



**Metropolitan Water Reclamation  
District of Greater Chicago**

**RAIN BARREL  
PROGRAM**

*A component of the District's  
Green  
Infrastructure Program*

# **RAIN BARREL PROGRAM**

## ***A component of the District's Green Infrastructure Program***

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## **I. PLAN**

Rain Barrels are a form of green infrastructure that are designed to capture and reuse rain water. The largest benefit of rain barrel use is achieved by disconnecting the roof runoff from the system and installing rain barrels to reuse water. Roofs comprise 41% of the impervious surface in Cook County. Many of these surfaces are directly connected to the public drainage system. This program is aimed at removing this direct load and reducing basement backups.

The goal of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (District's) Rain Barrel Program is removing the direct load from entering the sewer system, reducing basement backups, reducing combined sewer overflow volume and infiltration and inflow. The District believes the value of keeping water out of the system will benefit the community for reuse purposes. It is important to encourage end users to participate in some monetary fashion when feasible, regardless of which distribution method has been followed. A cost share schedule that will promote low or no cost distribution will be developed outside of this document.

The District's Rain Barrel Program will utilize three new distribution networks throughout the District's service-delivery area to distribute and promote the use of rain barrels to properties that have a direct roof connection to the sewer system. These networks are described in Section III. In addition, each rain barrel distributed will display a specially-designed label that summarizes the environmental benefits of using rain barrels (See Attachment A.)

## **II. DISTRIBUTION NETWORK**

The District currently has a contract with a vendor to furnish and deliver rain barrels, along with a website interface for placing orders. The District will modify the web interface to accommodate the three new distribution networks. The three networks that will be utilized to distribute rain barrels are: municipalities, non-government organizations, planning groups or community groups, and campus-type facilities.

### **a. Municipalities**

Cook County has 129 communities within the District's service-delivery area. Each community will be encouraged to adopt the Rain Barrel program as their own. The program will provide discounted or free rain barrels to residents who:

- Own property with downspouts that are directly connected to the sewer system;
- Agree to disconnect all downspouts from the sewer system, as practicable; and
- Agree to place rain barrels on each downspout, where feasible.

The District will provide promotional materials to each municipality to help administer the program. The District will also provide standard forms with

municipalities' logo or links to a website interface to sign up interested residents. Municipalities will be responsible for promoting the program, educating and encouraging residents about green infrastructure, verify preliminary information such as number of connections and confirm direct connections to the system.

Once an application is received, the District will evaluate the site for the practical installation of rain barrels and the order will be processed.

The residents will be asked to sign a commitment to properly use and maintain the rain barrels and agree to the installation of rain barrels and other pertinent terms and conditions.

b. Non-government, planning organizations or community groups

Cook County has many non-government, planning organizations, and community groups spending time and resources on stormwater green infrastructure neighborhood programs. These organizations will have access to the District's rain barrel program for well thought out regional plans. The non-government, planning organization or community group representative must adhere to the following requirements:

- The organization will submit a detailed plan to the District for the proposed project.
- Upon approval, the District will supply rain barrels as needed.
- The organization will ensure proper installation of rain barrels.
- The organization will assure proper education, care and maintenance.
- The organization will submit a post-implementation plan or "As-Built" document that provides:
  - o Addresses where rain barrels installed
  - o Number of rain barrels installed
  - o A brief report of their project successes and/or lessons learned in implementing the project

c. Campus-type facilities

Campus-type facilities include: schools, municipal properties (i.e. town halls, libraries, park district facilities, fire and police stations, garage/outbuilding), churches, community centers, senior centers, hospitals and clinics. The District will provide free rain barrels to any such facility committed to be a community partner and good steward of stormwater. The facility representative should contact the District to complete an appropriate application which shall include at a minimum:

- Size of campus
- Number of rain barrels required
- Percent of downspouts intercepted

- Any other additional stormwater controls implemented on the site.

Upon approval, the organization will submit a post-implementation plan or "As-Built" document that provides:

- o Addresses where rain barrels installed
- o Number of rain barrels installed
- o A brief report of their project successes and/or lessons learned in implementing the project

### **III. Marketing and Promotions**

In addition to providing technical assistance to residents, municipalities and nongovernmental and planning organizations on the proper use of rain barrels, a combination of tools will be provided by the District's Office of Public Affairs to promote and market rain barrels to the distribution network. The tools include the District website, community outreach, public service announcements, press releases, promotion on social media, and distribution of brochures. Proper forms for applying for free rain barrels will be provided.

In addition, the District can provide materials that utilize municipal logos for program purposes.

The District will assign a District sponsor to interested municipalities. The sponsor can provide assistance and direction during program implementation.

Commissioners will also play a role in the marketing and promotion of our rain barrel program. Rain barrels will be allocated for interested Commissioners to use and distribute at community events that are within the Distribution Network of Municipalities, Non-Government Organizations, Planning Groups or Community Groups and Campus Type Facilities. The Commissioners may use and distribute the allocated rain barrels as a means of educating and informing the public about the importance of green infrastructure, promoting the District's rain barrel program, and instructing on proper installation. Upon request of each rain barrel for such events, Commissioners will provide the date, location and purpose of the event for which the rain barrel is being used, acknowledging by signature that the use and distribution is in compliance with the District's Ethics Ordinance policy and political activity. There will be a limit of one (1) rain barrel per event.

