

20
23

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY



David Carter
President, Aqua Illinois

President's Message

At Aqua Illinois, we continue to partner with diverse suppliers to enhance business performance, maintain a supplier base that is reflective of our customer base, and assist in promoting a vibrant local economy. We take pride in our efforts and are gratified by the success of our many diverse suppliers.

In 2023, Aqua Illinois took some additional steps to grow our diverse supplier base and further promote the use of Tier II diverse suppliers where diverse prime contractors may not be readily available. In March of 2023, we held an in-person event with both existing and prospective diverse suppliers focused on helping to not only identify new diverse suppliers, but to also help new diverse suppliers understand how the process works in order to create the most effective and efficient working relationships.

To promote Tier II diverse spend, we added language on prime construction contracts that encourages non-diverse primes to partner with diverse subcontractors. This combined with the supplier diversity event mentioned above, resulted in our ability to expand our base of diverse suppliers by 24.8%. Additionally, our Tier II spend was 14 times more than the previous year, due in large part to the new contract language.

Aqua Illinois was also able to increase diverse spend on Professional Services in 2023. This intentional use of diverse professional firms has resulted in a more meaningful and enhanced customer experience.

At the same time, 2023 was not without challenges. While our overall spend increased, our diverse spend pace remained the same and significant MBE lags other diverse categories. A key driver was the lack of diverse suppliers for specific chemicals and some capital equipment procured in connection with large construction projects.

Aqua Illinois remains committed to supplier diversity and continues to develop strategies to address challenges and expand overall use of diverse suppliers in order to support how our local economies grow and thrive.

I am pleased with the steps we have taken this year and invite you to follow our progress in this report.

David Carter
President, Aqua Illinois

Vendor Classification	2023	% of Total*
MBE	\$1,101,885	2.2%
WBE	\$2,653,625	5.3%
VBE	\$3,438,133	6.9%
Total Diverse	\$7,193,643	14.4%
SBE	\$4,735,259	9.5%
Total Reportable	\$11,928,902	23.9%

*Percent of Total Eligible Spend

Dashboard

TOTAL DIVERSE SPEND

\$7.2 Million / 14%

TOTAL SBE SPEND

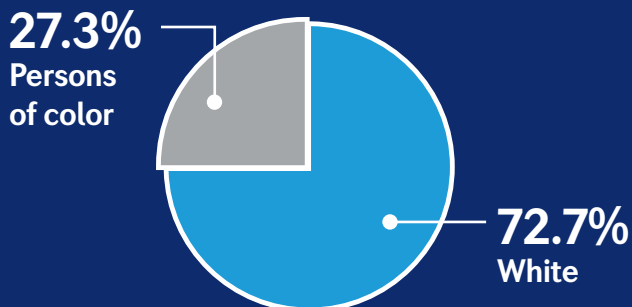
\$4.7 Million / 10%

TOTAL REPORTABLE SPEND

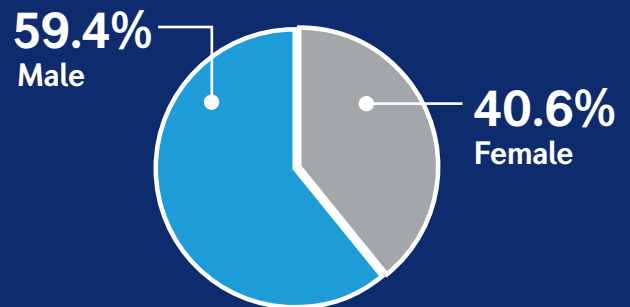
\$12 Million / 24%

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES – 143 (includes Aqua contact center, located in IL)

Diversity



Gender



Terms and Definitions

A diverse supplier is defined as any business that is owned by a U.S. Citizen and 51% owned, managed, and controlled by one of the following: (MBE) African American, Hispanic American, Native American, Asian American, or a (WBE) woman or (VBE) veteran. For purposes of this report, we are including (SBE) small business enterprise, which is a business that is defined by either the number of employees or average annual receipts of a business concern.

Aqua only recognizes and uses suppliers that are certified as diverse—MBE, WBE, or VBE.

