

New E.C.H.O. Program looks to enhance community safety

The Village recently launched the initial phase of its E.C.H.O. (Engaging Community for Healthy Outcomes) Program, an innovative initiative designed to enhance community safety and well-being by offering compassionate responses to non-emergency and low-risk calls for service through 911 dispatch. This program reflects Oak Park's commitment to reimagining public safety and meeting the diverse needs of the community.

What is E.C.H.O.?...E.C.H.O. is the Village's Alternative Response to Calls for Service Pilot Program. Developed in response to years of community advocacy and in alignment with state legislation and expert recommendations, E.C.H.O. seeks to provide compassionate, effective care by fostering collaboration between internal and external public safety and emergency response providers.

How E.C.H.O. Works...A cornerstone of E.C.H.O. is Community Care Navigation, which provides follow-up services and support for residents in need. Key features include:

- Connecting residents to additional resources following a 911 call or Village-initiated service.
- Rapid response to direct Village calls concerning unhoused individuals, traumatic community events and other urgent needs.
- Serving as subject matter experts in care coordination for the Village.

Community Care Navigation also emphasizes partnerships, including:

- Re-establishing the Village's inter-governmental agreement with Oak Park Township to participate in its Youth Engagement Program.
- Strengthening relationships with senior service programs.



Meet the Care Coordinators...As part of the program's initial rollout, the Village has hired its first two Care Coordinators. These dedicated professionals will play a vital role in the success of the E.C.H.O. program by offering specialized support to the Oak Park Police and Fire departments. Their expertise in behavioral health, crisis intervention and social services is expected to help bridge the gap between emergency response and long-term solutions for community members in need.

Community Impact...The implementation of E.C.H.O. is anticipated to have a significant impact on the Oak Park community. By providing spe-

cialized responses to non-emergency situations, the program aims to:

- **Enhance Public Safety:** Addressing non-emergency situations with appropriate resources allows law enforcement and first responders to focus on higher-priority incidents, thereby improving overall public safety.
- **Support the Unhoused:** E.C.H.O. offers resources and assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness, connecting them with services that can provide long-term solutions.
- **Strengthen Community Trust:** By collaborating with community partners and providing appropriate responses to various situations, E.C.H.O. fosters trust between residents and service providers.

For more information about E.C.H.O., visit www.oak-park.us/ECHO or contact the Neighborhood Services Department at ECHO@oak-park.us or 708.358.5640.

Feedback sought for streetscape project honoring Dr. Percy Julian



Dr. Percy L. Julian was a boundary-breaking chemist who lived in Oak Park from 1950 until his death in 1975. His home at East Avenue and Chicago Avenue is still in the Julian family. Dr. Julian was known for his pioneering scientific research, breaking racial barriers, his activism and the human element of his life story. Despite his significant accomplishments, Dr. Julian's legacy is largely unrecognized.

To honor his legacy, the Village has proposed the creation of a Dr. Percy L. Julian District along Chicago Avenue. The first step in this process is to design a streetscape in the proposed corridor that would provide a brand and identity for the district and facilitate economic development. The proposed streetscape would include site features and outdoor exhibits that tell the story of Dr. Julian's life. These exhibits will create a cohesive identity for the corridor, similar to existing districts in Oak Park that honor Frank Lloyd Wright and Ernest Hemingway.

Community input is an important part of the streetscape design process. Complete an online survey and find more information about the initiative at www.engageoakpark.com/julian.

2024 By the Numbers: A look at municipal service delivery

With 54,500 residents living within 4.7 square miles, the municipal services that make Oak Park such a great place to live, work and do business are comprehensive.

Services are delivered by a workforce of about 350 full-time employees who bring a wide range of formal education, experience and expertise to their jobs.

This includes a highly trained police force focused on neighborhoods and firefighter-paramedics who routinely eclipse national emergency response times.

