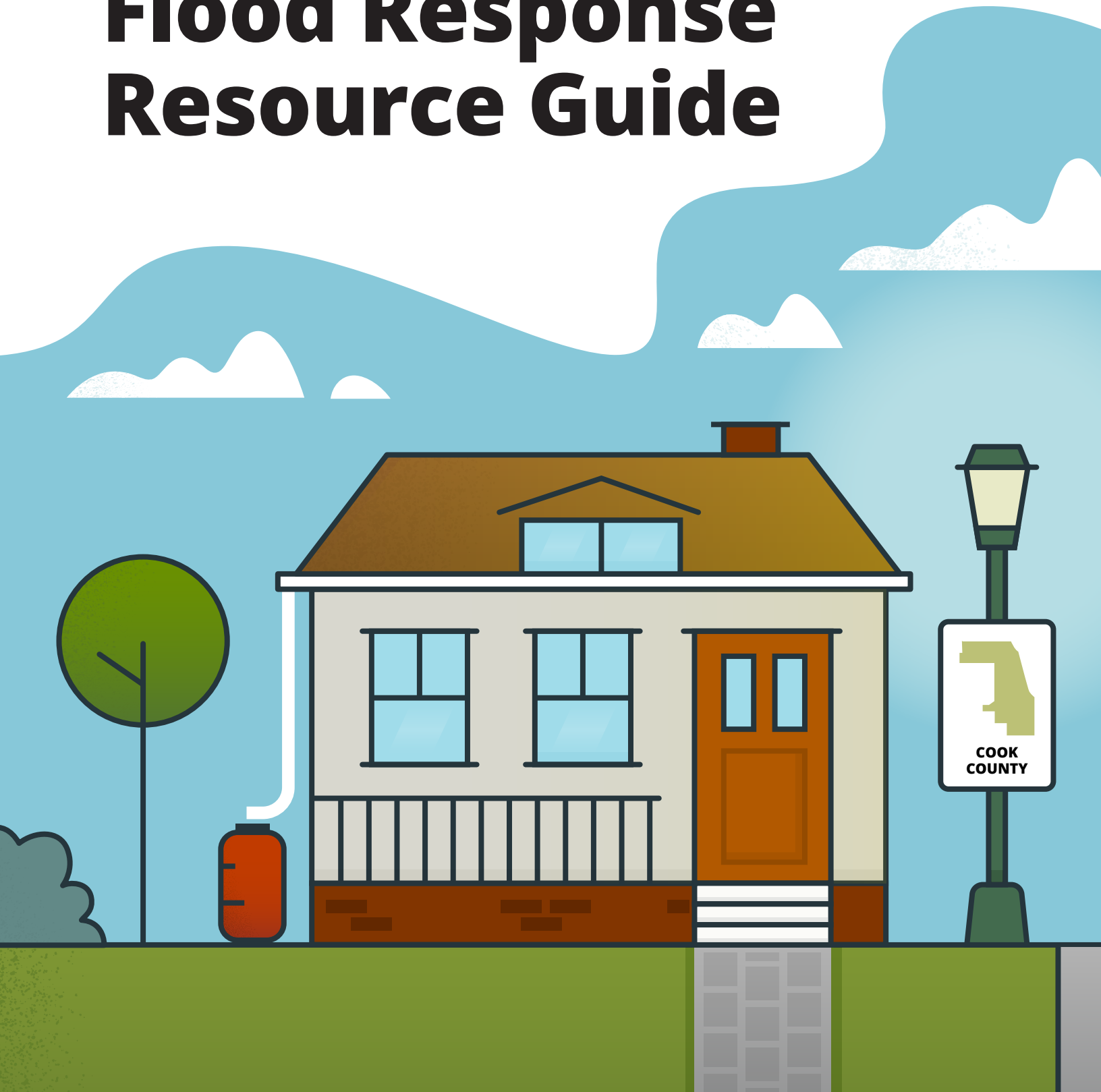




**Metropolitan Water
Reclamation District
of Greater Chicago**

WHAT TO DO AND WHERE TO GET HELP

Flood Response Resource Guide



Flooding can be devastating, leaving behind damage, stress and financial hardship.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) works around the clock to manage stormwater, mitigate flooding and protect our water environment, but unpredictable storms and other forces of nature are inevitable. The MWRD created this resource guide to provide clear information and practical tools to help residents recover and prepare for the future when those storms and flooding occurs.