Supplier Diversity Classification	
Minority Owned Business Enterprise (MBE)	A person or persons who is/are United States Citizens or lawful permanent residents and is/are African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Native American
Women Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)	A woman or women who is/are United States Citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States
Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE)	One or more veterans who is/are United States Citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States



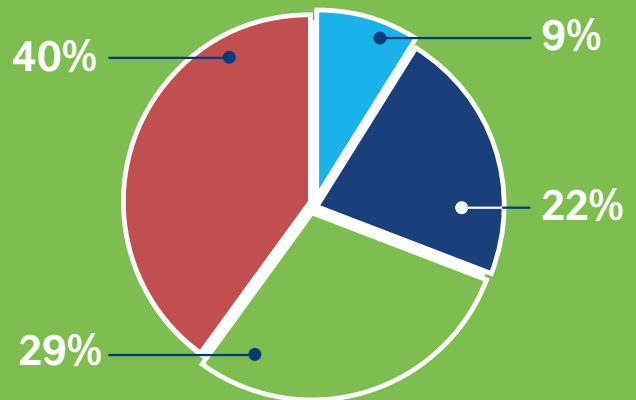
Summary of Spending/Activity

2023 Data by Reportable Category

2023			
Category	Diverse Spend	SBE	Total
All Other	-	\$2,043	\$2,043
Building & Grounds	\$189,743	\$355,353	\$545,096
Chemicals	\$57,969	\$491,499	\$549,468
Construction	\$5,182,272	\$1,708,680	\$6,890,952
Direct Material	\$140,186	\$907,253	\$1,047,439
Information Technology	\$37,097	\$1,462	\$38,559
Professional Services	\$1,203,935	\$513,618	\$1,717,553
Technical Services	\$331,044	\$632,312	\$963,356
Vehicles & Equipment	\$51,397	\$123,039	\$174,436
GRAND TOTAL	\$7,193,643	\$4,735,259	\$11,928,902

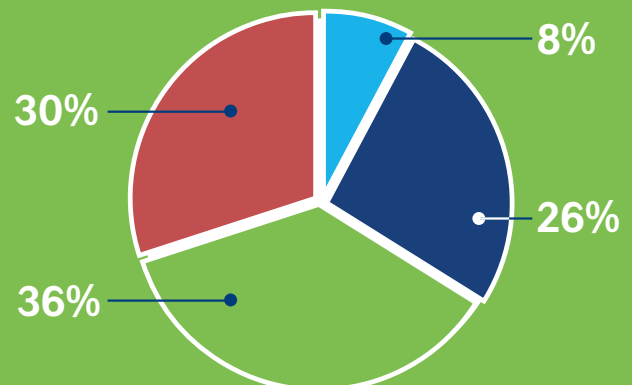
2023 Entity Totals – % of Reportable

Vendor Classification	Spending	% of Total Diverse Spend and SBE
MBEs ●	\$1,101,885	9%
WBEs ●	\$2,653,625	22%
VBEs ●	\$3,438,133	29%
SBEs ●	\$4,735,259	40%
Total Reportable	\$11,928,902	



2023 Illinois Totals – % of Reportable

Vendor Classification	Spending	% of Total Diverse Spend and SBE
MBEs ●	\$719,227	8%
WBEs ●	\$2,276,445	26%
VBEs ●	\$3,138,182	36%
SBEs ●	\$2,662,612	30%
Total	\$8,796,466	





Policies and Methodology

At Aqua, the core values of integrity, respect, and excellence are embedded within our business practices and our behavior. We proudly hold ourselves accountable to fair and transparent business practices and strive to operate as a socially responsible corporate citizen. We also expect our suppliers and contractors to demonstrate the same commitment to these values.

We recognize that Supplier Diversity is significantly important to our long-term procurement and supply chain process strategy. We have strategies in place to further build and enhance relationships with more diverse suppliers, and encourage them to compete for materials and services throughout all of Aqua. It is the policy of Aqua to develop significant partnering relationships with diverse firms to:

- Enhance the supply chain via lower costs, increased response time, higher level of quality, etc.
- Provide a competitive advantage in building brand equity and retaining existing or generating increased market share.

Additionally, all employees with spending authority are encouraged to consider diverse businesses as Tier I suppliers and to encourage Aqua's prime suppliers to do the same. Aqua encourages any certified diverse supplier that may have services of value to Aqua to apply as a supplier.

Aqua also submits an annual report of its diverse supplier spend to the Illinois Commerce Commission, which also tracks Aqua's Tier II spend dollar amount and percentage.