The Village's public works programs are at the core of municipal services. They pump the water, maintain the streets, plow the snow, keep the traffic signals operating, maintain nearly 18,000 trees on public property and keep a fleet of roughly 250 traditional, hybrid, compressed natural gas, bio-diesel and electric vehicles running smoothly.

One of only a handful certified by the state, the Public Health Department keeps our restaurants clean, pets licensed, childcare facilities safe and the community prepared for emergencies.

Other municipal services nurture business investment, foster diversity, equity and inclusion, plan for future development and protect the community's housing stock, one of Oak Park's most valuable assets.

Since approved by voters in 1952, Oak Park has operated under the council manager form of government, in which an elected Village Board hires a professional manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of municipal services and programs.

Though employees are assigned to different departments, and the jobs performed vary, all have the common mission of serving the many needs of the residents of Oak Park. So how did they do in 2024? Here's a snapshot of some of their activities from last year...

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

\$2,367,471 in federal grants distributed to help low- and moderate-income residents and the unhoused

\$2,000,000 in grants distributed to support Venezuelan migrants with legal services, case management, housing and food

588,567 mobile parking meter transactions processed

\$318,361 allocated to support affordable housing programs

119,841 overnight parking passes processed online

27,277 service requests answered by the Public Works Department Call Center

6,475 local ordinance and parking citations administratively adjudicated at Village Hall

2,780 requests processed under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act

2,186 graffiti hits removed

2,091 rat cases baited

1,658 free doses of Narcan distributed

1,185 animals licensed

1,200 COVID rapid antigen tests distributed

1,042 community relations issues addressed, including tenant/landlord disputes and neighbor conflicts

988 LINK transactions completed at the Oak Park Farmers' Market

598 block party requests processed

200 warming kits distributed to unhoused residents during the winter to help with inclement weather

123 unhoused residents housed in 100 days in partnership with Housing Forward for the 100-Day Challenge

75 animals returned to owners

49 sewer backup prevention grants approved for \$169,870

10 children with elevated blood lead levels provided with case management

COMMUNICATING INFORMATION

1,159,913 page views on Village website

565,600 minutes of VOP-TV programming viewed on Village YouTube channel and other social media platforms

234,071 engagements with Village social media posts

32,000 Village, Police, Fire and Pick Oak Park Facebook followers

21,233 minutes of video programming produced

12,700 Village, Police and Pick Oak Park Instagram followers

12,100 Village and Police X (formerly Twitter) followers

5,600 enews listserv subscribers

PROTECTING THE PUBLIC

60,441 police responses, including calls, traffic stops, vacation property checks and alarm/security checks

8,925 fire and emergency calls — 5,091 for EMS

7,230 trees trimmed, 309 removed and 305 planted

3,090 property code violations reviewed

1,830 neighborhood walk properties inspected

1,821 fire safety building plans reviewed

1,239 fire hydrants tested — 48 repaired and 3 replaced

1,100 tons of salt spread during 15 separate snow events

813 buildings inspected for fire safety

398 rental dwelling licenses issued consisting of 163 multi-family properties and 235 small-rental properties

260 restaurant inspections performed

255 animals impounded

151 Smoke-Free Illinois Act business inspections completed

135 community members trained to use Naloxone to stop an opioid disorder

125 short-term rental property licenses issued

13 bike intersection improvements installed

13 preparedness actions supported, including the Democratic National Convention in Chicago

12 blocks of new Neighborhood Greenway/Bike Boulevard installed

9 concrete bump outs/pinch points installed on roadways

IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE

7,806 sidewalk squares replaced and repaired

3,750 feet of new water mains installed

3,000 lane miles of streets swept

2,000 potholes patched with 120 tons of asphalt

1,809 street lamps and alley lights replaced

1,475 feet of new sewer main installed

750 street signs replaced

391 sidewalk trip-hazards mitigated by angle cutting

129 sidewalk ramps upgraded to ADA standards

15 alley segments replaced

5.58 miles of sewer video cleaned

2.75 miles of street resurfaced/reconstructed

2.05 miles of street preserved through microsurfacing

1.62 miles of street preserved through rejuvenation treatment

SUSTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT

\$343,096 in disposal fees saved by diverting 41% of all residential waste from landfills