Inside this document you will find:

- steps to take after a flood
- ways to protect your home and family
- resources available throughout Cook County

Our goal is to make it easier for you to navigate recovery and to connect you with the support you need.

Stormwater Management

The MWRD oversees a countywide effort to manage stormwater runoff, reduce flooding, improve the health of our waterways, and protect the source of our drinking water, Lake Michigan.

Learn more about our work and how you can help.

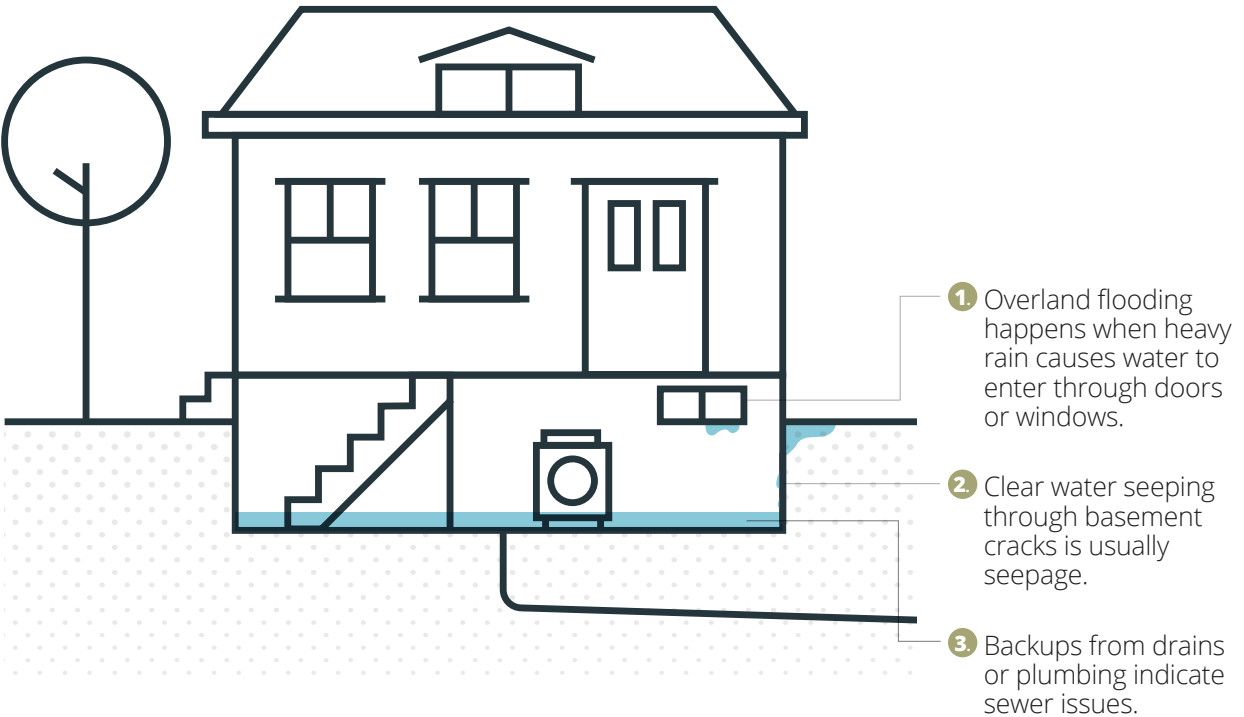
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FOR MORE ON STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
mwrdd.org/stormwater

What you should do during flooding



Identify where the water is coming from.

It may be coming from severe storms in your area, but other possible sources include plumbing leaks, roof leaks, or a malfunctioning sump pump.

Once you've identified the cause, consider contacting a licensed professional for repairs.

Notify your local municipality.

Your municipality needs to be notified so they can respond and track flooding issues and offer available assistance.

Chicago residents can call 3-1-1, visit [311.chicago.gov](https://www.311.chicago.gov), or use the CHI311 app.

Suburban Cook County residents should contact their local municipality (see pages 8-10). Your municipality manages local sewers and works with the MWRD to manage stormwater.

Document any damage to help with insurance claims or disaster assistance.

Clean up safely to protect your health.

