

Lena Tornado Response & Recovery Information

Community Update & Guidance

This information is intended to help residents understand what to expect in the coming days and weeks, reduce confusion, and help keep local response efforts focused where they are needed most.

We're currently working on planning a community meeting at the fire department that will bring together local resource groups all in one place. The goal is to create an open space where community members can connect directly with these organizations, share their needs, and learn about the support and services available to them.

More details will be coming soon – we're looking forward to making this a helpful and meaningful event for everyone involved!

1. Immediate Priorities: Protecting Homes

If your home has been damaged, the first priority is preventing further damage.

Current response efforts across the community include:

- Tarping damaged roofs
- Securing exposed structures
- Providing temporary weather protection

Homes that are open, exposed, or at risk of additional damage are being prioritized. Local companies and volunteers are working to help ensure homes and belongings are protected ahead of future weather.

What you should do:

- Stay clear of unsafe structures
- Avoid climbing on roofs or attempting dangerous repairs
- Report urgent safety hazards through appropriate emergency channels

If your home is unlivable, contact your insurance provider about Loss of Use / Additional Living Expenses (ALE) coverage. The Red Cross may also assist with immediate short-term needs.

2. Cleanup & Debris Removal

Cleanup efforts are ongoing throughout town and surrounding rural areas.

Current needs include:

- Equipment (skid steers, chainsaws, dump trailers, etc.)
- Labor to assist with debris movement

Designated debris drop-off location:

- Doc's Quarry – 6285 IL-73, north of town
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3. Utility & Safety Considerations

- Hidden damage may not be immediately visible
 - Residents should monitor for:
 - Electrical issues (flickering, outages, exposed wiring)
 - Gas odors or damaged lines
 - Water intrusion behind walls or ceilings
 - If utility damage is suspected, contact the appropriate provider immediately
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4. Community Supplies & Support

The American Red Cross will be distributing emergency supplies today (4/21) from 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM at Village Hall (122 E Main St). Volunteers will also be traveling through impacted neighborhoods to distribute supplies directly to residents.

Disaster Relief Services (NICAA)

Representatives from Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency (NICAA) will be available at Village Hall to assist residents with disaster-related needs and financial assistance programs.

Dates & Times:

- April 21: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- April 22: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- April 23: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- April 24: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Available Services Include:

- LIHEAP (Electric/Gas) Payment Assistance
- Mortgage Payment Assistance

- Rental Assistance
- Additional disaster relief resources

Bilingual services are available.

Contact Information:

- Phone: (815) 232-3141
- Website: www.nicaa.org

Food Assistance:

The Lena Food Pantry will be open with extended hours this week only:

- Monday–Friday: 9–11 AM and 4–6 PM
- Saturday: Regular hours 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

They are located at 103 ½ Main St – access is in the alley behind Citizens State Bank/Engels Jewelry

Other essential items:

A local distribution point is also available at 406 S. Schuyler for additional essential supplies.

Items commonly available:

- Bottled water
- Cleaning supplies
- Hygiene products
- Blankets/Towels

Efforts are being coordinated to consolidate donations and ensure efficient distribution.

School Update:

The Lena-Winslow School District will be hosting an Open House on Wednesday, April 22 at 5 PM to welcome the community back to school. Regular classes will resume Thursday.

5. Donations & How to Help

Community support has been strong, and many donation centers are currently at or near capacity.

Most needed items:

- Cleaning supplies (bleach, detergent, disinfectants)
- Hygiene products
- Diapers of all sizes

Most effective ways to help:

- Monetary donations
- Gift cards

The Foundation for Northwest Illinois has activated the **Lena Strong Community Fund**:

- Funds go directly to local nonprofits providing aid
- Donations are being matched dollar-for-dollar (up to \$50,000)

- Donations can be made at or mailed to:

The Foundation for Northwest Illinois

C/O Lena Strong Community Fund

1525 S. Forest Rd., Suite 200

Freeport, IL 61032

- Or online:

<https://fornwil.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund>

- Questions: info@fornwil.org | (815) 801-3035
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6. Recovery & Financial Assistance

SNAP Food Loss Replacement

If you are currently receiving SNAP benefits in Illinois and lost food due to the recent storms, you may be eligible for reimbursement of those losses.

Important: You must apply within 10 days of the food loss.

Apply or learn more here: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=18623>

Find your local DHS office: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12>

Agricultural Loss Assistance

Farmers and agricultural producers impacted by the recent storms may be eligible for assistance through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Important: You must file a notice of loss BEFORE making repairs to damaged property or infrastructure.

Taking action early helps ensure eligibility for potential disaster assistance.

Learn more about the disaster assistance process:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/.../emergency-disaster...>

Emergency Loan Programs (Coming Soon)

Emergency loan programs for individuals and small businesses are expected to become available.

These programs are typically designed to help cover:

- Uninsured losses
- Temporary housing or operating expenses
- Repairs not immediately covered by insurance

More information and application details will be shared as soon as they are available.

7. Insurance Process Basics

- Document all damage and any repairs with photos, notes, and receipts
 - Contact your insurance agent or carrier to report damage
 - Exercise patience and allow time for inspections and claim processing
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8. Village Regulations on Soliciting

- Contractors must have a valid permit to solicit
 - A No-Knock Registry is available through Village Hall – contact them to get added
 - No door-to-door solicitation is permitted on weekends at any time
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9. What to Expect Next

- Extended cleanup and debris removal
 - Ongoing safety assessments
 - Gradual transition from emergency response to rebuilding
 - Increased coordination between residents, insurers, and service providers
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10. Staying Informed

Residents are encouraged to:

- Follow official Village, Fire, and Sheriff communication channels
- Share verified information only
- Avoid spreading unconfirmed reports

Final Note

This is a community-wide recovery effort. Progress may feel slow at times, but work is actively underway across multiple fronts.

Clear communication, patience, and coordination will help ensure resources are used effectively and recovery continues to move forward.