



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA WATER DEPARTMENT

Deputy Commissioner of Operations





The Position

The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) is seeking an experienced, operationally grounded executive to serve as Deputy Commissioner of Operations (DCO) who will work in one of the largest and most complex integrated water utilities in the United States. PWD is an operating department of the City of Philadelphia, delivering services in a fair, equitable, and cost-effective manner, with a commitment to positive customer experience. The DCO must be able to think at both the executive and strategic level and demonstrate keen executive presence. The DCO reports directly to the Water Commissioner and serves as a key advisor on operational performance, regulatory risk, staffing strategy, and long-term utility direction.

This position provides a rare opportunity to shape the day-to-day reliability and long-term resilience of a system that delivers safe drinking water to 1.6 million Philadelphians and manages wastewater services for 2.2 million in Philadelphia and certain surrounding municipalities. The DCO will oversee a large, multidisciplinary workforce of approximately 1,379 employees who have deep institutional knowledge and a strong operational foundation. The workforce includes licensed operators, engineers, maintenance personnel, field crews, technical staff, and union-represented employees working within a civil service environment.

The DCO works closely with PWD's divisions of Engineering and Construction, Planning and Environmental Services, Finance, Public Affairs, and Human Resources and Administration, as well as with other City departments, regional governmental agencies, and utility partners while providing executive oversight for the full breadth of PWD's operational enterprise, which includes drinking water treatment, wastewater treatment, biosolids management, water conveyance and collection systems, pumping operations, stormwater management, and green stormwater infrastructure. This encompasses more than 3,100 miles of water mains, 3,700 miles of sewers, six treatment facilities, and dozens of pumping stations, infrastructure that collectively processes over 200 million gallons of drinking water and more than 500 million gallons of wastewater daily. The DCO is responsible for ensuring that this infrastructure performs reliably and remains in full compliance with federal, state, and local regulatory requirements across drinking water, wastewater, biosolids, and stormwater programs.

The role carries direct responsibility for emergency and incident response, including weather events, infrastructure failures, water quality incidents, and regulatory emergencies. The DCO is expected to be available around the clock as operational demands require.

Success in this role is measured by outcomes: treatment facilities operating within permit limits, field crews and maintenance teams deployed efficiently, capital investments coordinated seamlessly with engineering and planning divisions, and a workforce that is safe, well-led, and continuously improving. The DCO will define the organizational structure of the division, establish clear accountability for managers across seven functional areas, and drive operational improvements in workflow coordination, asset management, technology integration, and workforce development. The DCO will maintain a strong presence at treatment plants, pumping stations, and other field locations.

Priorities

- Ensure operational excellence by evaluating and implementing plans to ensure optimal staff deployment, operational processes, and modern policies are in place.
- Strive to ensure the workforce is customer-focused, delivering services with an emphasis on customer care, in a fair, equitable and cost-effective manner.
- Establish good working relationships with the workforce, leaders in and outside of government, the business community, and residents.
- Ensure the development of and regularly evaluated emergency response plans and training.
- Focus on the department's organizational alignment so that it meets the needs of the community through safety, compassion, integrity, collaboration, and excellence.

The Successful Candidate

The next DCO is a seasoned, operationally grounded executive who leads with both authority and humility. This leader is comfortable in a treatment plant or a construction site and presenting to elected officials or collaborating with union leadership. They bring a steady, confident presence to a large and complex organization and earn trust by being visible, accessible, and consistent. Above all, they are driven by a genuine commitment to public service and the responsibility of delivering clean water and reliable wastewater services to the City of Philadelphia residents, businesses, and visitors.

The successful candidate is a skilled people leader with a demonstrated ability to build and sustain high-performing teams across multiple functional areas, effectively build relationships with and communicate with a wide range of stakeholders including vendors and the business community. They delegate effectively, develop their managers, and create conditions for frontline staff to do their best work all in a civil service and union environment.

The successful candidate is a strong communicator who can translate complex operational and technical information for a wide range of audiences, from plant operators and maintenance crews to the Water Commissioner, elected officials, and the public. They are direct and honest, and they follow through on commitments. They approach interagency and interdepartmental collaboration with a partnership mindset, recognizing that PWD's work touches every other function of city government.

The next DCO brings deep knowledge of water and wastewater operations, treatment processes, collection and distribution system management, regulatory compliance, and asset management. They understand the relationship between day-to-day operational decisions and long-term infrastructure investment, and they can work fluidly with engineering, planning, and finance counterparts to align those priorities. Experienced and deliberate communicator, overseeing emergency response, and navigating the regulatory landscape at the federal, state, and local level is essential. Familiarity with treatment processes and integrated utility management is a meaningful advantage.

