



**Water & Sewerage  
Department**

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 15, 2019



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# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE TO THE BOARD



Water & Sewerage  
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- The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) will upgrade more than 50 miles of water and sewer pipe this year across the city, and it will be the first time we embark on improvements with a neighborhood approach.
  - DWSD will also install several green stormwater infrastructure projects.
  - In addition, DWSD is involved in the City's streetscape improvements under construction this spring/summer, including replacing 23 fire hydrants on Livernois near the Avenue of Fashion because the sidewalk is being expanded and replacing the water main on Grand River between Evergreen and the Southfield Freeway.
- You will see in this report that DWSD staff continue to make improvements in fire hydrant maintenance, with less than 0.5% of the hydrants with a work order for repair or replacement.
  - This is a collaborative effort with the Detroit Fire Department who performs the inspections, while DWSD receives and responds to public complaints and does the repair and replacement of the hydrants.
- DWSD continues to meet with the US Water Alliance, community advocates and other organizations to not only share about the compassionate assistance program – WRAP, the Water Residential Assistance Program – and the customer service improvements, but also gathering feedback on how to further improve to assist low-income Detroiters.
  - Out of these meetings, the DWSD executive team decided to add a new customer communication action by sending a postcard to delinquent residential accounts to help them avoid a service interruption before they even get a 7-day door hanger notice for nonpayment.
  - On the new postcard, and a new flier which has the same information, is a list of both DWSD programs and third-party assistance available to residents who need help with water bills, utilities and other household basic needs.
  - The website has also been updated to match the information on the printed materials.





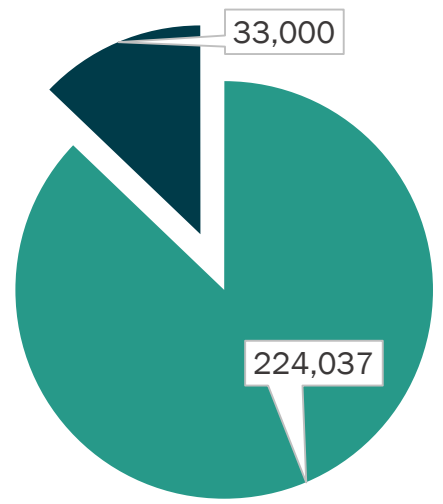
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# Customer Care

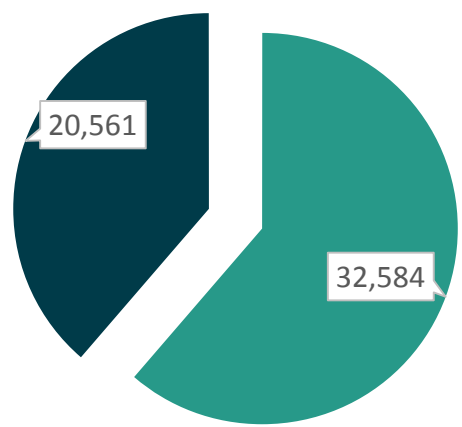
# CUSTOMER CARE: Number of Active Accounts



### Active Residential Accounts



### Active Non-Residential Accounts



■ Water/Sewerage/Drainage ■ Drainage Only (no water service)

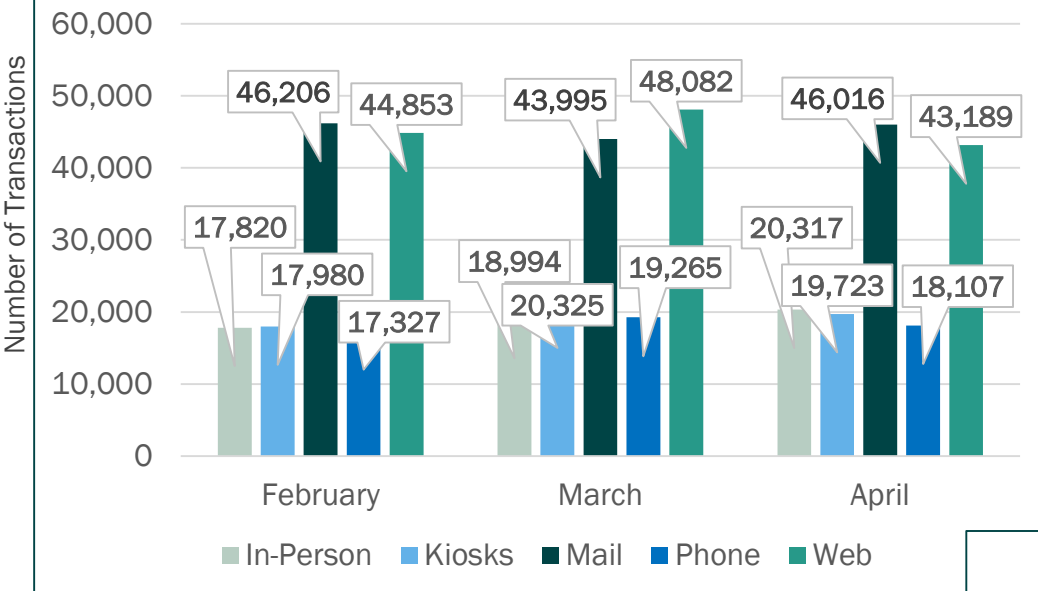
■ Water/Sewerage/Drainage ■ Drainage Only (no water service)

Vacant parcels, parking lots and other properties with no need for water service, receive stormwater charges only (drainage).

