



PRESS RELEASE

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COUNTY TO DRAFT PLAN TO PREPARE FOR IMPACTS OF NATURAL HAZARDS

A coalition of Cook County cities, villages and agencies are creating a comprehensive hazard mitigation plan to prepare for natural disasters and their impact. The coalition was formed to pool resources and create a uniform hazard mitigation strategy.

The plan is to reduce the county's vulnerabilities to natural hazards, such as floods, snowstorms and tornadoes, to protect the health, safety, welfare and economies of communities in Cook County. This is done by identifying cost-effective strategies to lessen the impacts of natural hazards.

"We have a responsibility to ensure the safety and security of our community," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said. "It is critical we understand what our vulnerabilities are and how we can address them."

"It's about maximizing the resources we have so we are adequately prepared to deal with, and quickly recover from, natural threats," said Michael Masters, executive director of the county's Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM).

Currently, 115 of the county's 134 municipalities have partnered with the Cook County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in a planning process that will take approximately 11 months to complete.

During this process, residents can contribute by sharing information about an area's vulnerability to hazards based on past experience. Public involvement will also be solicited at meetings, on the county's homeland security website and in questionnaires.

This process will be overseen by a steering committee made up of elected officials, first responders, public and private utilities and aid organizations from participating municipalities in Cook County. The steering committee will meet as needed on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 10:00 a.m. to noon throughout the planning process. The meetings are open to the public.

For more information about the hazard mitigation plan, meeting location and plan updates, visit www.cookcountyhomelandsecurity.org/hazard-mitigation-plan/.

Members of the public who have questions or want to provide comments, may visit www.cookcountyhomelandsecurity.org/public-comments.

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The Cook County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management integrates first responders, their departments and resources from 134 Cook County municipalities, and serves as the central agency in Cook County for coordinating efforts to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all incidents, whether man-made or natural. For more information, visit our website at www.cookcountyhomelandsecurity.org.