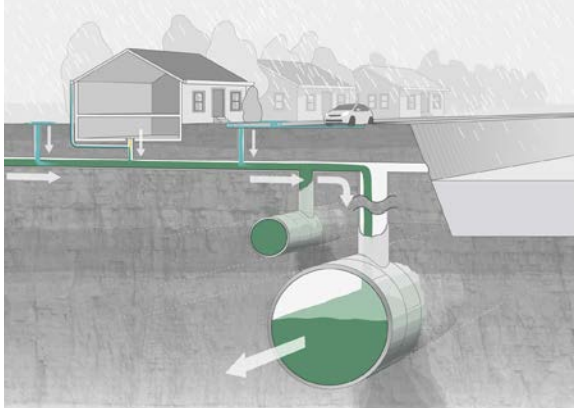


FOR MORE ON WHAT TO DO DURING FLOODING
[mwrdd.org/what-to-do-during-flooding](https://www.mwrdd.org/what-to-do-during-flooding)

Understanding your sewer

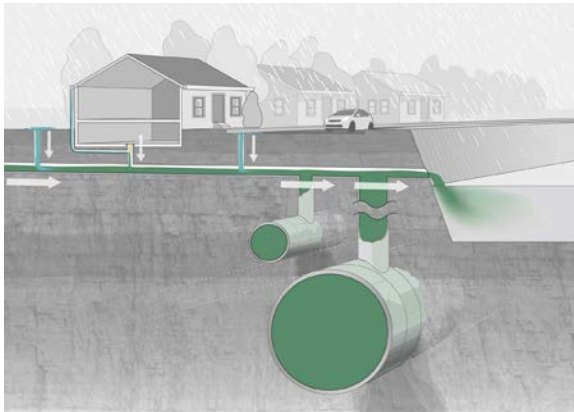
Water from your home flows through a private pipe into your neighborhood sewer, which is owned and maintained by your municipality.

These local sewers connect to larger MWRD intercepting sewers, which carry water to treatment plants where it is cleaned and released back into waterways.

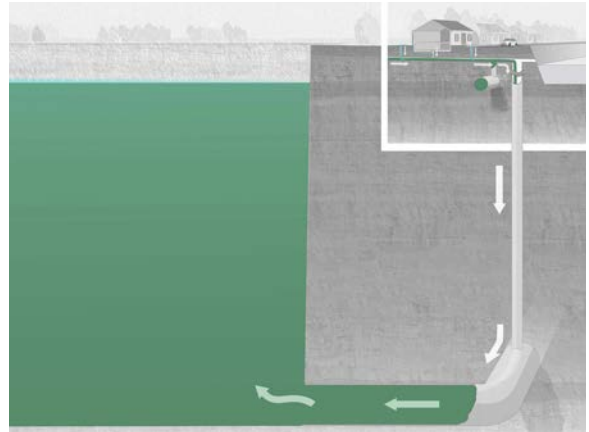


Many communities in the Chicago area have combined sewer systems, where both sewage and rainwater share the same pipes.

During heavy rainfall, too much water can enter these systems, causing combined sewer overflows (CSOs) that release untreated water into waterways.



To address this, the MWRD built the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP), or Deep Tunnel, which captures excess water in huge tunnels and reservoirs until it can be treated after storms.



Basement backups and street flooding often happen when rainwater enters neighborhood sewers faster than it can flow through them.

Even when there is space in MWRD's larger systems, backups can still occur due to clogged or damaged pipes, or simply because the local sewers reach capacity.

The MWRD helps prevent flooding by maintaining sewers, working with municipalities on stormwater projects, and installing green infrastructure like rain gardens and permeable surfaces to absorb rain where it falls.

Residents can help too by disconnecting their downspouts, protecting their private sewer lines, reducing water use during storms, and taking steps to prevent runoff, which improves water quality and reduces flooding risks.



FOR MORE ON UNDERSTANDING YOUR SEWER
mwrld.org/understanding-your-sewer

How the MWRD reduces flooding

The Chicago region's flat landscape makes it prone to flooding.

Since its founding in 1889, the MWRD has focused on reducing flooding and improving water quality for over five million residents.

The MWRD manages major infrastructure



Chicago Area Waterway System, which includes canals and rivers that protect Lake Michigan, provide drainage, and support navigation.



Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) captures sewage and stormwater during heavy rains to prevent sewer overflows, holding water until it can be treated.



