



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry
Fiscal Year 2022 Community Wildfire Defense Grant
Notice of Funding Opportunity Instructions
Northeast-Midwest**

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Overview and Submission Dates for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022

- Applications are being requested for the FY2022 Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG)
- This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is for projects that will be carried out within the footprint of the **Northeast-Midwest States** (Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and Wisconsin). For Tribes and other regions of the United States, please see appropriate NOFO for specific instructions.
- Search for the following grant Opportunity Number in [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and follow the included instructions:

USDA-FS-2022-CWDG-NEMW

- **SUBMIT ALL APPLICATIONS BY MIDNIGHT, EASTERN TIME ZONE, OCTOBER 7, 2022**

Purpose of the Community Wildfire Defense Grant

The purpose of the Community Wildfire Defense Grant is to assist at-risk local communities and Indian Tribes with planning for and mitigating against the risk created by wildfire. This program is authorized in H.R. 3684, “An Act to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes,” commonly referred to as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Specifically, the CWDG is provided for in Title VIII, Section 40803. There are two primary project types for which the grant provides



funding: The development and revising of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), and the implementation of projects described in a CWPP that is less than ten years old. The Act prioritizes at-risk communities that are in an area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential, are low-income, and/or have been impacted by a severe disaster. More details on these three priorities can be found in this NOFO.

The CWDG helps communities in the wildland urban interface (WUI) implement the three goals of the [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#) (Cohesive Strategy):

- **Restore and Maintain Landscapes:** Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances, in accordance with management objectives.
- **Create Fire Adapted Communities:** Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.
- **Improve Wildfire Response:** All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

Key Points

- **Who Can Apply:** Entities eligible to apply for funding under the CWDG include:
 - a. Units of local governments representing communities located in an area with a risk of wildfires,
 - b. Indian Tribes,
 - c. Non-profit organizations including homeowner associations that assist such communities,
 - d. State forestry agencies (including U.S. territories and interests), and
 - e. Alaska Native Corporations

For-profit entities are not eligible to apply for this funding opportunity.

- **Eligible Lands:** Eligible applicants may apply for grant funding for a project proposal to be conducted on lands with the following ownership types, as long as the project proposal directly reduces wildfire risk to a community:
 - a. Private lands
 - b. Local government
 - c. Homeowner associations
 - d. State government
 - e. Tribal/Alaska native corporation (includes Trust lands)

Federal lands are not eligible for this funding opportunity with the exception of Federal Tribal trust lands.

- **State Forest Action Plans and the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy:** Projects should further the priorities, e.g., goal, strategy, and/or priority landscape in the most recent State Forest Action Plans as well as the relevant regional cohesive wildland fire management strategy document.
- **Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government:** We prioritize applications that show a clear benefit to underserved people and the communities where they reside or the forest areas that they value. Where this is the case, this should be described in the "Project Narrative Form." Underserved communities are also eligible to request a waiver of match requirements.
- **Minimum and Maximum Funding Levels:**
 - a. There is no *minimum* Federal funding limit for projects under CWDG.
 - b. The *maximum* amount of Federal funding awarded to any one community or Tribe via this competitive process is:
 - \$250,000 for the creation or updating of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and