### **IV. Program Performance**

The District's Maintenance and Operations Department will continue to administer the Rain Barrel program in cooperation with Engineering and Public Affairs. An assigned Resident Engineer will administer the rain barrel contract, coordinate deliveries, and document distribution for reporting purposes. The Resident Engineer will collect the addresses and number of rain barrels delivered and installed. The Office of Public Affairs will document marketing, community outreach and technical assistance and submit this information to the Resident Engineer for inclusion in an annual report.

## **V. Label**

A label will be adhered to every rain barrel distributed. (See Attachment A.) The label summarizes the environmental benefits of using rain barrels and green infrastructure.

## **VI. Forms**

Sample forms are attached. These forms will be modified as needed and are not considered a part of the program. They are attached for convenience.

1. Municipal Ordering Instructions -Attachment B
2. Non-Government Organization/Planning Group/Community Group Application- Attachment C
3. Campus Rain Barrel Application Form-Attachment D

SAVE WATER

PREVENT FLOODING

IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

55 GALLON

FROST-PROOF

RECYCLED

# Rain Barrel

including:

MOSQUITO SCREEN

OVERFLOW DRAIN

SPIGOT

**This rain barrel is part of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's green infrastructure program.**

Green infrastructure helps prevent flooding and improve water quality by keeping clean water out of the sewer system.



Use water from your rain barrel to wash your car, water your garden or lawn, or wash your pet. Do not drink water from a rain barrel. For installation instructions and more information, visit [mwrdd.org](http://mwrdd.org). Find the MWRD on Facebook and Twitter and show off your rain barrel!

Attachment B



## MWRD Rain Barrel Program Municipal Ordering Instructions

Municipalities in the MWRD service-delivery area may order free rain barrels for their residents.

To qualify for free rain barrels, residents must meet the following three requirements:

- 1) Downspouts must be connected to the sewer system.
- 2) Residents must agree to disconnect each downspout from the sewer system.
- 3) Residents must agree to put rain barrels on the downspouts, where feasible.

If the resident meets the above criteria, then municipalities will be allowed to log onto the District's municipal rain barrel program page to order rain barrels:  
[www.mwrd.org/freerainbarrels](http://www.mwrd.org/freerainbarrels).

Login Name: Chicago      Password: PASSWORD

Once logged into the system, the following information will be required for delivery:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Number of rain barrels \_\_\_\_\_

Desired delivery days/times \_\_\_\_\_

Verification by the municipality that (*initial all that apply*):

- The resident is connected to the sewer system. \_\_\_\_\_
- The resident agrees to disconnect their downspouts from the sewer system. \_\_\_\_\_
- The resident agrees to have a rain barrel installed on all downspouts, where feasible. \_\_\_\_\_

If residents do not qualify for the free rain barrels, they may purchase them via [www.mwrd.org](http://www.mwrd.org) for \$58.00 plus tax, which includes delivery. Bulk deliveries will continue to be made to organizations and agencies wishing to purchase rain barrels at cost from the District. Contact the District's Rain Barrel hotline at (312) 751-5600.

*Need more information?* Visit [www.mwrd.org](http://www.mwrd.org) or call the Rain Barrel Hotline at (312) 751-5600.



Attachment C



## **MWRD Rain Barrel Program**

### **Non-Government Organization, Planning Group or Community Group Application**

Non-government, planning organizations and community groups may participate in the District's free rain barrel program by coordinating projects that incorporate multiple rain barrels. The entity must submit two documents to the District's Resident Engineer for approval: 1) Application and 2) A plan or sketch showing where barrels will be installed. The entity must also agree to oversee the project's completion and submit proof of installation in the form of an "as built" drawing.

The following information will be required for delivery and installation:

Non-Government Organization, Planning Group or Community Group Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Rain Barrel(s) Delivery Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated number of free rain barrels requested \_\_\_\_\_

Desired delivery date/ times \_\_\_\_\_

Verification that Plan/sketch are attached \_\_\_\_\_  
(initial)

Need more information? Visit [www.mwrd.org](http://www.mwrd.org) or call the Rain Barrel Hotline at (312) 751-5600.



## MWRD Rain Barrel Program

### Campus Rain Barrel Application Form

Campus-type facilities throughout the MWRD service-delivery area may order free rain barrels, including delivery.

These facilities include: schools, municipal properties (i.e. town halls, libraries, park district facilities, fire and police stations, garage/outbuilding), churches, community centers, senior centers, hospitals and clinics. Campus-type facilities must complete this application to begin the application process.

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Facility: *(circle one)*

- School
- Municipal property:
  - Town/Village Hall
  - Park District facility
  - Library
  - Fire or Police Station
  - Garage/Outbuilding
- Church
- Community or Senior Center
- Hospital or clinic

Facility Address: \_\_\_\_\_

If more than one facility, please list the addresses on additional sheets as necessary

Number of estimated rain barrels needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired delivery days/times: \_\_\_\_\_

Need more information? Visit [www.mwrdd.org](http://www.mwrdd.org) or call the Rain Barrel Hotline at (312) 751-5600.