Aqua strongly encourages all of its prime suppliers to utilize diverse suppliers, as well as submit their diverse spend dollar amount and percentage (of Aqua project/contract) through Aqua's automated Tier II reporting tool, the Supplier IO UniTier Tier II Platform, on an annual basis, no later than January 31.



Supplier Diversity Goals

In 2023, Aqua held an in-person supplier diversity event that included both existing diverse suppliers from across our state footprint as well as diverse firms looking to do business with Aqua. We discussed wanting to do more with existing suppliers and, via workshop with our existing diverse suppliers, provided information to prospective suppliers to help them better understand our processes. We also invited representatives from the Kankakee County NAACP to participate and to assist in helping Aqua identify other suppliers. The event helped to ensure we continuously enhance our policy to not only strengthen our ability to increase overall diverse spend, but also to identify new categories of goods and services that may create opportunities for additional diverse suppliers.

Since 2020, these efforts have directly resulted in many advancements made to the supplier diversity program, including:

- Increased VBE spend by 22.1%
- Increased building and grounds by 236.3% or \$384,400
- Increased direct materials by 163.3% or \$649,600
- Increase professional services by 115.2% or \$919,400

Aqua has also taken action internally to increase its work with diverse suppliers in the procurement process. This includes:

- Leadership commitment and accountability—demonstrating leadership commitment and accountability through messaging, policies, and behavior that advances diversity and inclusion goals and objectives.
- Promote business and community diversity—advancing diversity and inclusion in the Aqua supplier base by directing and supporting diverse suppliers, as well as supporting diverse groups through our charitable giving program.
- Regular review of vendor relationships—reviewing 12-month rolling spend of all vendor relationships exceeding a threshold of \$50,000 to identify opportunities to solicit bids from diverse vendors as services are renewed.



Areas of Procurement for the Next Calendar Year

Maximizing successes from the previous year, which included a successful supplier diversity event, increased Tier II and professional services spending, and expansion of the overall supplier base, supplier diversity goals for 2024 include:

- Continue to promote the use of Tier II diverse suppliers with our non-diverse prime contractors
- Work with other IUBDC member utilities to leverage best practices
- Focus on identifying diverse capital equipment manufacturers/dealers to increase spending in this category

Buying Plan

Over the next two years, Aqua Illinois has a large capital-intensive program planned that includes a wide range of projects and services. While final scope and schedules are yet to be determined, the full buying plan can be found in the appendix section of this report.



Challenges and Opportunities

Aqua continues work to identify diverse suppliers to fill certain gaps in our supplier diversity program. We were able to progress in the area of Professional Services in 2023; however, challenges in our supplier diversity program remain. Areas where we have significant annual spend but few diverse supplier options include:

- Water and Wastewater chemicals
- Capital equipment
- MBE Construction firms
- Residuals management

Some challenges also continue to exist geographically, including rural areas and for certain purchasing categories across the state. Aqua continues to work with local and regional partner organizations to identify new diverse suppliers as well as small business enterprise suppliers.



Certifications Accepted

State or local government certifying agencies and the following:

National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC)

1359 Broadway
Suite 1000
New York, NY 10018

Telephone: (212) 944-2430
www.nmsdc.org

National Veteran Business Development Certification (NVBDC)

325 E. Crescent Lane
Detroit, MI 48207

Telephone: 888-CERTIFIED
www.nvbdc.org

National Veteran Owned Business Association (NaVOBA)

313-315 N. Main Street
Carnegie, PA 15106

Telephone: 724-3-NAVOBA
(724-362-8622)
www.navoba.org

Women's Business Enterprise Center (WBEC)

1315 Walnut Street
Suite 1116
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Aqua Contact - Elizabeth Walsh

Email: ewalsh@wbeceast.com
Telephone: (215) 790-5060
<https://wbeceast.com/>

Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)

1120 Connecticut Ave., NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036

Telephone: (202) 872-5515
www.wbenc.org

Point of Contact

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ICC Website

www.icc.illinois.gov



Success Stories



Civil Design, Inc. (WBE)

“Civil Design, Inc. first reached out to AQUA Illinois in early 2018 to introduce our Women-Owned Civil Engineering firm. AQUA was very open to the meeting with CDI and forthcoming with future opportunities. After an initially unsuccessful attempt for a project package in late 2018, CDI was approached by AQUA for a different opportunity in Northern Illinois. While this project was challenging due to the onset of the pandemic, CDI delivered the project and was given an opportunity to pursue another project. AQUA, along with their team members Tracy Fullen and Stephen Palinski to name a few, have proven their dedication to supporting diverse companies while ensuring high-quality project delivery.”

