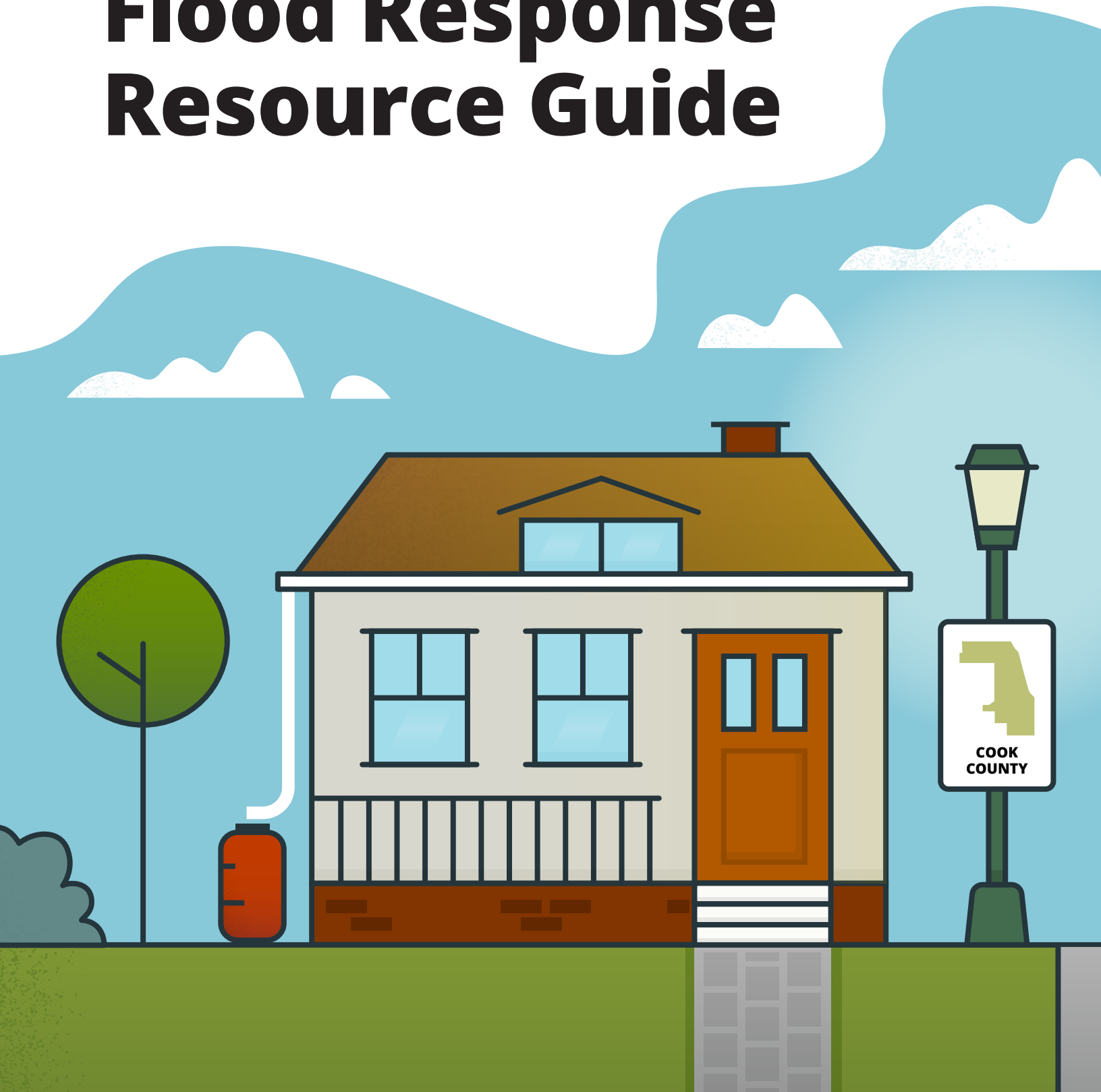




**Metropolitan Water
Reclamation District
of Greater Chicago**

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.