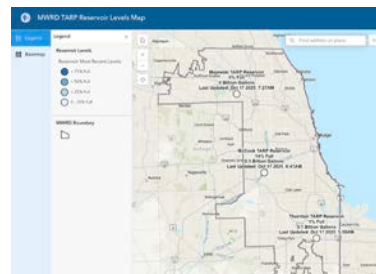
Channel improvements, which clear and widen streams to improve water flow and prevent erosion.



Flood control reservoirs, which temporarily store water from rivers and streams during storms.

The MWRD also works with communities on long-term flood prevention:

- Through four partnership programs: Stormwater, Green Infrastructure, Conceptual Projects and Voluntary Flood Prone Property Acquisition.
- Enforcing the Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO) to reduce runoff from new developments
- Promoting green infrastructure like rain gardens, permeable pavement, and other systems that absorb water where it falls
- Small Stream Maintenance program keeps waterways clear of blockages
- Native landscaping helps naturally manage stormwater and reduce pollution



You can access real time TARP levels on our website



FOR MORE ON REDUCING FLOODING
mwrdd.org/reducing-flooding

The MWRD and Chicago Area Waterway System

The MWRD manages the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) to control water levels and reduce the risk of flooding.

Lake Michigan is normally higher than the CAWS. Before a storm, the MWRD lowers the CAWS water level by releasing more water at Lockport and closing the lake's sluice gates (underwater doors) to create extra space for stormwater while maintaining enough depth for boat traffic.

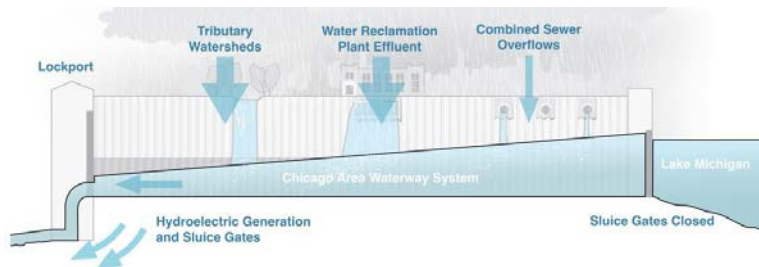
While CAWS operations can reduce overbank flooding, there are limits to their effectiveness. They can only help when the waterway level is higher than the lake, and they don't control flooding in areas outside the CAWS, such as the Des Plaines River.

Additionally, street flooding and basement backups often occur when neighborhood sewers are overwhelmed. Controlling the level in the CAWS helps ensure that when the MWRD's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) facilities are full, sewers can send as much overflow as possible to the CAWS instead of backing up into basements.

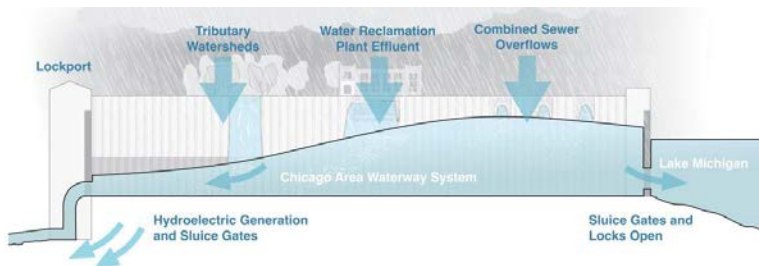
However, municipal sewers are generally decades old and were not sized to convey flow from some of the large storms we experience today. In these situations, neither TARP nor lowering the CAWS can prevent flooding because the storm is delivering more water into the local sewer system than can be conveyed downstream to TARP and the CAWS.



Under normal conditions, water flows into the CAWS from Lake Michigan, local streams, and water reclamation plants, then flows downhill toward the Lockport Powerhouse.



During moderate storms, additional sluice gates are opened to increase outflow while keeping lake gates closed to prevent extra water from entering.



In extreme storms, we maximize the flow released through Lockport, but water can still rise faster than it can be released. If water levels near the control structures at the lake exceed the lake's water level and flooding becomes imminent, the MWRD works with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to open the lake's gates to release water into the lake, a process called a "reversal."



FOR MORE ON THE MWRD AND CHICAGO AREA WATERWAY SYSTEM
mwrld.org/chicago-area-waterway-system-operations

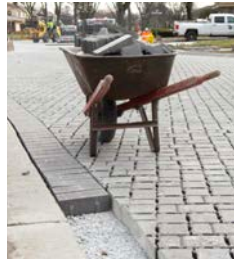
You can help reduce flooding

Flooding is a natural part of our region’s landscape, but you can take steps to help reduce its impact and protect water quality.

