

WORLD WATER HUB SUCCESS STORY

LISA SASSO, PROJECT MANAGER
MILWAUKEE METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE DISTRICT



A LIFELONG PASSION FOR WATER

Growing up in Wisconsin inspired a passion for water and the outdoors in Lisa Sasso. With access to countless lakes, rivers and streams, she fostered this love of the environment and water from a young age, which is why when it came time to pick a career, Sasso followed her heart. Leveraging the state's unique programs for water technology workforce development, she enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater (UW-W), one of the only universities in the nation that combines water and business curriculum. While on campus, Sasso's mom told her about the university's new water resources emphasis, which was available for Sasso's Integrated Business and Science major. She saw the opportunity to marry her academics to her love of water, and entered the program.

FOSTERING A CAREER IN WATER MANAGEMENT

Wisconsin's complete ecosystem of research, business and governmental bodies encourages water innovation, and helped fuel Sasso's career ambitions. After adding the water resources emphasis to her major, Sasso joined The Water Council (TWC) Student Chapter at UW-W. Membership in the chapter gave Sasso the chance to network with peers who shared her passion for water, as well as introduce her to TWC's members and staff. The relationships she created in the chapter led to Sasso accepting an internship at TWC's headquarters in Milwaukee, giving her the opportunity to access another perspective on water, and deepen her dedication to pursuing a career in the industry.



“I am very happy to be located in the water capital of the world. When I am outside Milwaukee and talk to other cities and organizations about what I do and where I’m from, they talk about all the excitement in Milwaukee and how forward-thinking we are, and that is very fulfilling.”

– Lisa Sasso



When the time came for graduate school, Wisconsin’s water cluster came into play yet again, as Sasso met with officials from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s School of Freshwater Sciences, the only freshwater-focused school in the nation. She embarked on a rigorous professional track, which combined classroom instruction with real-life internships to round out her learning experience.

By leveraging her contacts in the industry, Sasso landed an internship with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD). During her two years at MMSD, Sasso was able to grow even further in her career. She said she loved being able to work and learn somewhere that she could clearly see the impact she was making on society, whether that was through new conservation measures, stormwater management or other water-related endeavors.

After graduating in 2014 from the School of Freshwater Sciences, Sasso started working full-time at MMSD, this time focusing on managing and monitoring stormwater. Sasso’s water-centric academic and professional career showcases how Wisconsin’s water industry cluster, The Water Council, and academic partners develop and nurture talent today to solve tomorrow’s water woes.