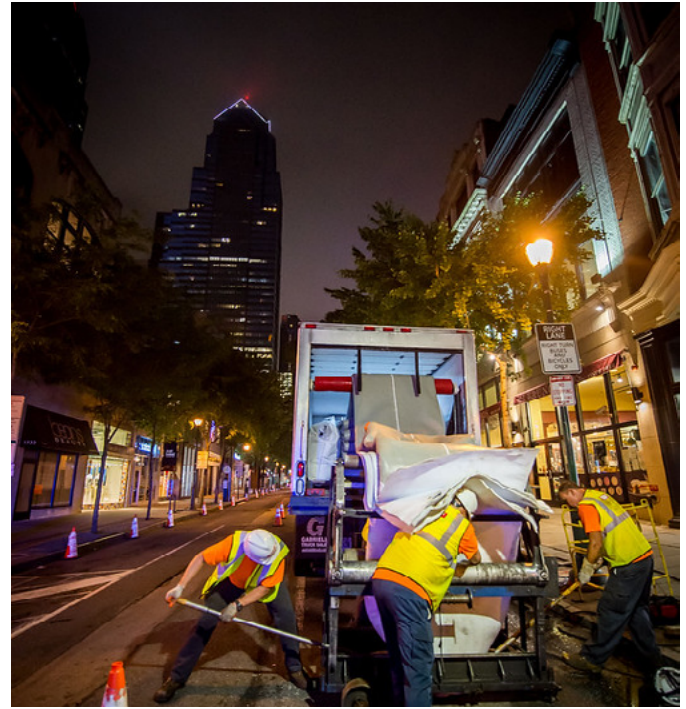
This candidate embraces data and technology as tools for better decision-making and is interested in operational efficiency, process improvement, and modernizing systems where it genuinely serves the workforce and the communities PWD serves.



Qualifications

Minimum requirements include any combination of education and experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree in engineering, environmental science, utility management, or a closely related field, and 10 years of progressively responsible public utility management experience, which must include senior-level management responsibility in a water, wastewater, or integrated utility environment. A valid driver's license and availability to respond to operational emergencies on a 24/7/365 basis are also required.

Preferred qualifications include a master's degree or other advanced degree in a relevant discipline, and experience overseeing unionized workforces and leading large, multidisciplinary operational teams. Registration as a Professional Engineer (PE) issued by the Pennsylvania State Registration Board for Professional Engineers, or the ability to attain licensure via reciprocity, is preferred. Possession of a Class A/E Water and Wastewater Systems Operator license issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is also preferred.



View the full position description with functions, competencies, and qualifications [here](#).

Inside the Philadelphia Water Department

The Philadelphia Water Department is a municipal department of approximately 2,500 employees working in six divisions: Planning and Environmental Services, Engineering and Construction, Human Resources and Administration, Finance, Public Affairs, and Operations. PWD is a "One Water" utility, providing integrated drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services to the City of Philadelphia. PWD has one wholesale drinking water customer and wholesale sewer customers in the surrounding Pennsylvania suburbs.

The primary mission of PWD is to plan for, operate, and maintain both the infrastructure and the organization necessary to purvey high-quality drinking water, to provide an adequate and reliable water supply for all household, commercial, and community needs, and to sustain and enhance the region's watersheds and quality of life by managing wastewater and stormwater effectively.

In fulfilling its mission, the Department seeks to be customer-focused, delivering services in a fair, equitable, and cost-effective manner. Having already served the City and region for nearly two centuries, the Department's commitment for the future includes an active role in the economic development of Greater Philadelphia and a legacy of environmental stewardship.

PWD maintains a network of more than 3,100 miles of water mains, 3,700 miles of sewers, six treatment facilities, and dozens of pumping stations, serving over half a million customer accounts. PWD's annual budget is approximately \$1.5 billion (combined operating and capital).



The Community

Located in southeastern Pennsylvania, Philadelphia is the state's largest city and home to approximately 1.6 million residents. The City of Philadelphia's leadership is committed to being the safest, cleanest, and greenest large city in the nation with access to economic opportunity for all. As the sixth most populous city in the United States and the birthplace of American democracy, Philly remains a significant historic, cultural, and economic hub for the region—without the high price tag of other major east coast cities! We combine relative affordability with world-class cultural offerings and a rich urban character that is uniquely Philly.

Philly is perfect for those looking to play tourists in their own city. It was voted “Most Walkable City” by USA Today for the third year in a row and offers vibrant neighborhoods where history and modern life intersect. From Independence Hall in Old City to the developing contemporary skyline, Philadelphia seamlessly blends past and present.

The City's food scene reflects its diversity and depth, with flavors spanning from the bustling streets of Chinatown to the historic Italian Market, and of course, the many locations to sample the world-famous Philly cheesesteak. Philly is also the mural capital of the world, with more than 4,000 public artworks, and boasts a thriving arts landscape anchored by the iconic Philadelphia Museum of Art and its surrounding cultural institutions.

Philly is a city unlike any other, but what truly sets us apart is our spirit of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection—rooted in resilience, creativity, and community pride. To live and work here is to join in shaping a city that honors its past while building a brighter future, improving life for its residents, and adding to its already remarkable story.



Compensation and Benefits

The expected hiring range is \$175,000-\$215,000, depending on qualifications, with an excellent benefits package. Learn more about our options and employee-based benefits [here](#).

Benefits offered include the following:

- Medical Benefits: Medical, Prescription, Dental, and Vision
- Additional Benefits: Backup Care, FSA, Pet Insurance, and a host of voluntary benefits
- Vacation Leave: 15 Days
- Administrative (Personal) Leave: 5 days
- Sick Leave: 15 Days
- Paid Holidays: 13 per calendar year
- Retirement: Defined pension contribution plan
- City vehicle and premium parking placard available



How to Apply

Applications will be accepted electronically by Raftelis at raftelis.com. Applicants complete a brief online form and are prompted to provide a cover letter and resume. The position will be open until filled with a first review of applications beginning **November 5, 2026**.



Questions

Please direct questions to Pamela Wideman at pwideman@raftelis.com and Kelsey Batt at kbatt@raftelis.com.

The City of Philadelphia is an Equal Opportunity employer and does not permit discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status, source of income, familial status, genetic information or domestic or sexual violence victim status. If you believe you were discriminated against, call the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations at 215-686-4670 or send an email to faqpchr@phila.gov.