# CUSTOMER CARE: Transactions

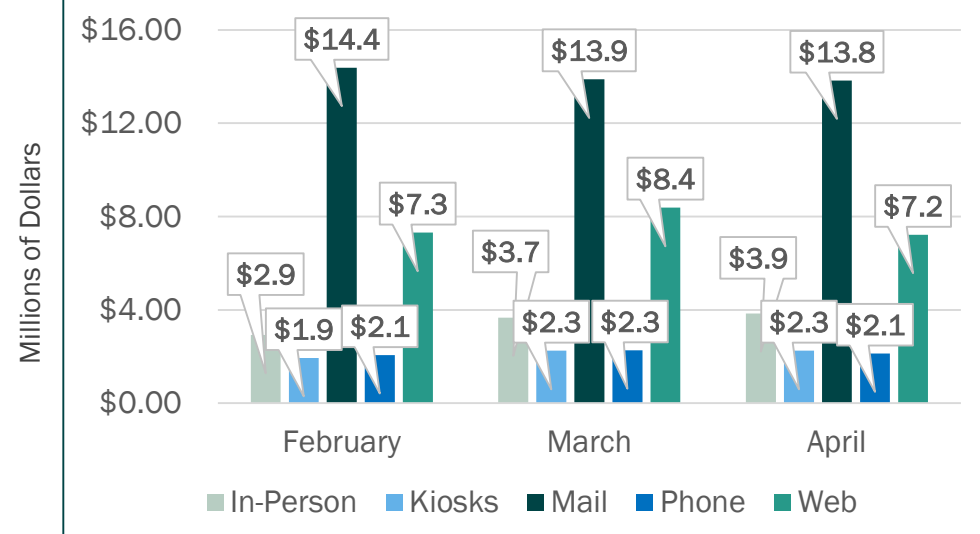


## Payment Transactions by Platform Type



DWSD is presenting this payment transaction data in a three-month series to show trends.

## Revenue Collected by Platform Type



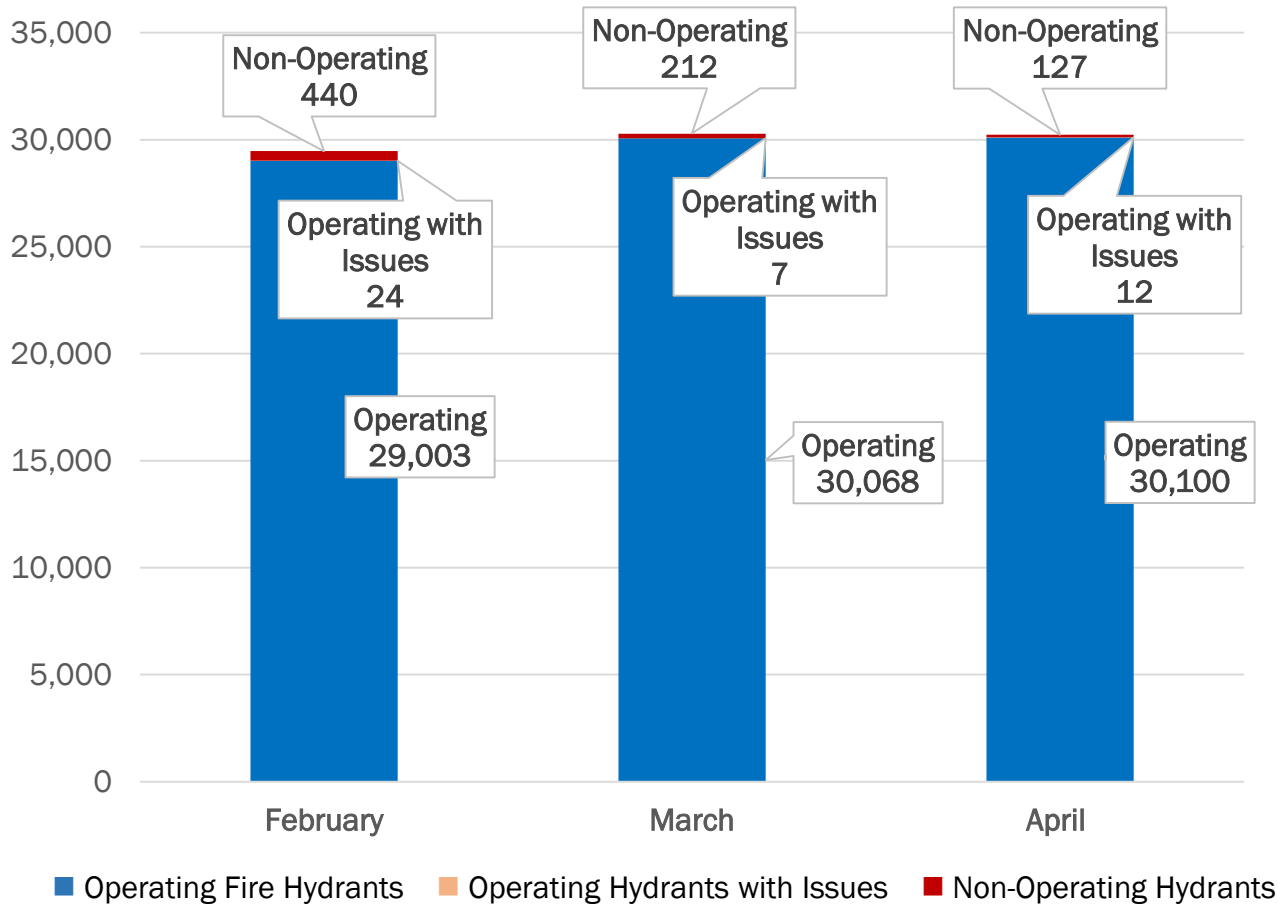


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# Field Services



# FIELD SERVICES: Fire Hydrant Maintenance



The number of fire hydrants with maintenance work orders is 0.045% of all city-owned hydrants in Detroit as of April 28, 2019.



