

Frequently Asked Questions

Community Wildfire Preparedness Funding Opportunity

Q: We are not a Firewise USA community, but we're still interested, are we still eligible to apply?

A: Yes, communities such as Homeowner Associations or Neighborhood Associations may still be eligible to apply. Please contact us and we will help you to determine if you are eligible to apply and if your project is a good fit for this funding opportunity.

Q: What if we are not a Firewise Community USA© but are interested in becoming one?

A: We are happy to help. The best approach is to schedule a time for one of us to come out and meet with a group of homeowners/residents interested in pursuing the Firewise recognition to learn more and decide if it is something the group wants to pursue. Following the initial meeting we will start working on your community risk assessment and provide technical support as your community applies for the recognition process.

Q: What if we don't know where our Community Risk Assessment is, or if we have completed one for our community?

A: No worries. Between the partner agencies: the Cascadia Conservation District, Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition, and Fire Districts we should have all Risk Assessments on file and can provide you a copy to review and use to generate project ideas.

Q: Will our community have to pay for supplies or contractors out of our own pocket, and wait to be reimbursed?

A: Yes, this is a reimbursement-based program. That said, we will work closely with your community every step of the way to ensure that any work or contracts entered into as part of your project meet the program requirements. This will also ensure that reimbursement happens as quickly as possible.

Q: Our Community Risk Assessment is really old, because we have been a Firewise Community for many years. Can we apply for a project that is not identified in our action plan?

A: Sure. If you feel like you have a great idea to make your community better prepared for wildfire, we want to hear about it and discuss it with you. Feel free to give us a call and we can make sure it is in line with the best available science for improving the resilience of communities and structures.

Q. How do we estimate the cost of a project?

A: Please take the time to review your Action Plan and do the best you can to estimate your project's cost. You can contact local suppliers and contractors for prices. Use \$25/hr. to estimate the value of volunteer/homeowner labor toward the project. If you need assistance or don't have an Action Plan, please contact us. We can assist you in estimating the cost of your project.

Q. What kind of projects is the financial assistance able to help communities implement?

A: Projects should be identified in your community's Action Plan; they should be similar to:

- Removal of flammable vegetation within 5' immediate zone of structures and installation of hardscape (gravel)
- Reducing hazardous fuels along critical egress routes for communities
- Reducing hazardous fuels through grazing*
- Fuels reduction projects on community owned parcels
- Installation of demonstration projects in highly visible areas of the community (Firewise gardens etc.)
- Community pine needle clean-up day
- Community roving chipper days (homeowners remove fuels, put them curbside then volunteers process them through a chipper, mainly to dispose of offsite)

Low Cost Home Hardening Practices (this funding will not go toward replacing one individual's roof, deck, etc. but for multiple homes in the community)

- Screening below decks
- Screening attic and soffit vents
- Ember resistant vent installation

Hosting a presentation from WSU Master Gardeners about Firewise Landscaping class

*Grazing projects will be evaluated on a case by case basis to determine their effectiveness and long-term maintenance of the project site.

Q. What is cost share?

A: The financial assistance can pay up to 50% of the total project cost and communities will need to pay the remaining 50%. For example, if a project costs \$10,000 to implement, the financial assistance will cover \$5,000. The community will need to fund the entire amount up front and will be reimbursed \$5,000 after the project is complete. Depending on whether there are donated hours and materials versus all cash outlay, this could mean up to \$5,000 in net hard costs to the community.

Cost share requirements can be met through a variety of ways, for example, community member volunteer hours, materials purchased for the project, equipment purchased or rented for the project.

Following is an example of a cost share project budget:

Planned Project: Reducing hazardous fuels along critical egress routes

Estimated Costs/Values:

Contractor to remove & chip vegetation		\$7,500
Rental value of landowner equipment (loader) and fuel to collect and pile material		\$ 500
Landowner labor: collect/pile material, spread chips (80 hours x \$25/hr.)		<u>\$2,000</u>
	Total Project Cost:	\$10,000
Cost Share Reimbursement (up to 50%)	\$5,000	
Community cash commitment to pay contractor:	\$7,500	
Net cost to community: (plus labor, equipment use and fuel)	\$2,500	

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to call the Cascadia CD office line, 509-436-1601 or email Hillary Heard. hheard@chelancountyfire.com

We do not want anyone to be discouraged from applying for any reason before talking to us, and if Hilary can't answer your question, she will connect you with a partner at Conservation District or Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition.