

Climate Ready Rainscapes

Residential Nature-Based Solutions Grant
Program Guidelines



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What is the Climate Ready Rainscapes grant program?

The Climate Ready Rainscapes grant program provides financial assistance to homeowners to help them manage rain on their property through nature-based solutions, such as rain gardens, cisterns, and permeable pavement. The program is funded by the Village of Oak Park through its Water & Sewer Fund. The program's goals are to:

1. Better manage rain at home
2. Reduce the burden on the local sewer by capturing rain where it falls
3. Provide health and environmental benefits
4. Educate residents about the benefits of nature-based solutions

How does the program work?



The program has four phases: Learn, Assess, Design and Build, and Maintain. During the **Learn** phase, homeowners will express interest in the program through an interest form, participate in a consultation call, and, if they are eligible for and interested in participating in the program, fill out an enrollment form. In the **Assess** phase, the homeowner will participate in a site visit to assess their home for stormwater issues and potential for nature-based solutions. Following this visit, the homeowner will receive a detailed home assessment report that will identify solutions and clearly outline costs for participation, after which they will sign an agreement to proceed with construction of the solutions. During the **Design and Build** phase, the homeowner will solicit bids and select a contractor from the Village's pre-approved contractors list, after which construction will take place. The Village will perform a quality control inspection of the construction to ensure the intended goals and design standards were met. For **non-income qualified homeowners**, the homeowner will pay the contractor directly and be reimbursed by the Village for the Village share upon completion of the work. For **income-qualified homeowners**, the Village will pay the contractor directly for the work to remove the need for fronting the full cost. Lastly, the homeowner will be trained on proper maintenance of the nature-based solutions and complete a post-construction survey during the **Maintain** phase.

How do I know if I'm an income-qualified homeowner?

For the purposes of the Climate Ready Rainscapes program, homeowners are classified as "income-qualified" if their annual household income is equal to or less than 80% of area median income (AMI) at the household level. To determine if you are an income-qualified homeowner, see the table below. Find the income amount listed below the number of persons in your household. If your household income is equal to or less than this amount, you are an income-qualified homeowner and are eligible for an increased level of funding from the Village for your nature-based solutions.

What work is covered under this program?

The Rainscapes program contributes to design engineering as well as construction costs (labor, materials, and equipment rental) for nature-based solutions. Homeowners may complete the installation themselves but will be reimbursed for the cost of materials only. The following are eligible nature-based solutions that may be covered as part of this program.

- Rain gardens
- Bioswales
- Cisterns
- Permeable pavement
- French drains as part of one of the other project types listed above
- Downspout disconnections as part of one of the other project types listed above

Homeowners are eligible to receive 50% of the installation's total cost from the Village of Oak Park, up to a maximum of \$2,000.

What work is not covered under this program?

Ineligible costs that will not be paid for by the Rainscapes program include:

- Ongoing maintenance of nature-based solutions. This will be the responsibility of the homeowner.
- Private construction inspection services hired by the homeowner
- Costs associated with utility staking
- Any work not specifically within the approved scope of work, as determined by the Assess phase of the program.
- Project costs over and above the \$2,000 cap paid by the Village must be paid for by the homeowner.

Who is eligible to participate?

To be eligible for the program, you need to:

- Be a resident of the Village of Oak Park
- Own and live in a single-family home
- Have no outstanding Village obligations or building code violations
- Have not received a retrofit through the Village's previous RainReady program
- Be willing to disconnect downspouts from the Village's sewer system
- Be willing to maintain your landscaping improvements for a minimum of three years

- Be willing to participate in short, confidential evaluation surveys used to improve the program

Who is ineligible to participate?

Homeowners will be considered ineligible if they:

- Have previously been the subject of a RainReady or Climate Ready Rainscapes grant
- Owe any unpaid taxes, water bills, or other debt to the Village
- Have any unpaid final judgments of liability from the office of Adjudication which are due and owing
- Have any unpaid Village liens on any property owned by the homeowner
- Are not current on any other Village obligations, or otherwise are not compliant with requirements of the Village Code, including but not limited to multi-family licensing, alarm permit, or vacant building registration requirements

What property types are eligible?

At this time, only single-family homes consisting of one dwelling unit in the principal building are eligible for the program.

How do I apply to participate in the program?

Apply for the Climate Ready Rainscapes program by submitting this interest form.

A. Steps. The following are the steps to apply for the program:

1. The homeowner will submit an interest form via the link above.
2. The Village will conduct an initial feasibility assessment of the property and notify the homeowner of their eligibility determination.
3. The homeowner will participate in a consultation call with the Village to further assess site eligibility and homeowner priorities for nature-based solutions.
4. The homeowner will complete an enrollment form and submit any supporting documentation.
5. The Village will notify the homeowner if they were selected for this round of Rainscapes funding.

B. Priority

Please be aware that program resources are very limited, and the program will first prioritize 1) applicants waitlisted from the previous RainReady program; and 2) homes located in areas of high climate risk and social vulnerability as defined by the [Climate Ready Oak Park Plan](#). Grants will be prioritized to income-eligible households, with a goal of awarding 40 percent of grants to income-eligible households. Submitting your interest early is recommended to increase the likelihood of a successful application.