# FIELD SERVICES: Running Water



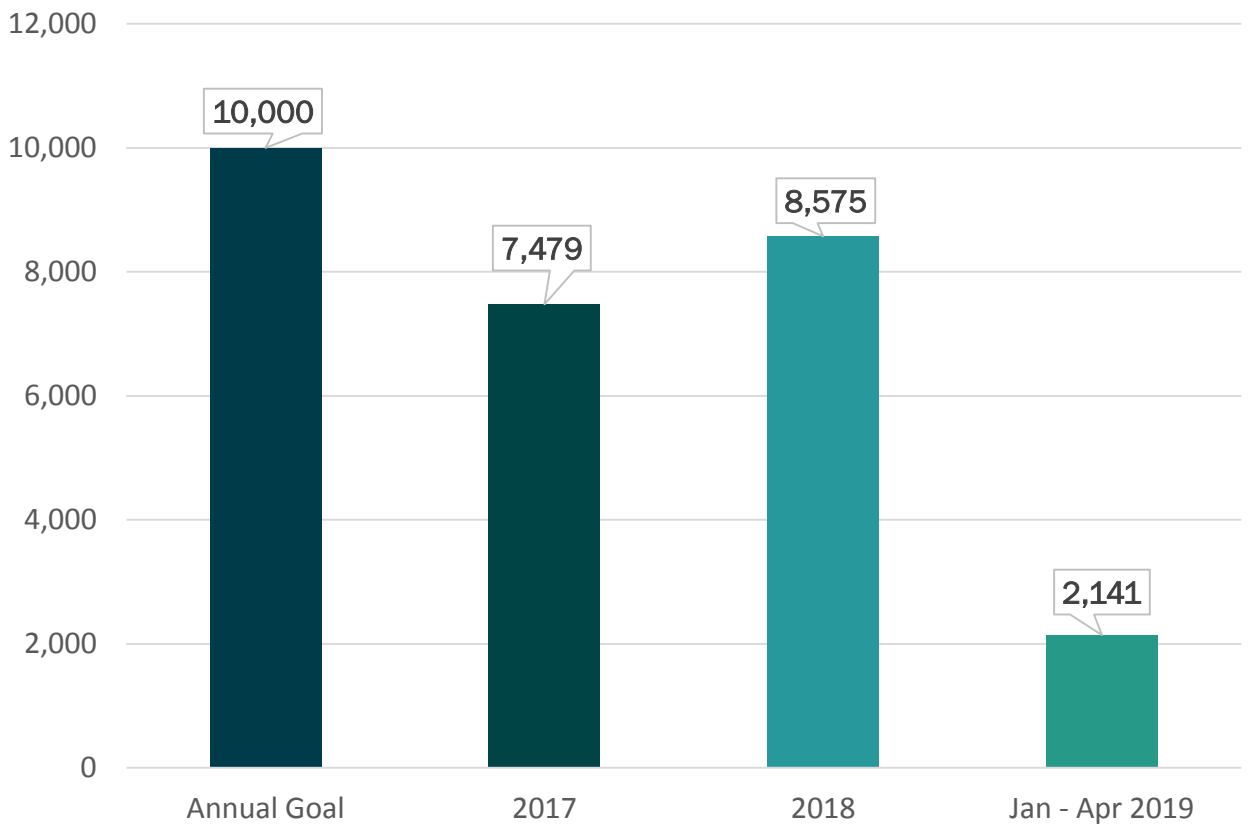
A significant increase in running water reports during the first part of this year, largely due to the dramatic changes in temperature, including the Polar Vortex when outdoor temperature dropped well below zero. Running water reports include water flowing on a street, issues at vacant properties, and calls by residents who see gushing/flowing water that is out of the ordinary.

# FIELD SERVICES: Water Main Breaks



When there is a significant temperature change – hot or cold – the condition of the soil alters and shifts the pipes. There was a major spike in the number of water main breaks during late January and into February due to outdoor temperature falling well below zero for several days.