Thank you, AQUA Illinois, for your support!
– Vicki S. LaRose, PE, President

Gene Wren Construction LLC (VBE)

“Through a steadfast commitment to diversity and excellence, Aqua Illinois and Gene Wren Construction, a veteran-owned business, have cultivated a thriving partnership for over twenty years.”

– Willie Wren, Gene Wren Construction, LLC

Uniform Appendix Aqua Illinois

(Tier I and Tier II Diverse Suppliers)

Diversity Attributes	Company Name	State	Amount	Category
MBE	American Infrastructure	ILLINOIS	\$131,042	Professional Services
MBE	Cavalry Maintenance & Cleaning	ILLINOIS	\$55,246	Building & Grounds
MBE	Century Asphalt And Construction, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$264,261	Construction
MBE	Civil Design, Inc.	WI	\$6,238	Professional Services
MBE	Danville Tile and Drainage	ILLINOIS	\$130,419	Direct Material
MBE	Dicke Tool Company	ILLINOIS	\$1,263	Direct Material
MBE	Diversity Sourcing Solutions, LLC	ILLINOIS	\$85,250	Professional Services
MBE	EMA Design Automation, Inc.	GA	\$125	Direct Material
MBE	EP Logistics	GA	\$15	Direct Material
MBE	Indirect	WI	\$78	Construction
MBE	JC Insulation, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$18,450	Construction
MBE	Kang Haggerty, LLC	PA	\$326,746	Professional Services
MBE	Mays Chemical Company, Inc.	IN	\$11,974	Chemicals
MBE	Milhouse Engineering	ILLINOIS	\$33,164	Professional Services
MBE	MFG Solutions, Inc.	GA	\$310	Direct Material
MBE	SHI International Corp.	TX	\$34,355	Information Technology
MBE	T and A Authorized Mac Tools Distributor Gp.	ILLINOIS	\$133	Direct Material
MBE	Unique Industrial Product Co.	GA	\$73	Direct Material
MBE	Zones, LLC	TX	\$2,742	Information Technology
WBE	AB Petroleum Services, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$863	Direct Material
WBE	Alexander Chemicals Co.	ILLINOIS	\$37,585	Chemicals
WBE	Anderson Lock Co., Ltd.	ILLINOIS	\$6,215	Technical Services
WBE	Berger Excavating Contractors	ILLINOIS	\$427,828	Construction
WBE	Bilco Safety Products, Inc.	PA	\$1,589	Construction
WBE	Carus, LLC	ILLINOIS	\$8,410	Chemicals
WBE	Certified Safety Manufacturing, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$29	Direct Material
WBE	Civil Design, Inc.	MO	\$39,158	Professional Services
WBE	Continental Resources	GA	\$31	Direct Material
WBE	Copperwing Design	GA	\$686	Direct Material
WBE	Corporate Claims Management	PA	\$2,433	Vehicles and Equipment
WBE	Discountcell, Inc.	GA	\$24	Direct Material
WBE	Double G Excavating, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$2,429	Construction
WBE	EJ Equipment, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$48,964	Vehicles and Equipment
WBE	Elliott Electric, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$86,650	Construction
WBE	Emergent Safety Supply	ILLINOIS	\$312	Construction
WBE	Entech Engineering, Inc.	MO	\$165,300	Professional Services

Continued on page 13.