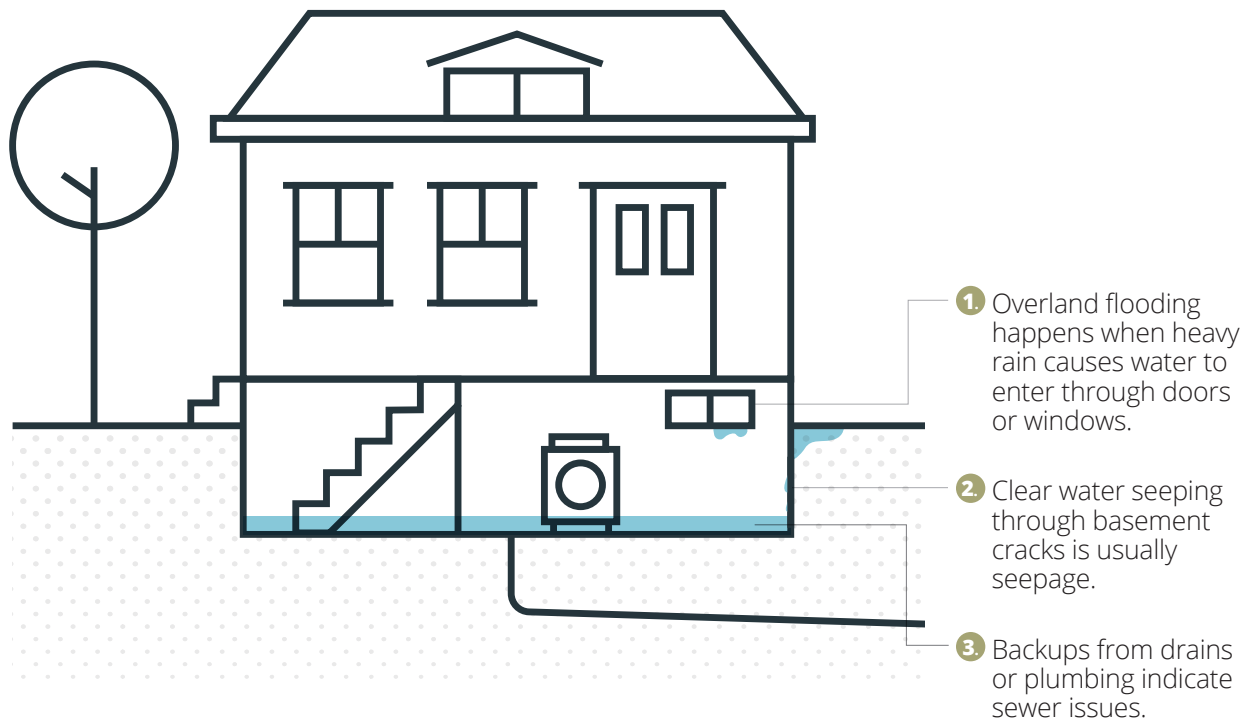
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FOR MORE ON STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
mwrdd.org/stormwater

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, 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.

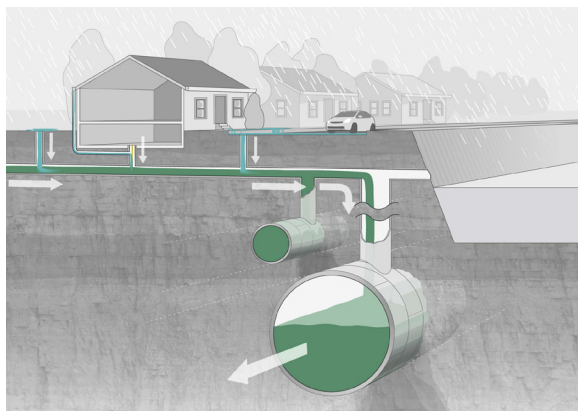


FOR MORE ON WHAT TO DO DURING FLOODING
mwrdd.org/what-to-do-during-flooding

Understanding your sewer

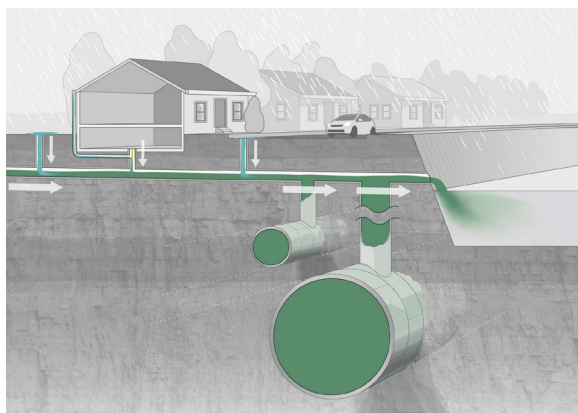
Water from your home flows through a private pipe into your neighborhood sewer, which is owned and maintained by your municipality.