# FIELD SERVICES: Catch Basin Inspection & Cleaning



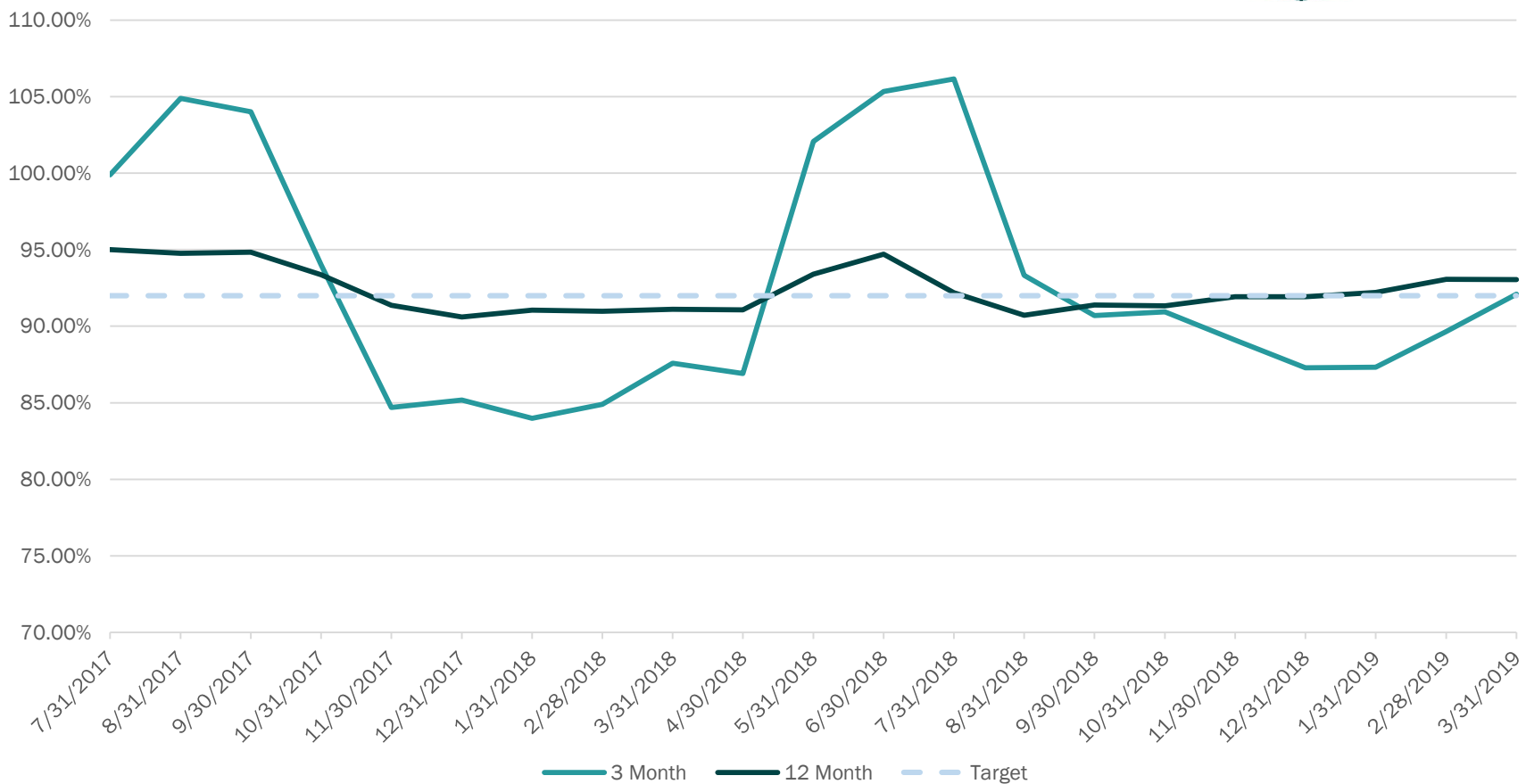
The catch basin inspection and cleaning program is on target to reach it's 30,000 basin goal within three years (launched August 2017). Due to the efforts of the crews, DWSD is seeing a decrease in the volume of catch basin complaints.



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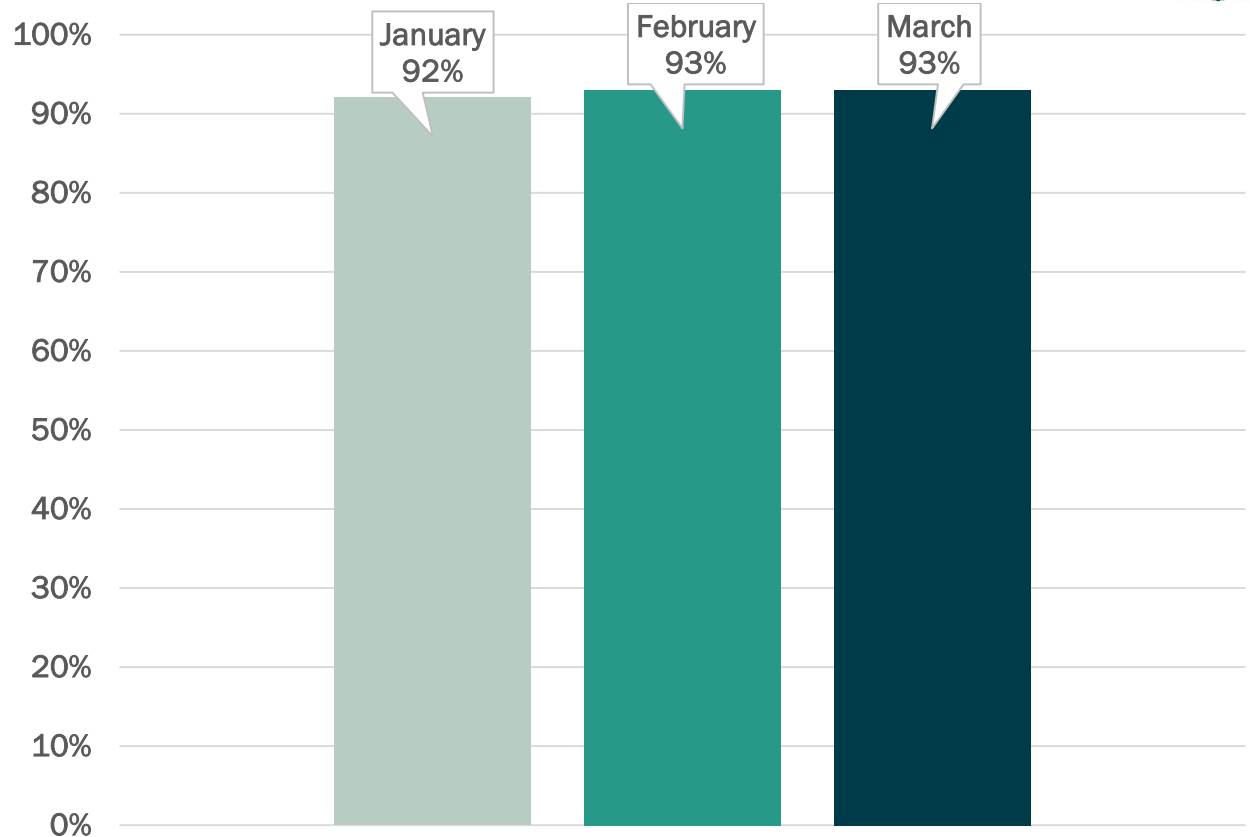
# Finance

# FINANCE: Bill Collection Rate



During the winter months, the collection rate historically decreases as households choose to pay their heating bills and catch up later with water bills in the spring, even moreso this past winter due to the temperatures falling well below zero for several days. Every percentage increase in the collection rate above 80 percent is an additional \$4.5 million which can be applied to the maintenance of and upgrades to the water and sewer systems.