Too much water can overwhelm sewers, leading to street flooding, basement backups, and overflows into local waterways. By making small changes at home, you can keep more water out of the sewer system.



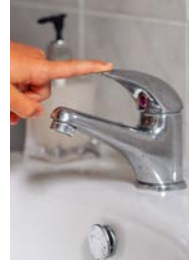
Disconnect downspouts so rainwater flows into your yard instead of the sewer



Replace paved areas with water-absorbing surfaces



Report waterway blockages or flooding to your local municipality



Use less water during storms



Install a rain barrel and rain garden

Read the “Green Neighbor Guide.”



This online resource provides homeowners with detailed information, outlines the equipment needed and gives step-by-step instructions to help manage stormwater at home through practices that utilize green infrastructure.

The guide takes readers through effective stormwater management practices, such as disconnecting downspouts, installing rain barrels, rain gardens and dry wells, and constructing permeable pavement to soak up more water. Each of these applications varies in the amount of time and resources required, but each has its own impact on the land.

You can [download a free copy at mwrđ.org/GNG-English](http://mwrđ.org/GNG-English).



FOR MORE ON REDUCING FLOODING
mwrđ.org/help-prevent-flooding

Overflow Action

You can help reduce basement backups and flooding by conserving water before, during and after rainstorms.

In most of the Chicago area, rainwater goes through the same set of pipes as the water that goes down the drain in your home. When too much water enters sewers too quickly, the sewers can back up into streets and basements. Additionally, extra water in sewers can cause them to overflow into the river in some cases. Every little bit of conservation can help reduce the overall amount of water in the system.

Ways to conserve water



Delay or reduce shower times



Put off running the dishwasher



Wait to wash clothes



Replace old and leaky faucets, toilets and showerheads with new products approved by EPA WaterSense



The MWRD sends out Overflow Action Alerts as reminders to conserve water when heavy rains are forecast.

Overflow Action Alerts are a joint initiative of the MWRD and Friends of the Chicago River.

Sign up to receive Overflow Action Alerts



FOR MORE ON OVERFLOW ACTION
mwrdd.org/overflow-action

Stormwater partnership programs

The MWRD works with local government organizations to protect communities from flooding through four partnership programs: Stormwater, Green Infrastructure, Conceptual Projects and Voluntary Flood Prone Property Acquisition. Local governments and public agencies in Cook County can apply to the MWRD for help with funding stormwater projects.



Stormwater Partnership Program

MWRD provides funding to build shovel-ready stormwater management projects.

The MWRD Stormwater Partnership Program funds (top left) projects that address flooding through a variety of traditional engineering solutions including localized detention, upsizing storm sewers and culverts, pumping stations, establishing drainage ways, as well as green infrastructure.



Green Infrastructure Partnership Program

MWRD provides funding to build GI projects.

The MWRD's Green Infrastructure Partnership Program involves funding projects (top right) like permeable pavement and rain gardens that allow stormwater to infiltrate the ground before entering the sewer system



Conceptual Projects

MWRD provides technical assistance to study your flooding problem and design a solution.

Selected conceptual projects (bottom right) unite MWRD engineers with communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon solution to a stormwater problem. The MWRD provides technical assistance needed on the project, which can include preliminary engineering.



Voluntary Flood-Prone Property Acquisition Program

MWRD provides funding to acquire flood-prone properties. Acquisitions are voluntary.

Some homes located within the floodplain sustain repetitive damage from multiple flood events (bottom left). The FPPA program helps local municipalities acquire these properties in flood-prone areas from willing sellers and restore the property as green space that can better manage stormwater.



