

RainReady Oak Park

Frequently Asked Questions



WHAT IS RAINREADY OAK PARK?

RainReady Oak Park is a grant program that helps homeowners use smart landscaping to manage rain at their property. The program is funded by the Village of Oak Park and administered by RainReady (RainReady.org), an initiative of the non-profit Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT).

WHY IS THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK DOING THIS PROGRAM?

The goals of RainReady Oak Park are to:

- Reduce the burden on Oak Park's sewer system by capturing rain where it falls
- Reduce site drainage problems at homes
- Provide health and environmental benefits through smart landscaping

WHAT ASSISTANCE WILL I RECEIVE?

You will benefit from:

- A professional home assessment to identify improvements to manage rain at your home.
- A landscape design and construction scope of work that you can use to get quotes from landscaping contractors.
- A grant of 50 percent of the total cost of eligible landscaping improvements, up to a maximum grant of \$1,300.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

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 with a yard and disconnected downspouts (or can be disconnected)
- Have no outstanding Village obligations or building code violations
- Be able to maintain the landscaping improvements for at least three years
- Be willing to participate in short evaluation surveys. This information will be kept confidential and used improve the program.

WHAT KIND OF LANDSCAPING IMPROVEMENTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A PROGRAM GRANT?

- Rain Garden or Bioswale
Let rain soak into a rain garden or bioswale that uses porous soil and water-loving plants. Rain gardens are bowl-shaped; bioswales are line-shaped. *typical cost: \$1,500 - \$3,000*
- Cistern or Dry Well
Store rain in a cistern or dry well. Dry wells are below ground; cisterns are above ground. *typical cost: \$1,000*
- Permeable Pavement
Replace old concrete or asphalt with open grass pavers, interlocking permeable pavers, or permeable concrete that lets rain pass through. *typical cost: Varies by type of pavement*
- Others as approved by the Village

WHAT KIND OF LANDSCAPING IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A GRANT?

French drains, tree removal, general regrading and new impermeable surfaces (e.g., concrete) are **not** eligible.

WHAT COSTS CAN BE REIMBURSED?

Eligible costs related to the approved landscaping scope of work include:

- Design and Engineering Services
- Labor and Equipment Rental
- Materials and Construction

Village permit fees are **waived** for this program.

Ineligible costs include:

- Watering and maintenance of landscaping
- Private construction inspection services hired by the homeowner
- Costs associated with utility staking
- Any landscaping or other work not within the approved scope of work

The homeowner will be responsible for paying the contractor in full before receiving a program grant. Project costs above the grant amount will be paid by the homeowner.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

1. Submit a program application. There are a limited number of grants available. If you don't receive a grant this year, you will be put on the waiting list for next year.
2. After you are selected for a grant, sign the grant agreement and pay a \$200 refundable deposit towards the cost of the home assessment. The deposit is refunded with the grant reimbursement, once the landscaping is installed.
3. RainReady will visit your home to assess your yard, create a landscaping plan, and make other recommendations. You can use the recommended landscaping plan, or suggest an alternate plan for the Village to approve.
4. Choose your preferred landscaper. Depending on the landscaping design, the landscaper might need to be registered with the Village, and be required obtain a permit from the Village before starting work.
5. Complete the landscaping work within 6 months of enrolling in the program, or by October 31st, whichever is sooner. Submit the Grant Reimbursement Forms. If the work required a permit, a Village inspector will inspect the finished work. You will receive your grant and deposit refund within 30 to 45 days after successfully passing the inspection (if required).

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I RECEIVE MY GRANT?

Your participation in our program evaluation is critical to improving the program. RainReady will email you short, confidential surveys. With your permission, we may also document your landscaping with professional photography.

I'D LIKE TO APPLY. WHAT DO I DO?

Fill out the online application and grant agreement at (<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3105407/RainReady-Oak-Park>). The annual deadline is **April 1st**. You can also pick up a paper application at Village Hall (room 214). RainReady will review the applications and notify applicants. Eligible applicants who aren't selected will be placed on a waiting list for assistance next year. If you are selected for this year's program, we will be in touch with you to complete the grant agreement process and schedule a date for your RainReady Home assessment.

OTHER COMMON QUESTIONS

Will smart landscaping stop my flooding?

Smart landscaping will help with yard ponding. Addressing severe yard ponding may require work that exceeds the maximum grant provided by RainReady Oak Park. Smart landscaping can help lessen seepage by fixing the grading around your home, but building foundation repairs or other work may be necessary too. If you have sewage backup, please apply instead for the Village's Sewer Backup Protection Grant Program.

Do I have the right kind of yard?

All smart landscaping should be connected to at least one downspout. The downspout(s) should take the rain from at least one-fourth of your roof. Above ground cisterns can be located right next to your home. Cisterns should be emptied between storms, and discharged on your property, at least ten feet away from any building foundation. Rain gardens, bioswales, dry wells, and permeable pavement should be located at least ten feet away from any building foundation. Permeable pavement should only be installed in an area where you currently have regular concrete or asphalt.

How big should my landscaping installation be?

This depends on the size and shape of your roof and yard, your soil, and how much rain you want to capture. All smart landscaping provides some benefits. The average RainReady installation is 380 square feet.

What if I have a connected downspout?

If you have connected downspouts but you are willing to disconnect all of them, please include that information in your application. If you believe one or more of your downspouts needs to remain connected, you can request a Downspout Disconnection Waiver.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAM?

Please contact the Village of Oak Park at 708.358.5410 or email housing@oak-park.us