# FINANCE: Bill Collection Rate



12-Month Rolling Average Collection Rate

Prior to 2016 and the bifurcation with the Great Lakes Water Authority, the bill collection rate was 77 percent. Since the current leadership began at DWSD, changing the business practices, improving technology, customer service and outreach, the collection rate has remained above 90 percent the last three years.

# FINANCE: Cash Balance



**\$95,886,919**

Water cash balance as of  
March 31, 2019

**\$162,531,194**

Sewer cash balance as of  
March 31, 2019

As of March 31, 2019, DWSD had 230 days of cash on hand. The target is 120 days.





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# Legal Services

# LEGAL: Claims, Hearings and Cases



**0**  
Property damage claims

**0**  
Basement backup damage claims appeals

**36**  
Dispute hearings

**20**  
Number of cases DWSD prevailed

**15**  
Cases handled by in-house staff

**10**  
Cases handled by outside counsel

**1**  
Lawsuits dismissed

**N/A**  
Amount in property damage claims

**N/A**  
Basement backup damage claim appeals

**N/A**  
Total claims recommended to be paid

**\$100,853**  
Amount in dispute

**\$33,584**  
Credited to customers based on hearing outcomes

**\$67,269**  
Owed to DWSD after hearings

DWSD uses a mix of in-house and contracted legal counsel to handle damage claims, civil action for commercial delinquencies and lawsuits filed against the department.

Customers who have bill disputes may request a hearing at the City of Detroit Department of Appeals and Hearings.



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# Investigations

# INVESTIGATIONS: Results



**1,535**  
[153 per month, on average]  
Parcels investigated for delinquency, possible meter tampering and no meter since July 1, 2018



Money Owed to DWSD identified by Investigators  
**\$4,680,003**  
Total since July 1, 2018

**\$1,467,169**  
Back billed

**\$2,047,219**  
Future owed in 12 months

**\$1,165,615**  
Water loss

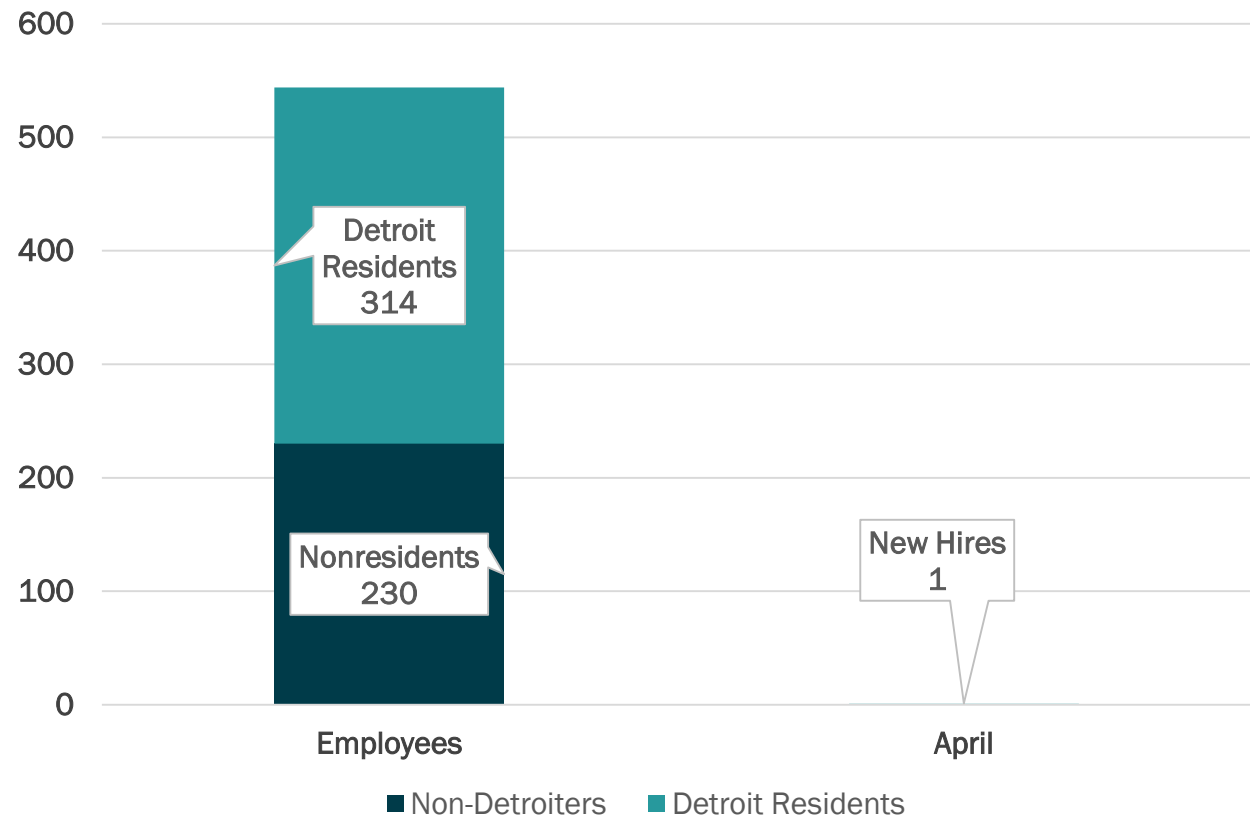
The DWSD Revenue Recovery Unit, in collaboration with customer service/billing, has identified nearly \$8 million in services owed by primarily commercial customers since its creation in August 2017. They uncovered severe delinquencies, non-working meters, unauthorized use of fire hydrants, tampering with the meters, or connected to the city's water main without a meter and/or permit. The team works closely with the DWSD collections and legal staff.