FOR MORE ON STORMWATER PARTNERSHIPS
mwrд.org/stormwater/partnerships

Municipality Contacts

| Municipality | Website | Phone |
|---------------------|--|---------------------|
| Alsip | villageofalsip.org | 708-385-6902 |
| Arlington Heights | vah.com | 847-368-5000 |
| Barrington | barrington-il.gov | 847-304-3400 |
| Barrington Hills | barringtonhills-il.gov | 847-551-3000 |
| Bartlett | bartlett.il.gov | 630-837-0800 |
| Bedford Park | villageofbedfordpark.com | 708-458-2067 |
| Bellwood | vil.bellwood.il.us | 708-547-3500 |
| Bensenville | bensenville.gov | 630-766-8200 |
| Berkeley | berkeley.il.us | 708-449-8840 |
| Berwyn | berwyn-il.gov | 708-788-2660 |
| Blue Island | blueisland.org | 708-597-8603 |
| Bridgeview | bridgeview-il.gov | 708-594-2525 |
| Broadview | broadview-il.gov | 708-681-3600 |
| Brookfield | brookfieldil.gov | 708-485-7344 |
| Buffalo Grove | vbg.org | 847-459-2500 |
| Burbank | burbankil.gov | 708-599-5500 |
| Burr Ridge | burr-ridge.gov | 630-654-8181 |
| Burnham | burnham-il.gov | 708-862-9150 |
| Calumet City | calumetcity.org | 708-891-8106 |
| Calumet Park | calumetparkvillage.org | 708-389-0850 |
| Chicago | chicago.gov | 311 or 312-744-5000 |
| Chicago Heights | cityofchicagoheights.org | 708-756-5300 |
| Chicago Ridge | chicagoridge.org | 708-425-7700 |
| Cicero | thetownofcicero.com | 708-656-3600 |
| Country Club Hills | countryclubhills.org | 708-798-2616 |
| Countryside | countryside-il.org | 708-354-7270 |
| Crestwood | crestwood.illinois.gov | 708-371-4800 |
| Deer Park | villageofdeerpark.com | 847-726-1648 |
| Deerfield | deerfield.il.us | 847-945-5000 |
| Des Plaines | desplainesil.gov | 847-391-5300 |
| Dixmoor | villageofdixmoor.org | 708-389-6121 |
| Dolton | vodolton.org | 708-849-4000 |
| East Dundee | eastdundee.net | 847-426-2822 |
| East Hazel Crest | easthazelcrest.com | 708-798-0213 |
| Elgin | elginil.gov | 847-931-6001 |
| Elk Grove Village | elkgrove.org | 847-357-4000 |
| Elmhurst | elmhurst.org | 630-530-3000 |
| Elmwood Park | elmwoodpark.org | 708-452-7300 |
| Evanston | cityofevanston.org | 847-448-4311 |
| Evergreen Park | evergreenpark-ill.com | 708-422-1551 |
| Flossmoor | flossmoor.org | 708-798-2300 |
| Ford Heights | villagesoffordheights.com | 708-758-3131 |
| Forest Park | forestpark.net | 708-366-2323 |
| Forest View | forestview-il.org | 708-788-3429 |
| Frankfort | frankfortil.org | 815-469-2177 |
| Franklin Park | villageoffranklinpark.com | 847-671-4800 |
| Glencoe | villageofglencoe.org | 847-835-4111 |
| Glenview | glenview.il.us | 847-724-1700 |

