

Community Flood Assistance and Resilience Program: Acquisition Services for Homeowners

Voluntary Acquisitions for Homeowners

The **Community Flood Assistance and Resilience (CFAR) Program** is part of the Chehalis Basin Strategy, providing technical and financial assistance for a wide range of property-owner focused projects and other actions to reduce flood-related damage in communities throughout the Basin. The Department of Ecology's **Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB)** administers the program. CFAR's services include **voluntary acquisitions**, in which OCB and partner agencies help purchase properties at risk of flood damage from willing property owners. OCB funds acquisitions and coordinates the process to identify a new title holder, transfer ownership, and remove existing buildings when acquired.

Why should I participate in a voluntary acquisition?

Participating in voluntary acquisition (if eligible) can provide you with important benefits:

- *Improved safety:* You and your family will be able to move to a home out of harm's way, away from floodwaters
- *Peace of mind:* It reduces stress and uncertainty from potential recurring flood damage, including not having to deal with insurance claims and disaster assistance
- *Financial protection:* It helps avoid future home repair costs and loss of belongings
- *Community benefit:* We build community resilience by helping families live in safer homes

Am I eligible to participate in the program?

If you own a building with finished living space at risk of flood damage, you may be eligible for a CFAR-funded voluntary acquisition. Your property can be either owner- or renter-occupied. To determine your eligibility, OCB will:

- Conduct a property site visit and prepare a report that describes the flood hazard, building conditions, and recommended flood damage reduction measures.
- Determine whether the flood source is connected to the Chehalis River and/or its tributaries.
- Confirm the project is consistent with local codes and plans adopted by the community and does not have any outstanding building or permitting compliance violations.
- Confirm via writing that you, the property owner, are interested in participating.

Do I have to commit to having my property be acquired immediately?

No, participation is voluntary at every stage, you may withdraw at any point before closing. You must confirm your interest via writing to be eligible to move forward, but the acquisition remains voluntary all the way through closing.

How much money will I get for my property?

Ecology will purchase your property at fair market value -- the estimated price that the property would be sold at if the buyer and seller were to agree upon through negotiations under normal selling conditions, with considerations for situations like flood damage. A third-party professional will determine your property's value through an appraisal process. The appraised value represents fair compensation for the property. Properties with mortgages or liens can participate in a voluntary acquisition.

What are the steps for the voluntary acquisition process?

1. Contact OCB

Reach out to OCB to express interest. OCB staff will help you understand your needs as a homeowner and if a site visit is the right next step.

2. Site Visit and Report

If appropriate, OCB will schedule a site visit to understand your property's flood risk, flood history, and building conditions. OCB will prepare a report describing flood hazards and providing recommendations on actions to reduce exposure to flood damage, including acquisition, elevation, or other technical assistance.

3. Project Prioritization

If acquisition is the best option, your property may be added to a prioritization list to receive project funding.

4. Appraisal, Due Diligence, and Offer

Once your project is selected for funding, OCB will help manage the acquisition process, working with you as the willing seller and with the potential buyer (e.g., a local government or land trust) to obtain a third-party appraisal, ensure due diligence, and negotiate an offer.

5. Closing

Once you accept an offer, legal documents are recorded and the acquisition is complete. Depending on negotiations, you and/or your tenant(s) will need to leave the property before or after closing.

Will I get assistance to relocate?

Per state and federal law, the CFAR Program will provide relocation assistance for any eligible displaced tenants if your property is rented. Homeowners typically do not receive relocation assistance under voluntary acquisition programs.

What will happen to my property after it is acquired?

Any buildings will be removed and in general, the property will be restored to natural floodplain conditions to help reduce flood damage to the whole community. The land trust or local government that purchased your property will provide ongoing maintenance and stewardship of the property in alignment with Chehalis Basin Strategy goals of flood damage reduction and aquatic restoration.

Who can I contact and where can I learn more?

To request assistance, submit an electronic request through our online portal at <https://ecology.wa.gov/community-flood-help-request>. Our advisors will contact you to review your situation and discuss options, explain the financial assistance program, help with any necessary documentation, and schedule a potential site visit to the property. For more details on voluntary acquisition policies and protocols, you can also view the [Chehalis Basin Strategy Voluntary Acquisition Handbook](#). You can also reach out to the contact below to ask any questions.

Contact information

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ADA accessibility

To request ADA accommodations, contact us by phone at (360) 407-6831. email us at: ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov or visit: ecology.wa.gov/accessibility. For Relay Service or TTY call 711.