



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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Funding available for green infrastructure projects from MWRD



Green alleys and rain gardens are two popular green infrastructure practices that the MWRD selects each year to fund. Cook County municipalities and public agencies are encouraged to apply for assistance.

Applications are now being accepted by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) to fund and support local green infrastructure projects that mitigate flooding, protect area water quality and enhance public spaces.

The MWRD seeks to partner with local municipalities and public agencies to install green infrastructure throughout its service area in Cook County. For more information, including program guidelines, partnership responsibilities and eligibility requirements, please visit <https://mwr.org/GI-app>. Applications are due by Sept. 6.

“This is the perfect time to work together to improve our community spaces, manage stormwater and build a more resilient region,” said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. “We encourage local municipalities and public agencies to consider green infrastructure and apply to the MWRD for funding assistance.”

The MWRD has completed or is currently planning for 60 green infrastructure projects throughout Cook

County since its first call for projects in 2017, with 21 projects on schedule to be completed this year. In total, once complete, these 60 projects will retain more than 6.6 millions gallons of stormwater volume per rain event.

Green infrastructure is a type of stormwater management that uses natural or biological modes of controlling stormwater to prevent or reduce the flow of water from entering the sewer system. While conventional gray infrastructure enlists concrete pipes to convey stormwater, green infrastructure tools, like rain gardens and permeable pavement, can store water before it slowly soaks into the underlying soil.

“Green infrastructure is an excellent community investment that can help reduce flooding and urban runoff, improve area water quality and decrease the load on our sewer systems,” said MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos. “With more intense rain events on the horizon this summer, now is the right time to plan for green infrastructure improvements.”

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Funding available for green infrastructure projects from MWRD, *cont.*

Following its popular call for green infrastructure projects in 2020, the MWRD selected 16 projects that will mitigate flooding for 1,673 structures and provide the capacity to retain more than 1.6 million gallons of water per rain event. These projects include permeable streets, intersections, parking lots and alleys that offer an innovative way to soak up more water and prevent it from overwhelming local sewers, basements, waterways and streets throughout Cook County.

As part of the MWRD's Green Infrastructure Partnership Opportunity Program, applicants must have perpetual ownership or easement over the project site and agree to maintain and operate the completed project long term. Eligible public entities include municipalities, townships, county agencies, park districts, school districts and other local government organizations. All projects will be required to meet the MWRD's procurement, labor and affirmative action requirements.

The MWRD has implemented a wide variety of green infrastructure programs, introducing a low-cost rain barrel distribution program for 2021 while also giving away free oak tree saplings every Wednesday at its water reclamation plants. The MWRD has also collaborated with



In Tinley Park, the MWRD contributed \$200,000 to fund 16,500 square feet of permeable pavers and convert North Street into a green street. The project replaced the existing asphalt with green infrastructure that will provide more than 69,000 gallons of stormwater storage on site.

partners to transform Chicago schoolyards into vibrant places to learn and play atop attractive and permeable surfaces and is looking into expanding a similar program into suburban Cook County.

For more information, contact Holly Sauter at SauterH@mwr.org or GIApps@mwr.org.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at mwr.org.