

Water Operations Fund

FUND 600

The Water fund provides for the supply, treatment, storage, and distribution of the City's potable water system, which annually provides approximately 1.1 billion gallons of water to DeKalb residents and businesses. The City's Public Water System is a modern, state-of-the-art water supply and serves a population of over 44,000 residents including Northern Illinois University. The water provided to the residents of DeKalb comes from six deep wells which pump from deep sandstone aquifers, and three shallow wells that pump from sand and gravel aquifers. Groundwater is treated at one of five ion-exchange/iron removal water treatment plants. The treatment process produces a high quality water supply by reducing the amount of hardness and iron in the water.

Before leaving the treatment plant, the groundwater is treated with chlorine and phosphate to ensure the safety of the water supply within our distribution system. In addition, fluoride is added to the water to promote the development of strong teeth.

After treatment, the water enters the distribution system for use or is stored in one of the City's four elevated water towers. The four towers have the ability to store a total of 5.75 million gallons. The elevated towers provide storage and maintain system pressures for fire protection.

Utility staff maintain over 180 miles of water main making up the City's water distribution system. The system also includes over 2,500 hydrants, 3,000 valves and 11,000 service lines and metered accounts. Ensuring all of these assets are adequately maintained is critical to a safe, uninterrupted water supply to our community and the ability to provide fire protection at all times.

Utility Staffing Level	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
FT	10	8	9
PT Seasonal	1	1	1
FTE	11	9	10

The primary source of funding for the Water Operations Fund (Fund 600) and Water Capital Fund (Fund 620) is water sales, accounting for over 95% of the total revenue to these two funds. Overall, the Water Department continues to see a decline in water demands. Water sales have decreased an average of 1.41% annually over the past 10 years. The decrease can be attributed to multiple factors that influence water use including low-flow water fixtures, decreased NIU enrollment, loss of large industrial users and flat residential growth in the community. The Covid-19 pandemic also negatively impacted water use in 2020 primarily due a further decrease in overall in-resident NIU enrollment as many students elected to take classes remotely. Water use is expected to stabilize or moderately increase over the next few fiscal years as a result of new development in the Chicago West Business Park and the downtown core. This includes the new Ferrara and Facebook facilities on the Gurler Road corridor as well as additional water demands expected as a result of Cornerstone, Plaza DeKalb, Isaac Suites, Home2 Suites, Agora Towers, Raising Cane Restaurant and Johann Suites to among others.