9,633 tons of garbage hauled away

8,023 fewer gallons of fossil fuel used by Village vehicles in 2024 than 2022

3,910 tons of household recyclables collected

2,392 tons of yard waste and organics collected

379 tons of leaves collected

30 tons of hazardous household waste materials and electronic waste collected

13 public EV charging stations and parking spaces maintained in Village lots

BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

\$12,550,000 in sales and use taxes generated — \$10,450,000 by local businesses

\$2,481,105 in building permit fees collected

8,447 construction, commercial and residential property inspections performed

4,396 online building permit applications submitted

1,804 historic preservation property renovation permits reviewed

1,287 business licenses issued, including for 105 new businesses

101 liquor licenses issued, including 9 new licenses

Sustainability events

Native Gardening for the Neighborhood...Join the Village, Oak Park Public Library and West Cook Wild Ones for a workshop and discussion about how to design, plant and maintain a native garden in your front yard or parkway. The event will take place from 1 to 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 16 in the Veterans Room at the main library, 834 Lake St. Speakers Christine Nye and Ken Williams bring combined decades of expertise in horticulture and native gardening. Stay for a question-and-answer session with the speakers and representatives from the Village who can answer questions about gardening in your parkway. After the presentation there will be refreshments and an opportunity for conversation with local gardeners and community organizations. More information is at www.oak-park.us/NativeGardenEvent.

Earth Month activities...The Village and its partners are busy finalizing Earth Month activities throughout April. Make sure to check out the Village's sustainability events page at www.oak-park.us/sustainabilityevents as events get added. In the meantime, save these dates:

- **April 5: Eco Extravaganza** – Earth Month community kickoff event for all ages from 10 a.m. to noon at Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake St. Learn, play and connect with community groups working in the sustainability space while enjoying local treats.
- **April 22 – 28: One Earth Film Festival** – The Midwest's premier environmental film festival returns to Oak Park and other communities in the Chicago area for its 14th season. More information is at www.oneearthcollective.org/one-earth-film-fest.
- **April 25–28: City Nature Challenge** – Join thousands of people from throughout the Chicagoland region and around the globe in logging nature observations. More information is at www.chicagowilderness.org/citynaturechallenge.

Volunteers needed to help with community events

The Village is seeking volunteers to assist with community events being planned throughout the year to celebrate Oak Park's diversity. Volunteers who are able to dedicate time to helping plan the celebrations are encouraged to sign up to serve on a planning committee. Volunteers are also needed to assist with logistics on the day of events. Find an online volunteer sign-up form and more information about the series of community events on the Village website at www.oak-park.us/communityevents. Additional information is also available by contacting the Village's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at DEI@oak-park.us.

Women's History Month...The Village is hosting a panel discussion centered around the national Women's History Month theme: Moving Forward Together! Women Educating and Inspiring Generations. The free event will take place at 11 a.m. on Sat., March 22 in the Veterans Room at the Oak Park Public Library. Refreshments will be served. For more information, visit www.oak-park.us/WHM25.