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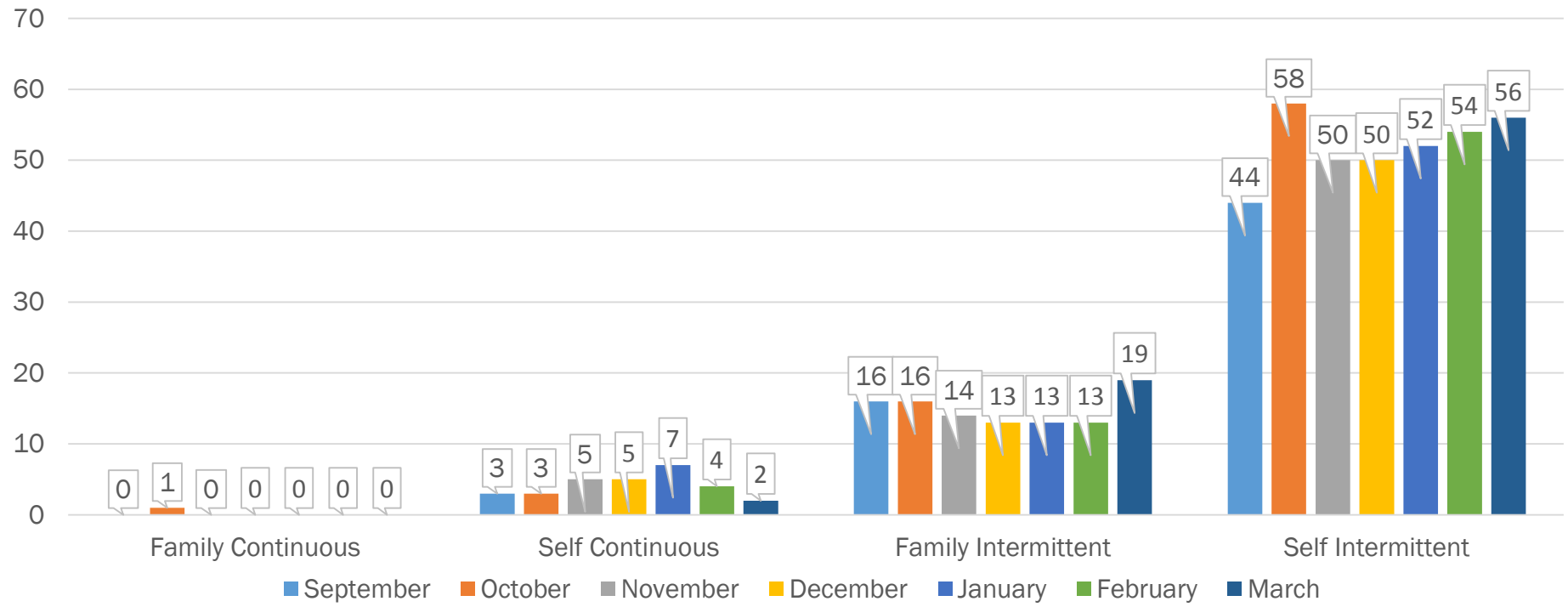
# Human Resources

# HUMAN RESOURCES: Detroit Residents and Hiring



Fifty-seven percent of the DWSD workforce lives in Detroit.

# HUMAN RESOURCES: Family Medical Leave Act







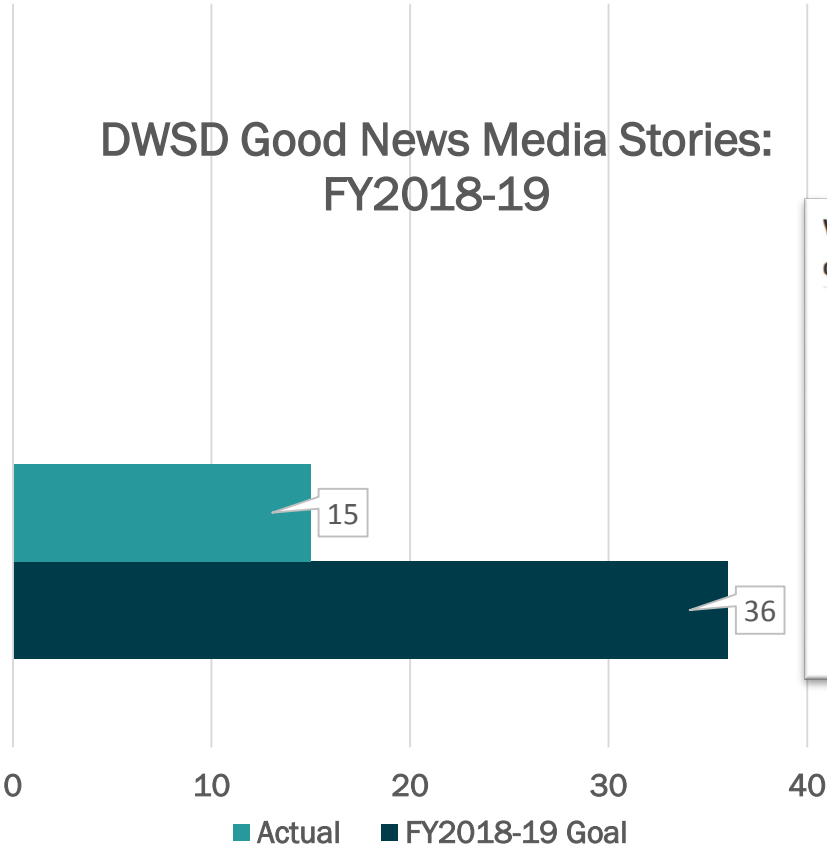
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# Public Affairs