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

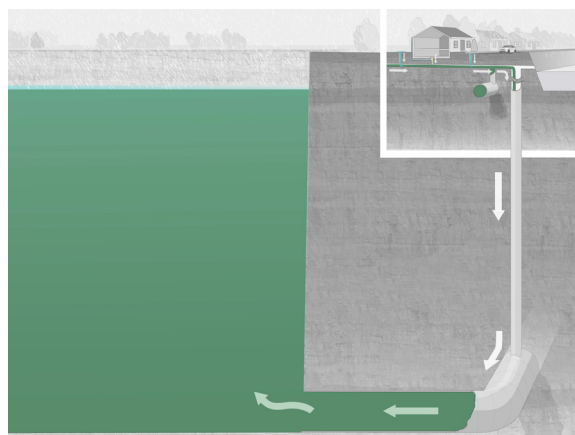


Many communities in the Chicago area have combined sewer systems, where both sewage and rainwater share the same pipes.

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.



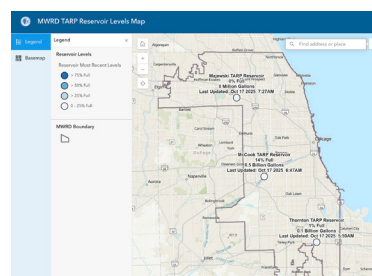
Channel improvements, which clear and widen streams to improve water flow and prevent erosion.



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
mwrld.org/reducing-flooding

The MWRD and Chicago Area Waterway System

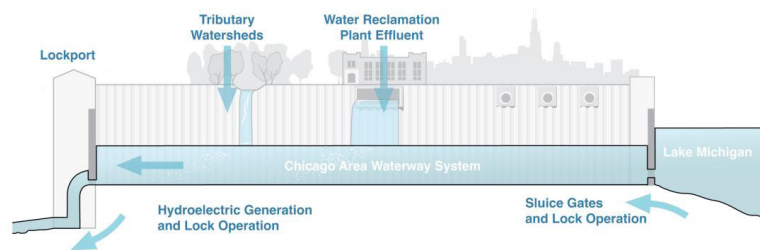
The MWRD manages the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) to control water levels and reduce the risk of flooding.

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.

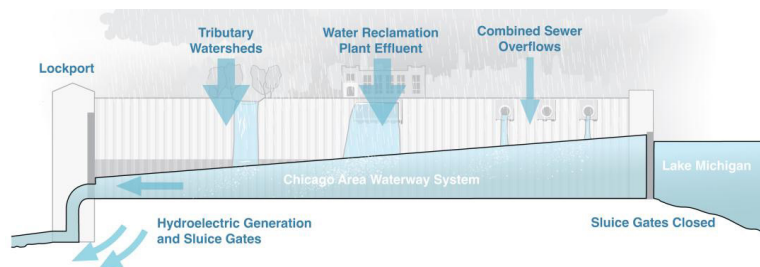
While CAWS operations can reduce overbank flooding, there are limits to their effectiveness. They can only help when the waterway level is higher than the lake, and they don't control flooding in areas outside the CAWS, such as the Des Plaines River.

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 Reservoirs Plan (TARP) facilities are full, sewers can send as much overflow as possible to the CAWS instead of backing up into basements.

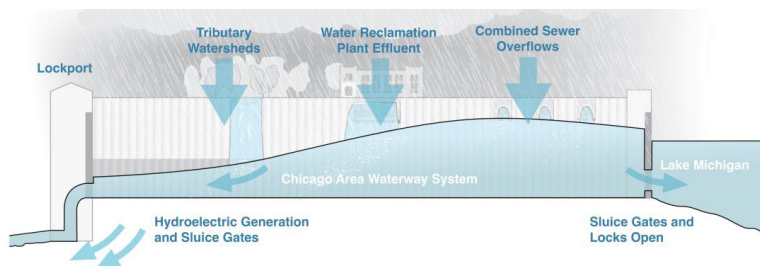
However, municipal sewers are generally decades old and were not sized to convey flow from some of the large storms we experience today. In these situations, neither TARP nor lowering the CAWS can prevent flooding because the storm is delivering more water into the local sewer system than can be conveyed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

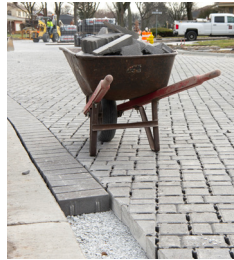
You can help reduce flooding

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 mwrdd.org; enter "Green Neighbor Guide" in the search bar.



FOR MORE ON REDUCING FLOODING
mwrdd.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
mwrld.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

Municipality	Website	Phone
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
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

Municipality	Website	Phone
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
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) Salvation Army EDS central Chicagoland / Illinois pages
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 site.



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

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