Organize a neighborhood cleanup

Residents and organizations in Oak Park can help improve the community by organizing a neighborhood clean-up event as part of the Keep Oak Park Beautiful initiative. The Village will provide up to 10 heavy duty trash bags, 10 pairs of gloves and 10 pink refuse stickers that can be used to collect litter from alleys and parkways. Brooms and shovels are also available to borrow on a first come, first served basis. Visit www.oak-park.us/neighborhoodcleanup to sign up and for tips to hosting a safe and successful event. For more information about the program, email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Yard waste collection begins in April

Weekly collection of yard waste for residential dwellings of five or fewer units begins in April and continues through the last full week of November. Bundled brush no larger than two feet in diameter and four feet in length and yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, shrubs and vines will be picked up on regular refuse collection days. A green yard waste sticker must be attached to each brush bundle, 32-gallon paper bag and rigid container. Stickers are \$3.25 each. Residents are urged to look for alternatives to bagging yard waste such as mulching mowers, leaf shredders or backyard compost piles. Participants in the Village's compost program can discard yard waste in their gray cart without using a green sticker. For more information, visit www.oak-park.us/refuse, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Where to buy stickers

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Village Hall , 123 Madison St. | • Pete's Fresh Market , 259 Lake St. |
| • Jewel Food Stores ,
438 Madison St.,
7036 Roosevelt Rd. and
7572 Lake St. (River Forest) | • PJ's Ace Hardware , 7 Chicago Ave.
• Sugar Beet Food Co-Op ,
812 Madison St.
• Schauer Hardware ,
7449 Madison St. (Forest Park) |

Public Health news

Community health survey...The Public Health Department is conducting a community health survey this spring, and randomly selected Oak Park households have received postcards and letters in the mail with information about how to complete the survey. If you have received these materials, the Village would greatly appreciate your participation. Survey responses will remain anonymous, confidential and used solely to improve local health services. Participant feedback and experiences will provide the Village with valuable insights as the Public Health Department works to create priorities and programming for the coming years. For more information, contact health@oak-park.us.

Narcan training...The Public Health Department's Opioid Overdose Prevention Project has already trained more than 150 Oak Park residents to use Narcan to stop an opioid overdose. The next opportunity to participate is 1 p.m. on Sat., April 12 at the Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake St. The 90-minute training is ideal for people who want to be ready to respond if they encounter a person experiencing a potential opioid overdose. The training covers signs and symptoms of opioid overdose, how Narcan works in the body, hands-on practice with Narcan nasal spray and time for questions and answers. Participants will also receive a free opioid overdose prevention kit to take home. Sign up at www.oak-park.us/overdoseprevention.

Energy efficiency grants available

Have you made upgrades to your home that improved energy efficiency or electrified gas appliances? You may be eligible for a Climate Ready Energy Efficiency Grant. All households are eligible to apply, with grants ranging from up to \$1,000, \$5,000 or \$10,000 depending on the household's income. Learn what expenses are eligible and how to apply at www.oak-park.us/EnergyGrants.

Village welcomes new Health Director



Greg Olsen, an experienced professional with a wealth of knowledge across the public health spectrum, arrived earlier this year as Oak Park's new Health Director following a comprehensive national search. Olsen comes to the Village from the City of Evanston where he helped oversee environmental health programs, emergency preparedness and response, community health programs and more in his role as Public Health Manager. More information about Olsen's background is at www.oak-park.us/olsen. The Oak Park Public Health Department that Olsen oversees is one of only a handful of municipal-level public health departments certified by the state of Illinois. Learn more about the Health Department's responsibilities at www.oak-park.us/health.

Village Hall to host early voting

Suburban Cook County voters can cast an early ballot for the April 1, 2025 Consolidated Municipal Election from March 17 through March 31 at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Village Hall hours for early voting will be as follows:

- Mon., March 17 – Sat., March 22: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sun., March 23: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Mon. March 24 – Sat., March 29: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sun., March 30: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Mon., March 31: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Voters will be asked to enter Village Hall via the courtyard entrance on Madison Street. Voters who park in the main lot will be directed to walk around the outside of the building to enter from the courtyard.

On Election Day, Tues., April 1, residents must cast ballots at their designated polling place. Village Hall is not a polling place on Election Day. Visit www.cookcountyclerk.com/elections for a list of polling sites by address.