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS: Good News



## DWSD Good News Media Stories: FY2018-19



**Wayne County Treasurer's Office partnered with community organizations for Customer Assistance Day**

Wayne County Treasurer's Office partners with DTE Energy, Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency and the City of Detroit Water and Sewerage Department for Customer Assistance Day.

Wednesday April 10, 2019- The Wayne County Treasurer's Office (WCTO) partnered with community organizations to host Customer Assistance Day at Eastern Market Shed 3 in Detroit. This event provided community members with information about utility payment plans, home energy consultations, energy-saving information, taxpayer assistance and other services available to Michigan residents. The WCTO staff was available on-site to assist taxpayers with property taxes and to provide information on available payment plans.

## The Detroit News

**Fewer Detroit water customers at risk of shutoffs**

Christine Ferretti, The Detroit News | Published 5:58 p.m. ET April 11, 2019 | Updated 8:32 p.m. ET April 11, 2019

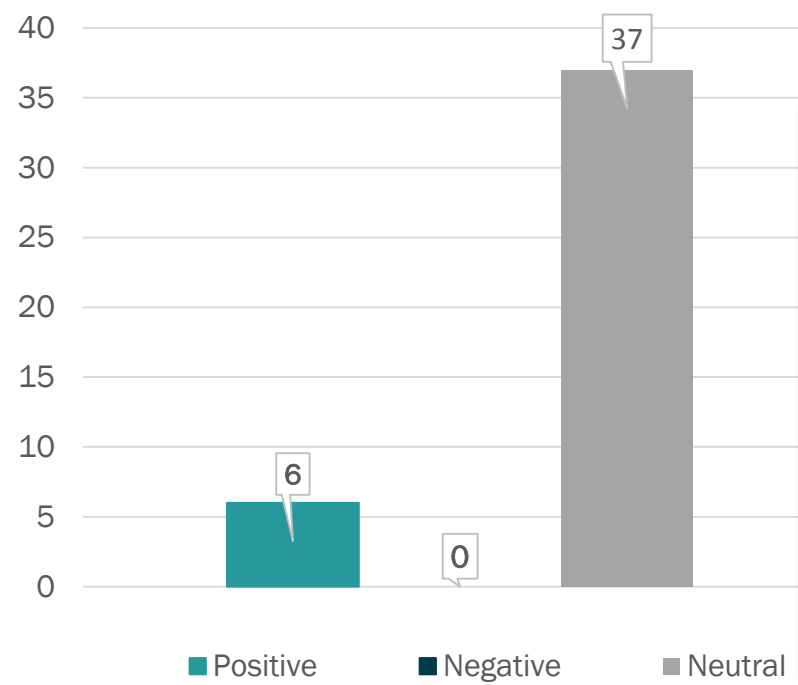
This month, the Public Affairs group garnered 2 positive news stories. One about the drastic drop in number of households at-risk for a service interruption this year. The other was a story about DWSD partnering with other government entities and organizations including DTE and the Wayne County Treasurer for a Customer Assistance Day.

**PLEASE NOTE:** For this metric, news stories are only counted once per topic, not by the number of media outlets picking up the story.

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS: Positive vs. Negative News Stories



DWSD News Coverage: April 1 – April 30, 2019



This month the DWSD Public Affairs group saw a total of 43 media stories. The majority of the neutral stories were regarding the water main break in Corktown. Even though there were many stories on the break, the media covered only the prompt response of DWSD’s crew. For the first time in the last five years, the service interruption stories were majority positive, highlighting the customer assistance programs and outreach efforts. Of the stories, 10 were broadcast, 25 were print/online and 8 were radio.



**PLEASE NOTE:** For this metric, each story/interview published or aired is counted.

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS: Social Media Activity



**67**  
New Facebook Followers

**7,786**  
Total Followers on Facebook

**3,083**  
Engagement on Facebook



**12**  
New Twitter Followers

**1,532**  
Total Followers on Twitter

**208**  
Engagement on Twitter



**16**  
New Instagram Followers

**1,116**  
Total Followers on Instagram

**907**  
Engagement on Instagram



The DWSD gained **95** new followers on social media in April 2019, bringing the total number of followers to **10,434**. In addition to the metrics above, Facebook saw a total of 329,200 impressions and 3,083 link clicks. The top performing post on Facebook was on April 2 when DWSD featured the Returning Citizens – one year later, with 424 reactions, 22 comments and a reach of 9,443. The April 5<sup>th</sup> post explaining how the drainage rate is calculated was the top performing post on Twitter, with 6 responses, 4 retweets and a reach of 7,037.



