville have historically been affected by a legacy of redlining, and today are disproportionately impacted by water affordability, aging infrastructure, and flooding issues, as well as barriers to participating in the local infrastructure workforce and contracting opportunities. Among the report's recommended actions are changes to procurement and hiring policies, as well as more intensive cross-agency collaboration on workforce and skills training and mentoring potential employees from the city's vulnerable communities.

According to MSD Executive Director Tony Parrott, "Water has the power to put people to work. At MSD, we've been making good progress toward understanding and tackling the barriers to workforce participation and contracting that confront minorities and low-income residents. This roadmap lays out specific steps we can take, at MSD and beyond, to deepen our impact. We'll keep driving to make sure

all Louisville's residents have access to the economic benefits resulting from our community's investments in infrastructure."

"We're proud of Louisville Water and MSD for leading the way on workforce equity, taking an honest look at existing inequities and working to include our most vulnerable," added Sadiqa Reynolds, CEO of Louisville Urban League. "The policy change and inter-agency collaboration recommended in this roadmap will translate into better workforce access for the people who stand to benefit the most."

An Equitable Water Future: Louisville discusses local factors that influence water equity. While the primary focus is on the infrastructure workforce, the report also explores local issues around water affordability, aging infrastructure, flooding and climate impacts, and funding constraints. For each of these areas, the [report](#) outlines recommendations that agencies and organizations in Louisville can take to advance equitable water management.

"The challenges facing Louisville's vulnerable communities are significant, but we can help people thrive by expanding access to water workforce and contracting opportunities. I applaud Louisville's leaders for recognizing the benefits of working toward greater social equity, and I'm proud of the Louisville Water Equity Taskforce for setting a course to grow opportunities for all," said Radhika Fox, CEO of the US Water Alliance.

This report is part of the Water Equity Taskforce, a network of cities convened by the US Water Alliance that work together to develop more equitable water policies and practices. The Taskforce comprises cross-sector teams in the cities of Atlanta, Buffalo, Camden, Cleveland, Louisville, Milwaukee, and Pittsburgh.

For more information on the Water Equity Taskforce project, visit <http://uswateralliance.org/initiatives/water-equity/taskforce>.

About MSD

The Louisville/Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) works to achieve and maintain clean, environmentally safe waterways for a healthy and vibrant community. The organization's more than 700 employees provide wastewater management, drainage and flood protection services across the 376 square miles of Louisville Metro. In addition to operating and maintaining Louisville Metro's sewer system, floodwall system, water quality treatment centers and flood pumping stations, MSD invests in hundreds of infrastructure improvement projects each year, plants more than 1,000 trees and other vegetation annually to enhance water filtration and reduce runoff, and provides numerous outreach programs to inform and educate the community about protecting our waterways.