

Establishing a Rain Fund to Make Your Community RainReady



In RainReadySM communities, better water management means that homes, schools, and businesses are prepared for rain—whether too much or too little. RainReady programs keep residences secure and dry, services running, and rivers and lakes clean.

Home and business owners usually pay taxes to cover the cost of local stormwater management services. Yet when it pours, basements and ground floors still flood, and our rivers, lakes, and streams still become polluted by rainwater that picks up debris as it runs through our streets, parking lots, and yards.

Successful stormwater management requires sustained, reliable funding. General municipal revenue – such as property, income, and sales taxes – are often inadequate and ineffective, as municipalities have competing demands for these resources.

These problems have led to the emergence of new and better funding practices. CNT has reviewed these best practices and summarized them into one single funding approach designed to help fund RainReady improvements to your home and neighborhood. We are calling this approach the **Rain Fund**.

A RAIN FUND OFFERS:

- ✓ A DEDICATED REVENUE STREAM TO HELP PROTECT HOMES, MAINTAIN AND UPGRADE STORM SEWER SYSTEMS AND OTHER CRITICAL MAN-MADE AND NATURAL DEFENSES
- ✓ A LOW, FLAT FEE FOR SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES; ALL OTHERS PAY ACCORDING TO THEIR USAGE
- ✓ CASH BACK FOR BUSINESSES, CHURCHES, AND SCHOOLS THAT TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE RISK

More and more towns and cities are adopting these practices in place of general revenue for stormwater management.

Unlike stormwater taxes, Rain Funds are clearly listed on water bills so residents know exactly how much they are paying to protect their homes and communities. And knowledge means accountability; the fund cannot be used for anything else.

Rain Funds are the only fair, transparent, and equitable way to tackle the shared problem of flooded homes, schools, and businesses – and to prevent pollution flowing to rivers and streams.



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DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE A RAINREADY PLAN? LEARN MORE AT WWW.RAINREADY.ORG

ESTABLISHING A RAIN FUND

SOME TIPS + BEST PRACTICES:

1

DOCUMENT FLOODING AND POLLUTION PROBLEMS

and inform municipal officials who may not know about them. Basement flooding in homes often goes undocumented and unreported. Use surveys, polls, photographs, drawings, and maps to illustrate where the flooding occurs.

2

MAKE SURE THERE'S A MUNICIPAL FLOOD MITIGATION PLAN IN PLACE.

Rain Funds can provide support or cost sharing for functional landscape plumbing and building improvements on private properties, for restoration of critical natural barriers, or repair of sewer pipes. More information = a better plan.

3

USE NATURAL SOLUTIONS.

Nature has many ingenious ways to protect communities against flooding and keep streams and lakes clean. Rain Funds can help pay for landscape buffers alongside bodies of water, retention ponds, bioswales, and the incorporation of vegetation in or along sidewalks to reduce the flow of stormwater and prevent flooding and water pollution. Green roofs and porous pavement for parking areas and driveways can increase infiltration into the ground. These strategies also help recharge the groundwater, improve water and air quality, increase the habitat for native wildlife, and provide more attractive places for hiking and biking. Nature should be part every community plan.

4

MAKE IT FAIR.

Properties with large amounts of impervious paving create more stormwater runoff than those without. Unmanaged, this runoff enters homes, schools and businesses and pollutes rivers and lakes. Rain Funds charge single-family homes a low, flat rate. Properties with large areas of impermeable paving pay more. Like drinking or wastewater, charges are linked to actual usage.

5

ESTABLISH A CASH-BACK PLAN.

Since schools, religious institutions and businesses may have large areas of paving, their fees will be higher than single-family homes. Setting up a cash-back or grant program offers an incentive to manage stormwater runoff by installing natural drainage areas on the property. The Rain Fund can be used for partial grants to help cover these costs.

6

CREATE CHAMPIONS.

Reach out to parent-teacher associations (PTAs) in schools, business associations, social clubs, religious congregations, and labor unions as you advocate for the establishment of a Rain Fund. Street corner meetings, public meetings, and citizen advisory groups are all good ways of engaging the public.

Hundreds of communities across the U.S. have already established Rain Funds. Best practice communities include Portland, OR, Minneapolis, MN, Charlotte, NC, Philadelphia, PA and Aurora, IL.



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