



Access to Fishing (ATF)

Access to Fishing (ATF) kits are available to sites interested in renting out fishing tackle to the public. Typical host sites include libraries, park districts, nature centers and YMCAs.

Kits contain spincast combos, terminal tackle (hooks, sinkers, bobbers) and educational materials from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Larger kits are available for special events and fishing derbies.

Additional Services

The Urban and Community Fishing Program also offers additional services which include

- Fishing clinics and classes for adult, senior and alternately abled groups
- Educational materials for fishing derbies and special events
- Year-round fishing experiences (weather permitting)
- Staffing at career fairs, fishing derbies, expos and community events

**Have a program need that is not listed?
Let us know!**

**We work with people of all ages and skill levels
to get our participants hooked on fishing!**

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Digital Resources

For more information on the Urban and Community Fishing Program, visit



For more information on Illinois fisheries, visit

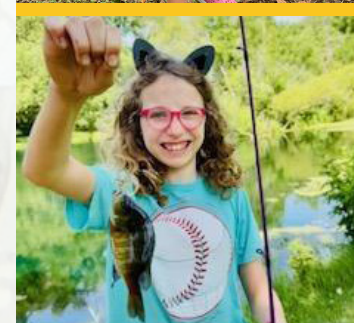


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Urban and Community Fishing Program



**EVERYONE
BELONGS
IN NATURE**



History

The Illinois Urban and Community Fishing program began in 1985 in Chicago. By offering free fishing clinics and aquatic resource programs to Chicago residents, the program aimed to teach sportfishing to people of all ages, enhance fishing opportunities for urban residents and promote a greater appreciation of Illinois Natural Resources.

In 1994, the program expanded statewide. Program offerings consisted of three components.

- 1.) Free summer fishing clinics at stocked lagoons
- 2.) Fishing and non-fishing programs at schools
- 3.) Fishing programs for community groups

In 1997, the program added an additional component, the Access to Fishing Program. Through Access to Fishing (ATF), public sites like libraries, park districts and forest preserves receive tackle kits (rods, spin cast reels and terminal tackle) to loan to the public. Annual fish stockings occur at urban ponds, lakes, and lagoons to enhance fishing opportunities for urban communities and program participants.

Each year, the Urban and Community Fishing program provides free fishing clinics and aquatic resource programs to 75,000 Illinois residents. An average of 1,800 programs are conducted each year, with programs offered to people of all ages and ability levels. The program has reached 2 million Illinois residents during its 40-year history.

School Lessons

The Urban and Community Fishing program uses classroom-based and experiential learning opportunities to teach students about fishing skills, aquatic science and resource conservation. School programs consist of a two-part lesson, featuring a classroom (indoor) and fishing (outdoor) session. Single session classroom lessons, without a fishing component, are also available.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources also offers bus grants to offset transportation cost for participation schools. Grants cover bus transportation up to \$500 per teacher with a limit of \$1,000 per trip.

Group size: 10 or more individuals (multiple sessions for large groups available)

Age: 6 years and up

Program length: Classroom session – 50 minutes, Fishing session – 2 hours

Dates: Fall: September 1st - December 1st,
Spring: February 1st - May 31st



All services and programs provided through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Fishing Program are provided free of charge.



Summer Programs

Summer programs include registered fishing clinics, walk up clinics, fishing skill workshops and aquatic resource education classes. Classes are led by Conservation Education Representatives (CERs) or regional coordinators. Clinics are held at public sites including city lagoons, forest preserves, river walks and marinas. Tackle, bait and instruction are provided.

“Dry” clinics are offered to sites that do not have immediate access to a public body of water. These clinics cover Illinois aquatic resources and involve casting practice using plastic “plugs.” Dry clinics are a great alternative for groups without water access and are an excellent way for participants to practice casting skills before fishing with bait and hooks.

Group size: 10 or more individuals

Age: 6 years and up

Program Length: 1 to 2 hours

Dates: June 1st - September 1st