Tier I and Tier II Diverse Suppliers

Continued

Diversity Attributes	Company Name	State	Amount	Category
WBE	GA Rich & Sons	ILLINOIS	\$767,997	Construction
WBE	Glesco Electric, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$30,162	Construction
WBE	Gordon Electric Supply	ILLINOIS	\$3,996	Direct Material
WBE	Hygieneering, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$13,566	Professional Services
WBE	Indirect	WI	\$270	Construction
WBE	Indirect	ILLINOIS	\$208	Direct Material
WBE	Jay M. Heap & Associates, Ltd.	ILLINOIS	\$5,000	Building & Grounds
WBE	Keramida Environmental, Inc.	IN	\$1,149	Professional Services
WBE	Leading Marks, LLC	GA	\$1	Direct Material
WBE	M & J Underground	ILLINOIS	\$499,466	Construction
WBE	Midwest Engineering and Testing, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$995	Professional Services
WBE	Morreale Communications	ILLINOIS	\$228,843	Professional Services
WBE	Paige Marketing Communications	NY	\$33,260	Professional Services
WBE	Runco Office Supply	ILLINOIS	\$8,411	Building & Grounds
WBE	Scanion Excavating & Concrete	ILLINOIS	\$47,527	Construction
WBE	Schomburg & Schomburg Construction	ILLINOIS	\$10,086	Construction
WBE	SHI Corporation	GA	\$1,173	Direct Material
WBE	Technical Maintenance, Inc.	GA	\$20	Direct Material
WBE	Tegrete Corporation	MN	\$121,087	Building & Grounds
WBE	Terratec Engineering	WI	\$11,000	Professional Services
WBE	Titan Industries, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$10,000	Construction
WBE	Work Zone Safety, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$7,425	Construction
WBE	Work Zone Safety, Inc	ILLINOIS	\$23,479	Construction

VBE	Allegro Industries	ILLINOIS	\$663	Direct Material
VBE	BC Systems	ILLINOIS	\$324,829	Technical Services
VBE	Creative Security Systems, Inc.	GA	\$25	Direct Material
VBE	Gene Wren Construction, LLC	ILLINOIS	\$2,812,562	Construction
VBE	Indirect	ILLINOIS	\$129	Direct Material
VBE	Indirect	WI	\$58	Construction
VBE	MW Cole Construction, LLC	FL	\$109,990	Construction
VBE	Structured Solutions, LLC	IN	\$61,653	Construction
VBE	Whitt Sturtevant, LLP	OH	\$128,226	Professional Services

Small Business Suppliers

Diversity Attributes	Company Name	State	Amount	Category
SBE	Alternate Energy Solutions	IN	\$77,034	Building & Grounds
SBE	Aqua Aerobic Systems, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$2,362	Construction
SBE	Carlile Architects, LLC	ILLINOIS	\$933	Professional Services
SBE	Conserve FS	ILLINOIS	\$3,607	Construction
SBE	Cornwell Engineering Group	VA	\$2,760	Professional Services
SBE	CSG Global Consulting	PA	\$1,462	Information Technology
SBE	Dahme Mechanical Industries, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$17,888	Building & Grounds
SBE	Daniel L. Ribbe Trucking	ILLINOIS	\$43,065	Construction
SBE	Dimeo Bros., Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$248,755	Building & Grounds
SBE	Dixon Engineering, Inc.	MI	\$114,675	Professional Services
SBE	Dorner Products, Inc.	WI	\$27,941	Technical Services
SBE	Exeter Supply Co., Inc.	PA	\$29,423	Direct Material
SBE	Faulkner Buick, Inc.	PA	\$92,164	Vehicles & Equipment
SBE	Flow-Technics, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$37,082	Direct Material
SBE	Fontus Blue, Inc.	OH	\$19,000	Construction
SBE	Henry, Meisenhelmer & Gende, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$106,363	Professional Services
SBE	Intercon Truck Equipment, Inc.	PA	\$30,875	Vehicles & Equipment
SBE	IXOM Watercare, Inc.	CO	\$10,496	Technical Services
SBE	JCI Jones Chemicals, Inc.	FL	\$376,051	Chemicals
SBE	Klingner & Associate, PC	ILLINOIS	\$5,434	Professional Services
SBE	L & H Services, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$498	Construction
SBE	LAI, Ltd.	ILLINOIS	\$351,489	Technical Services
SBE	Lee Jensen Sales, Co., Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$2,284	Technical Services
SBE	Lipsey Logistics Worldwide, LLC	TN	\$87,500	Professional Services
SBE	M.E. Simpson Co., Inc.	IN	\$28,744	Construction
SBE	Manhard Consulting Ltd.	ILLINOIS	\$32,298	Professional Services
SBE	Marc Kresmery Construction, LLC	ILLINOIS	\$113,295	Construction
SBE	Martin Mechanical Corp.	IN	\$19,573	Technical Services
SBE	Midwest Salt, LLC	ILLINOIS	\$20,814	Chemicals
SBE	Midwest Well Service, Inc.	WI	\$769,240	Direct Material
SBE	Nature Environmental Services	ILLINOIS	\$21,550	Professional Services
SBE	Omni-Pump Repairs, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$7,875	Direct Material
SBE	Owens Excavating & Trucking	ILLINOIS	\$13,218	Construction
SBE	Pendergast Safety Equipment	PA	\$5,360	Direct Material
SBE	Phoenix Fire Systems, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$790	Professional Services
SBE	Pittsburg Tank & Tower Maintenance Co., Inc.	KY	\$95,000	Technical Services
SBE	Proshred Security	PA	\$316	Professional Services
SBE	R & R Construction	ILLINOIS	\$1,115,292	Construction
SBE	Rogers Supply Co., Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$228	Direct Material
SBE	Sal Chemical	WV	\$1,687	Chemicals
SBE	Seiler Instrument & Mfg. Co.	MO	\$4,670	Building & Grounds

