



City of Fort Wayne, Indiana

Voluntary Floodplain Home Buyout Program

Guideline for Property Owners

This document is intended to provide general information on the City of Fort Wayne's Voluntary Floodplain Home Buyout Program. The program is administered by the City's Flood Control Department, with the assistance of the Maumee River Basin Commission (MRBC), and is funded with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants.

The Voluntary Floodplain Home Buyout Program can provide owners of homes located in the floodway or floodplain, subject to repetitive damage from flooding, with the opportunity to sell their property to the City at its fair market value (FMV), as established by independent, qualified appraisers. The house is then demolished by the City and the floodplain property is returned to open green space, designed to hold floodwater.

Buyouts are an effective tool for long-term damage reduction. For homes that were built prior to the flood hazard building regulation, buyouts permanently reduce the hazard of the loss of life and property from any future significant flood events.

For the community's taxpayers, buyouts reduce the future public costs to the county, state, and federal agencies that provide evacuation, emergency shelter, and debris removal services. In addition, buyouts provide the added benefit of improving local flood storage and conveyance, while enhancing habitats for plants and animals and improving water quality.

All buyouts are strictly voluntary and typically take a year or two to complete, from the start of the application process.

Eligible Properties are those that meet several of the following criteria:

- a. The home is in the floodway.
- b. The home has been subject to repetitive (2 or more times) flood damage.
- c. The home has been substantially damaged (repair costs exceed 50% of value of the house) by flooding.
- d. The home is too low to practically protect from future flood losses.
- e. The homeowner is willing to participate in the program.
- f. The homeowner is willing to accept the FMV of the property, as established by the appraisers. **(over)**



- g. The buyout meets the FEMA's benefit cost criteria for a return on investment.
- h. The buyout fits within the City's budget for flood reduction projects.

FEMA provides financial assistance generally on an annual basis, for the purchase of at-risk homes, through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Program. The federal government is willing to fund these programs because of the continued risk to lives and cost to the community that these properties can present. FEMA will pay 75% of the eligible costs for the acquisition and removal of these properties.

If the City presents an offer to purchase for a buyout, the owners may accept or reject, with no further obligation. Homeowners are responsible for maintenance, utilities, and any other costs of ownership, including insurance and mortgage payments, during the buyout process.

The buyout process has the following general steps for the homeowner:

1. Contact the City to discuss the process and get on the interested homeowners list.
2. If still interested at the time of application, come to Citizens Square to sign the Statement of Voluntary Participation (SVP).
3. Wait to hear back from the City if the grant is received and the state-local agreement is approved.
4. If received, provide access to the appraiser to the home and grounds.
5. Meet with the City and the MRBC to review the offer to purchase.
6. If accepted, wait for the purchase funds to be received by the City.
7. Meet with the City and the MRBC to close and vacate the property at closing.

If you are interested in participating in this program, please complete step 1 and contact the Flood Control Manager by mail, phone or email at:

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