



WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

# NEWSLETTER

## JANUARY 2024



**JENNIFER BERTINO-TARRANT**  
**WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

While we were lucky to have a mild weather during holiday season, we faced extremely cold temperatures throughout Will County during January. Many of our communities faced weather-related challenges during this sudden drop in temperatures. Thankfully, our strong network of public safety and community service agencies have been working hard to keep the public informed of dangerous conditions and ensuring that resources are available for residents in need.

These efforts were especially visible over the last two weeks, as residents along the Kankakee River faced elevated risks of flash flooding due to ice jams (pictured at the bottom). Our dedicated Will County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has been working hard to coordinate with local agencies to respond to flooding and keep residents informed of changes in a timely manner. These lines of communication contributed to a strong multi-agency response that occurred last week, when a flash flooding incident occurred in the City of Wilmington. With water levels receding, EMA will continue to work closely with local leaders to assess the extent of the damage that occurred.

I would like to thank the amazing team of EMA staff and volunteers for everything they've done to keep the public safe during the weather-related challenges this month. I'm also very grateful for all our local partners who supported this response, including the City of Wilmington, Wilmington ESDA, the Wilmington Fire Protection District, Constellation Energy, and the National Weather Service. Most of all, I'd like to thank the residents who have been positively engaging with local officials during this challenging time.

Weather in the Midwest keeps us on our toes. We will continue to build resources and mitigation methods to be better prepared for future emergencies and encourage our residents to stay vigilant about potential emergencies.

Stay warm out there!

*Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant*  
Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant | Will County Executive



# KIDS' FAIR 2024

**SAVE THE DATE**

**MONDAY**

**FEB. 19**

**9am - Noon**

**JOIN US AT**

**Troy Middle School**  
5800 W. Theodore St.,  
Plainfield, IL

**FREE ADMISSION**

**Storytelling**

**Live Animals**

**Crafts**

**Prizes**

**Face Painting**

## Save the Date: 2024 Kids' Fair - FEBRUARY 19

Need a family-fun activity for Presidents Day? We have you covered!

Join us for Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant's Kids' Fair - Monday, Feb. 19 from 9 a.m. until noon at Troy Middle School in Plainfield.

Dozens of representatives from local resource providers and businesses will be on hand with games, activities, crafts, and information for both parents and guardians about local resources. Entertainment will be available that will be fun for the whole family!

Admission is free and open to all. No registration required - just show up for the fun!

**Join us for a virtual open house!**

**OUR WAY FORWARD 2050**  
**WILL COUNTY**  
**LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**Register**















## We Need Your Input!

Save the date! Will County is hosting two virtual open houses to gather feedback on transportation priorities for the next 25 years.

The open houses are part of the first phase of the "Our Way Forward: 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan" that is currently underway. The planning effort will evaluate all modes of transportation, including walking, biking, driving, transit, and freight. The plan will incorporate public feedback from open houses and surveys to help the Will County Division of Transportation identify needs to be addressed with future infrastructure projects.

The virtual open houses are on Tuesday, Feb. 6 from 6-7 p.m. and Wednesday, Feb. 7 from 12-1 p.m. Register to attend one to learn more about the project and share your thoughts on the County's transportation challenges and opportunities.

There is still time to take the online survey and share your feedback! The survey asks residents their travel preferences and how they believe transportation investments should be prioritized. It will be available on the project website until the end of February.

For more information and to register for the virtual open houses, scan the QR code.

# WILLO COUNTY

## AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT



### Expanding Food Availability

Will County has allocated over \$28 Million through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to local organizations to improve health outcomes for residents. Over \$3 Million was allocated specifically to expand food assistance programs and work to close the gap on food insecurity in Will County. Throughout December, several local organizations were able to use this funding to significantly expand their services to the community.

Read the full story of how four Will County organizations expanded their food services in December thanks to ARPA funding!

[Learn more](#)



### ARPA Spotlight: ShareFest Will County

Will County's allocation of federal funding continues to make a positive impact on addressing food insecurity in our communities! ShareFest Will County received \$827,872 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to build and open a new Food Distribution Center and Free Storefront.

Watch as Founder Gary Cheney discusses the impact this additional funding will have on ShareFest's operation and their mission to provide compassionate community service for those in need.

Watch the video to learn all about ShareFest's expansion and the resources that they provide to residents throughout Will County.



### Energy Assistance Funding Available!

The State of Illinois has made funding available for eligible households to help pay for winter energy utilities, such as gas, electricity, and furnace repairs. Energy costs can place severe strain on household budgets, especially during the cold weather months. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), managed by the Illinois Department of Commerce, is accepting new applications for eligible households through August 15, 2024, or until funds are depleted.

The Will County Center for Community Concerns (WCCCC) is available to help residents apply for this State funding. They recommend reaching out to their office before beginning an application for utility assistance to ensure the best possible support throughout the entire process. Eligibility for the LIHEAP program includes households with a 30-day gross income that is at or below 150% of the poverty level.

[Learn more](#)



WCCCC offers similar support to residents throughout the year, including rent/mortgage assistance, scholarships, homeless services, and financial literacy education. They also offer other homeowner resources, including the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) that can help residents reduce their energy bills through home improvements.

Learn more about the WCCCC and their LIHEAP support.