Voter registration...Village Hall will offer grace-period registration during early voting hours for those who missed the registration deadline. Individuals wishing to register during early voting must bring two pieces of identification, one with a current address. Registrants must immediately cast their ballot after registering to vote. Contact the Village Clerk's Office at 708.358.5670 or clerk@oak-park.us for more information about voter registration or early voting at Village Hall.

Paper shredding and foam recycling April 19

Oak Parkers are invited to safely dispose of sensitive documents and foam products with the No. 6 symbol at a free paper shredding and foam recycling event scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon on Sat., April 19 at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd.

Paper shredding...Each household is limited to two bags or small boxes of paper items with personal information such as canceled checks, documents containing credit card numbers, social security numbers and medical information. Paper materials that can be placed in the recycling cart or bin, such as newspaper, magazines, chipboard or junk mail will not be accepted.

Foam recycling...Foam products with the No. 6 symbol are not accepted as part of the Village's single-stream recycling program with waste hauler LRS. To fill the gap, the Village has scheduled Dart Container Corporation to collect foam products. Please follow these guidelines:

- Deposit foam products in a clear or translucent bag.
- Make sure foam has the No. 6 recycling symbol.
- Rinse or wipe foodservice containers.
- No foam packaging peanuts.

For more information, contact publicworks@oak-park.us or 708.358.5700.



Village of Oak Park

Village Hall

123 Madison Street

Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272

O/P/FYI

Village President Vicki Scaman

Trustees

Susan Buchanan Lucia Robinson

Chibuike Enyia Brian D. Straw

Ravi Parakkat Cory J. Wesley

Village Clerk

Christina M. Waters Kevin J. Jackson

Village Manager

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Permit No. 26
PAID
U.S. Postage
Standard
Presort



Village focusing on lead service line notification

As part of its commitment to providing clean, safe drinking water for all residents, the Village recently launched an online portal at www.LeadFreeOakPark.com with easy-to-understand information about water service lines, why they matter and what residents can do to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water.

The Village's Water & Sewer Division will also be sending out additional lead service line notification letters in mid-April. Similar letters were sent last fall to residences with a lead service line, galvanized service line requiring replacement or an unknown service line. If you receive a notification letter for an unknown service line, please take the survey utilizing the QR code or website address indicated in the letter.

Lead service lines in Oak Park...The Village stopped using lead materials in 1973. Depending on the age of an Oak Park home or if major renovations were completed after 1973, its water service could be lead, galvanized steel, copper or a combination of these materials. The Village encourages property owners to confirm water service line data for their address on the interactive Village-wide inventory map at www.LeadFreeOakPark.com.

Village complying with state law...A state law passed in 2022 called the Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act (LSLRNA) requires owners and operators of community water supplies such as the Village of Oak Park to develop and maintain a comprehensive water service line material inventory and implement a lead service line replacement plan. The Village is establishing its Lead Service Line Replacement Plan with the assistance of Baxter & Woodman. The final plan, due in April 2027, requires that the Village identify how it will facilitate replacement of all lead water services in a 20-year time frame. More information, including frequently asked questions and future updates, can be found at www.LeadFreeOakPark.com. For more information about water service in Oak Park, contact 708.358.5700 or publicworks@oak-park.us.

Block party season coming soon

The Village is now accepting applications for block parties. The 2025 block party season will run from April 19 through Oct. 31. Each block is limited to two events per year. The events can be a block party, a block sale or a combination of both. The total number of events across the community is limited to 30 per weekend. Some weekends fill quickly, so residents are encouraged to plan events early to ensure preferred dates. A block party and/or block sale request must include the appropriate petition signed by at least 10 separate addresses on the block, or a majority of residents on a smaller block. Find more information and the block event application and petition forms at www.oak-park.us/blockparties.



Make it green...Oak Parkers are invited to go green at their next block party. Residents who sign up for a green block party via the block party application form receive a kit that includes compostable bags and pop-up waste sorting boxes with signage indicating what waste goes where.