Small Business Suppliers Continued

Diversity Attributes	Company Name	State	Amount	Category
SBE	Servpro of Kankakee County	ILLINOIS	\$5,427	Building & Grounds
SBE	Smith & Loveless, Inc.	KS	\$46,917	Direct Material
SBE	Staradio Corp.	ILLINOIS	\$5,000	Professional Services
SBE	Stenstrom Excavation & Blacktop Group	ILLINOIS	\$75,726	Construction
SBE	Stenstrom Petroleum Services	ILLINOIS	\$42,081	Construction
SBE	Sterling Water Technologies	PA	\$74,410	Chemicals
SBE	Superior Excavating Company	ILLINOIS	\$220,722	Construction
SBE	The Country Table, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$2,043	All Other
SBE	The Headset Professionals, Inc.	PA	\$751	Direct Material
SBE	Trotter and Associates, Inc.	ILLINOIS	\$136,000	Professional Services
SBE	Viking Chemical Company	ILLINOIS	\$18,536	Chemicals
SBE	Visu-Sewer of Illinois, LLC	WI	\$31,070	Construction
SBE	Water Remediation Technology	CO	\$125,529	Technical Services
SBE	Weldstar Co.	ILLINOIS	\$668	Direct Material
SBE	West Side Tractor Sales	ILLINOIS	\$9,709	Direct Material
SBE	Wheatland Title Co.	ILLINOIS	\$1,580	Building & Grounds

About Aqua Illinois

At Aqua Illinois, we care about the people and communities we serve—over 277,000 people through 69,700 water connections and 24,400 wastewater connections in 14 counties. It's why we continually invest in our systems to ensure we meet state and federal environmental regulations and support local waterways. Aqua Illinois is committed to purchasing from suppliers that strive to improve the environmental quality of its water and wastewater operations, and that use reasonable efforts to minimize pollution, and improve environmental protection and sustainability.



Buying Plan

Procurement Method	Department	Contract Type	NAICS	Procurement Category	Project Description	Anticipated RFP Release Date
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	Peotone Interconnects	May-24
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	Indianola Well	May-24
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	Cleveland Street Water Main Replacement	May-24
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	Moecherville WTP Improvements	May-24
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	NM 2024 I&I Reduction Program	May-24
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	NM 2025 I&I Reduction Program	May-25
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	BBN 2024 I&I Reduction Program	May-24
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	BBN 2025 I&I Reduction Program	May-25
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	Willowbrook Tank Improvements	Aug-24
Invitation to Bid	Engineering	Construction	237110	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction	Plum Creek WWTP Improvements	Apr-25
RFP	Engineering	Design	541330	Engineering Services	BBN 2025 I&I Reduction Program	Feb-25
RFP	Engineering	Design	541330	Engineering Services	NM 2025 I&I Reduction Program	Feb-25
RFP	Engineering	Design	541330	Engineering Services	Sun River Terrace Iron Removal Plant	Jan-25
RFP	Engineering	Design	541330	Engineering Services	Eastwood Manor Iron Removal Plant	Jun-24
RFP	Engineering	Design	541330	Engineering Services	Woodlawn Iron Removal Plant	Jan-25



An Essential Utilities Company

To learn more about Aqua, please call 877.987.2782, or visit:

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