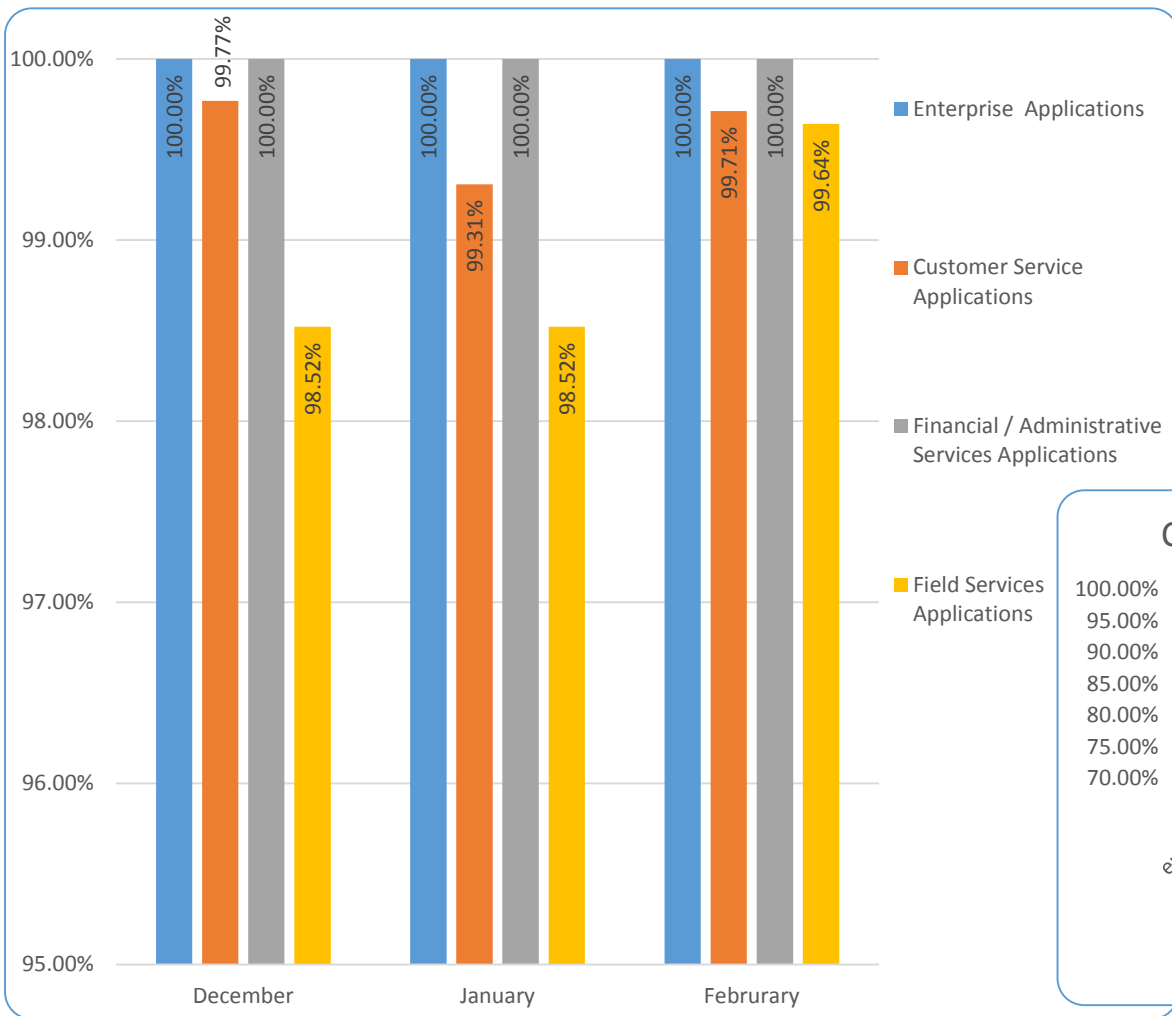
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# Information Technology

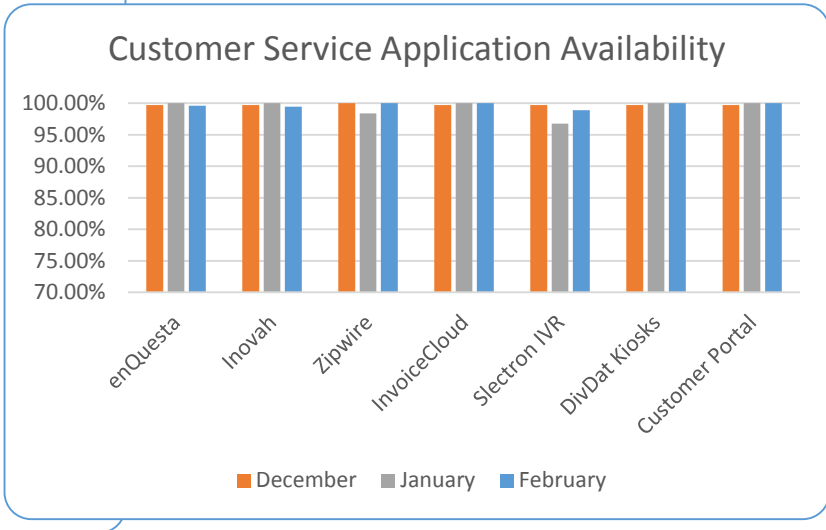
# Technology: Application Availability



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**99.85%**  
MONTHLY AVAILABILITY  
99.9% = TARGET



In the Informational Technology (IT) Group, the major projects underway are the transition from Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) IT shared services which includes new network, active director, BOX.com, print/fax services, IVR upgrade to the cloud, and GIS (Geographic Information System) to City of Detroit migration; launch of fleet management programs AssetWorks, FleetFocus and FuelFocus; CityWorks to replace WAM work order system; and Customer Care Web Portal phase two.