| Municipality | Website | Phone |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Glenwood | villageofglenwood.com | 708-753-2400 |
| Golf | villageofgolf.us | 847-998-8852 |
| Hanover Park | hpil.org | 630-823-5600 |
| Harvey | cityofharveyil.gov | 708-210-5300 |
| Harwood Heights | harwoodheights.org | 708-867-7200 |
| Hazel Crest | villageofhazelcrest.org | 708-335-9600 |
| Hickory Hills | hickoryhillsil.org | 708-598-4800 |
| Hillside | hillside-il.org | 708-449-6450 |
| Hinsdale | villageofhinsdale.org | 630-789-7000 |
| Hodgkins | villageofhodgkins.org | 708-579-6700 |
| Hoffman Estates | hoffmanestates.org | 847-882-9100 |
| Hometown | cityofhometown.org | 708-424-7500 |
| Homewood | village.homewood.il.us | 708-798-3000 |
| Indian Head Park | indianheadpark-il.gov | 708-246-3080 |
| Inverness | inverness-il.gov | 847-358-7740 |
| Justice | villageofjustice.org | 708-458-2520 |
| Kenilworth | vok.org | 847-251-1666 |
| LaGrange | villageoflagrange.com | 708-579-2300 |
| LaGrange Park | lagrangepark.org | 708-354-0225 |
| Lansing | villageoflansing.org | 708-895-7200 |
| Lemont | lemont.il.us | 630-257-1550 |
| Lincolnwood | lincolnwoodil.org | 847-673-1540 |
| Lynwood | lynwoodil.us | 708-758-6101 |
| Lyons | villageoflyons-il.net | 708-442-4500 |
| Markham | cityofmarkham.net | 708-331-4905 |
| Matteson | villageofmatteson.org | 708-283-4900 |
| Maywood | maywood-il.gov | 708-450-6300 |
| McCook | villageofmccook.org | 708-447-9030 |
| Melrose Park | melrosepark.org | 708-343-4000 |
| Merrionette Park | merrionettepark.org | 708-396-3183 |
| Midlothian | villageofmidlothian.net | 708-389-0200 |
| Morton Grove | mortongroveil.org | 847-965-4100 |
| Mount Prospect | mountprospect.org | 847-392-6000 |
| Niles | vniles.com | 847-588-8000 |
| Norridge | villageofnorridge.com | 708-453-0880 |
| North Riverside | northriverside-il.org | 708-447-4211 |
| Northbrook | northbrook.il.us | 847-272-5050 |
| Northfield | northfieldil.org | 847-446-9200 |
| Northlake | northlakecity.com | 708-343-8700 |
| Oak Brook | oak-brook.org | 630-368-5000 |
| Oak Forest | oak-forest.org | 708-687-4050 |
| Oak Lawn | oaklawn-il.gov | 708-636-4400 |
| Oak Park | oak-park.us | 708-358-5700 |
| Olympia Fields | olympia-fields.com | 708-503-8000 |
| Orland Hills | orlandhills.org | 708-349-6666 |
| Orland Park | orlandpark.org | 708-403-6100 |
| Palatine | palatine.il.us | 847-358-7500 |
| Palos Heights | palosheights.org | 708-361-1800 |

| Municipality | Website | Phone |
|-----------------------|--|--------------|
| Palos Hills | paloshillsweb.org | 708-598-3400 |
| Palos Park | palospark.org | 708-671-3700 |
| Park Forest | villageofparkforest.com | 708-748-1112 |
| Park Ridge | parkridge.us | 847-318-5200 |
| Phoenix | villageofphoenix.com | 708-331-2636 |
| Posen | villageofposen.org | 708-385-0139 |
| Prospect Heights | prospect-heights.il.us | 847-398-6070 |
| Richton Park | richtonpark.org | 708-481-8950 |
| River Forest | vrf.us | 708-366-8500 |
| River Grove | rivergroveil.gov | 708-453-8000 |
| Riverdale | villageofriverdale.net | 708-841-2200 |
| Riverside | riverside.il.us | 708-447-2700 |
| Robbins | robbins-il.com | 708-385-8940 |
| Rolling Meadows | cityrm.org | 847-394-8500 |
| Roselle | roselle.il.us | 630-980-2000 |
| Rosemont | rosemont.com | 847-825-4404 |
| Sauk Village | saukvillage.org | 708-758-3330 |
| Schaumburg | villageofschaumburg.com | 847-895-4500 |
| Schiller Park | villageofschillerpark.com | 847-678-2550 |
| Skokie | skokie.org | 847-673-0500 |
| South Barrington | southbarrington.org | 847-381-7510 |
| South Chicago Heights | southchicagoheights.com | 708-755-1880 |
| South Holland | southholland.org | 708-210-2900 |
| Steger | villageofsteger.org | 708-754-3395 |
| Stickney | villageofstickney.com | 708-749-4400 |
| Stone Park | vosp.us | 708-345-5550 |
| Streamwood | streamwood.org | 630-736-3800 |
| Summit | summit-il.org | 708-563-4800 |
| Thornton | thorntonil.us | 708-877-4456 |
| Tinley Park | tinleypark.org | 708-444-5000 |
| University Park | university-park-il.com | 708-534-6451 |
| Westchester | westchester-il.org | 708-345-0020 |
| Western Springs | wsprings.com | 708-246-1800 |
| Wheeling | wheelingil.gov | 847-459-2600 |
| Willow Springs | willowsprings-il.gov | 708-467-3700 |
| Wilmette | wilmette.gov | 847-251-2700 |
| Winnetka | villageofwinnetka.org | 847-501-6000 |
| Worth | villageofworth.com | 708-448-1181 |

Additional Resources

Local, state, and federal agencies operating in or around Cook County that offer resources to people impacted by flooding.

