

TODAY: Multi-Agency Resource Center Opens To Help Residents Impacted By Severe Storms

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SPRINGFIELD – A Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) will open today in Cook County to help residents recover from recent severe weather. The MARC is designed to allow residents to access disaster related relief services and information. The MARC brings together representatives from local and state agencies as well as essential support

organizations. This unique recovery center is open to all Illinois residents impacted by recent storms.

“Helping our residents and our communities recover from a disaster is a priority for this agency,” said IEMA Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau. “A storm of this magnitude has had a devastating effect on those who live in these communities. A MARC can help expedite the recovery process by bringing together multiple service providers in a single location to provide on-site assistance. We are grateful to the local health department and various state agencies for their insight and cooperation to ensure we continue to provide the necessary resources to the residents who are recovering from this severe weather event.”

“This community was particularly impacted by severe weather earlier this month,” said William Barnes, executive director of Cook County’s Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security, “Our goal is to ensure residents have access to the resources they need to effectively recover.”

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), on Monday, August 10, a derecho produced wind gusts as high as 92 mph, and knocked down trees and power lines in numerous communities. In the Cook County town of Harvey, 94-percent of the community was without power for a week. The NWS also indicates this storm produced 15 confirmed tornadoes within the Chicago Warning Area.

All residents affected by the recent severe weather can visit the MARC at Thornton High School located at 15001 Broadway Avenue in Harvey. The facility will be open on Monday, August 24 and Tuesday, August 25 from 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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State and local agencies offering assistance through the MARC include:

Department on Aging will assist older adults and their family caregivers with information on services and public benefits within the community; evaluate the problems and capacities of individuals to recover from the storm and attempt to address service gaps; provide follow-up services based on the older individual’s and family caregiver’s needs; deliver information regarding the wide range of services offered by the Aging Network. Seniors in need of assistance, but unable to attend the MARC can contact the agency via a toll-free hotline 1-800-252-8966.

Department of Human Services will assist residents seeking to replace Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits lost due to the storm. Literature will also be available to regarding mental healthcare, substance abuse programs, childcare needs and functional-needs support. For those who are unable to attend the MARC, but still need help with benefits, services or have eligibility questions can use the IDHS Customer Help Line 1-800-843-6154. Additionally, the Illinois Department of Human

Services (IDHS) has a free helpline for residents who need emotional support during a crisis. Illinoisans can text "TALK" to 55-2020 (or "HABLAR" for Spanish) for the Call4Calm service.

Department of Insurance will be on hand to answer questions about individual insurance policies or questions about the insurance claim process as well as to address issues with individual insurance agents or insurance companies. People may also call the department's toll-free number at 866-445-5364.

Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs will have representatives on hand to guide residents on the process to replace lost documents. Referrals will also be available for additional services offered by IDVA. For those unable to attend the MARC, but would still like assistance can contact IDVA at 800-437-9824.

Illinois Attorney General representatives will be on hand to educate residents about how to report fraudulent contractors and scams as they recover from this event. People are encouraged to contact the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline at 800-386-5438 before hiring a contractor.

The Cook County Bureau of Economic Development will provide information about its COVID-19 Community Recovery Programs, providing support to residents and businesses who have been impacted by the pandemic and other recent emergencies. Program areas include: housing, mortgage, food, utility, job placement, emergency cash, applying for grants, securing a loan, finding shelter and business planning. Monday, August 24, 4:00 pm is the last day to apply for the COVID-19 Recovery: Rental Assistance Program administered by the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC). For more information about COVID recovery programs, visit www.cookcountyil.gov/recovery, For more information about HACC, visit www.thehacc.org or call (312) 663-5447.

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Cook County Health will share information about the medical services offered at Stroger and Provident Hospitals as well as its clinics in Blue Island, Robbins and Ford Heights. They will also provide details on financial assistance programs for health care.

Thornton Township will offer residents guidance regarding social services they offer such as general assistance and the Food Assistance Center, youth and adult Services and senior services. Individuals unable to attend may also reach Thornton Township at (708) 596-6040.

Protecting the Community during COVID-19

Upon arrival at the MARC, residents will be greeted in the parking lot and assigned a number. Residents will be encouraged to remain in their vehicle until their number is called to discourage congregating, and to limit the number of individuals inside the

building at one time. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, only a limited number of people will be permitted in the building at one time and limited to one representative per family. Special accommodations will be made for elderly residents or those with special needs.

Once your number is called, residents will be given a health screening and temperature check. Masks are required for all individuals participating in the MARC. If a resident does not have a mask when they arrive, one will be made available at the door. Once the resident passes their health screening, they will be paired with a Service Ambassador who can help the residents navigate the facility and ensure their needs are addressed.

Janitorial services will be on site to conduct cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surface areas. Additionally, MARC representatives will be disinfecting their tables between each resident visit.

Emergency management officials are urging residents to be aware of the dangers associated with extended power outages and storm clean-up. To learn more about what to do before, during and after a storm visit www.ready.illinois.gov.