FEDERAL RESOURCES

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) | Provides disaster assistance to individuals and businesses, including housing aid, temporary shelter, and repair grants after a federal disaster declaration. Assists with applications for Individual Assistance. | 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) TTY: 1-800-462-7585 disasterassistance.gov fema.gov |
| Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Disaster Assistance | Offers tax relief for individuals and businesses in federally declared disaster areas, including extended filing deadlines and casualty loss deductions. | 1-866-562-5227 irs.gov |
| National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) – administered by FEMA | Offers flood insurance to homeowners, renters, and businesses. Assists policyholders with claims and provides information on floodplain management and insurance coverage. | 1-877-336-2627 floodsmart.gov |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) | Supports flood risk management, levee information, and technical assistance during and after flooding events. May assist local governments with sandbagging and flood-fighting measures. | 312-846-5330 (Chicago District) usace.army.mil |
| U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) | May provide housing assistance and recovery funding to communities through Community Development Block Grants – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) and related programs. | 1-202-708-1112 hud.gov |
| U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) | Provides information and technical support on safe cleanup of floodwater, mold, drinking water, and environmental hazards after disasters. | 1-202-272-0167 (Headquarters) epa.gov/natural-disasters/flooding |
| U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Farm Service Agency (FSA) | Provides financial and technical assistance to farmers impacted by floods, including crop loss programs, emergency loans, and conservation assistance. | 1-866-466-8176 (Illinois State FSA Office) fsa.usda.gov |

STATE OF ILLINOIS RESOURCES

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) | Provides information on health and safety after floods, including mold cleanup, drinking water safety, and sanitation. Offers public health guidance and resources for affected communities. | 217-782-4977 (General Information) TTY: 800-547-0466 dph.illinois.gov |
| Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) | Supports economic recovery for businesses impacted by disasters, including funding opportunities, small business support, and coordination with federal partners. | 217-782-7500 (Main) illinois.gov/dceo |
| Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) | Manages floodplain regulations, permits, and technical assistance on floodplain mapping and mitigation strategies. Also provides information on the National Flood Insurance Program. | 217-782-6302 (Main Office) dnr.illinois.gov |
| Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) | Provides information and support for transportation infrastructure impacts due to flooding, road closures, and assistance with damage assessments related to public roadways. | 217-782-7820 (IDOT Information Line) idot.illinois.gov |
| Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) | Oversees environmental protection and water quality issues; can assist with cleanup guidance, debris disposal, and potential water contamination concerns following a flood. | 217-782-3397 (Main) epa.illinois.gov |
| Illinois Finance Authority (IFA) | Offers financial tools and programs that may support businesses and local governments recovering from disaster-related losses. | 312-651-1300 (Main) il-fa.com |

LOCAL / COOK COUNTY & MUNICIPAL RESOURCES

Cook County Department of Emergency Management & Regional Security (EMRS) Coordinates Cook County's emergency response, including flood issues; helps with local coordination after flooding. 312-603-8180
cookcountyil.gov
Emergency Management & Regional Security.

Cook County Disaster Recovery and Resilience / CDBG-DR Programs using Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery funds to help with rebuilding, mitigation, housing recovery. 312-603-1000
for general Cook County info & accommodations like translations.
Response@cookcountyil.gov for disaster-recovery email.

City of Chicago — OEMC (Office of Emergency Management & Communications) Information for homeowners, renters, businesses impacted by disasters; helps with applying for FEMA, etc. 312-746-9111
chicago.gov/oemc
disaster assistance instructions
FEMA application:
1-800-621-FEMA

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

American Red Cross, Greater Chicago Chapter Disaster relief, shelter, emergency food, assistance in filling out claims, emotional support, etc. 1-800-RED-CROSS
(1-800-733-2767)
(24 hours)
Chicago office:
(312) 729-6100
redcross.org/local/illinois

The Salvation Army – Greater Chicagoland / North & Central Illinois Division Food, shelter, essential supplies, long-term recovery services depending on scale of disaster. 1-800-SAL-ARMY
(1-800-725-2769)
salvationarmyusa.org

United Way / 2-1-1 Information & referral service: can help you locate local resources for food, shelter, clean-up help, legal help after floods. Dial 211 from inside Cook County or use United Way Chicago website, 211metrochicago.org



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

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mwrld.org 312.751.6633