- \$10 million for a project described within a Community Wildfire Protection Plan less than 10 years old.
- c. For planning purposes, the Federal funding allocated through the CWDG competitive process is expected to be approximately \$160 million annually for the next five years.
- **Required Matching Funds:** The CWDG program has differing levels of match dependent upon the proposal for which is being applied. For proposals to develop or update a CWPP, the required match is 10%. For proposals to implement projects described within a CWPP, the required match is 25%. Matching funds must be derived entirely from non-Federal sources (unless expressly authorized in law by the other federal program). The match must be met by eligible and allowable costs and is subject to match provisions in grant regulations ([Code of Federal Regulations Title 2 Part 200.306](#) and [Subpart E for Cost Principles](#)). Match must meet all the same requirements as the Federal share and be documented sufficiently to support financial tracking and accountability. See the [Matching Funds document](#) for more guidance. **Communities meeting the definition of underserved may request a waiver of match;** no other waivers are allowable under this program.
- **Lead Agency or Organization:** All applications must identify the lead agency or organization that will have primary responsibility for coordinating project work and reporting. The lead agency may pass funds to other partners performing work as relevant.
- **Grant Timeframes:** Projects must be completed within five (5) years.
- **For Proposals including multiple communities:** For separate projects in separate communities, a single application (424, 424A) within grants.gov may be submitted, however, a separate narrative form and included budget will need to be filled out for each community for purposes of determining eligibility, prioritization, and ranking. For an application consisting of a single project that spans multiple communities, the project can be applied for and described within the same application and narrative form.
- **Scoring and Ranking of applications:** Applications will be scored by members of a regional review panel. Individual reviewer scores will be normalized. All regionally-scored applications will be compiled in a single nationally-ranked list, which will be used to distribute funding.
- **Reporting:** Funded CWDG projects will be required to provide financial reports to the grant's administrator on a quarterly basis, and project performance reports on an annual basis. The annual performance report shall include a spatial data component. This requires both Forest Service grant monitors and CWDG grant recipients to coordinate in entering project information.
- **Build America/Buy America:** to the extent possible, successful applicants are encouraged to purchase materials, components, equipment and supplies that were made in America.
- **Environmental Compliance:** The requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) applies to proposed "Federal" actions. Whether an action under the CWDG program may be subject to NEPA analysis is dependent upon the level of federal (Forest Service) control and authority over the action. Deciding whether or not the Forest Service is responsible for performing NEPA analysis is determining whether the Forest Service exercises control over the implementation of the action to be funded, and to what degree implementation of the action is dependent upon Forest Service funding. For example, where the Forest Service provides funding, but does not exercise control or decision making over the specific projects and actions funded by the CWDG grant, it is unlikely to be deemed a Federal action for purposes of requiring NEPA analysis. Similarly, where the Forest Service provides only a small percentage of the funding for a project, it is unlikely that environmental analysis will be required under NEPA due to limited control and responsibility.
- **Floodplain Management Criteria:** If applicable and appropriate, a project located in a Special Flood Hazard Area must implement and meet the conditions contained within the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS).



- **Labor Standards:** All laborers and mechanics employed by the applicant, subrecipients, contractors or subcontractors in the performance of construction, alteration, or repair work on an award or project in excess of \$2000 funded directly by or assisted in whole or in part by funds made available under this grant program shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on similar projects in the locality, as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code commonly referred to as the “Davis-Bacon Act” (DBA).

Applicants shall provide written assurance acknowledging the DBA requirements for the award or project and confirming that all laborers and mechanics performing construction, alteration, or repair work on projects in excess of \$2000 funded directly by or assisted in whole or in part by and through funding under the award are paid or will be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with Subchapter IV of Chapter 31 of Title 40, United States Code (Davis-Bacon Act).

Recipients of funding will also be required to undergo DBA compliance training and to maintain competency in DBA compliance. The U.S. Department of Labor offers free Prevailing Wage Seminars several times a year that meet this requirement, at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/government-contracts/construction/seminars/events>.

For additional guidance on how to comply with DBA provisions and clauses, see <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/government-contracts/construction> and <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/government-contracts/protections-for-workers-in-construction>.

Detailed Eligibility and Qualifying Proposal Types

All applicants are highly encouraged to coordinate with the State Forestry Agency (or equivalent) in proposal development. State Forester contact information is available on the [National Association of State Foresters website](#). The Forest Service State & Private Forestry staff are also available to facilitate and assist with this coordination, can provide liaison support for Tribes, and can assist with application submission if needed.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- The following entities are eligible to submit a project proposal for funding.
 - Units of local governments representing communities located in an area with a risk of wildfires,
 - Indian Tribes,
 - Non-profit organizations such as homeowner associations that assist such communities,
 - State forestry agencies, and
 - Alaska Native Corporations (if within the applicable footprint of this NOFO)
- For-profit entities are not eligible to apply for a grant under this program.

For applications submitted by organizations that plan to work with multiple communities, it will be a requirement of the application to name each of the specific communities that the organization plans to assist. Those specified communities will each need to meet the same eligibility requirements as a community that would be applying on their own.

If a non-profit or other organization is contracted with a State forestry agency for Community Wildfire Defense Grants Program related work, they will not be eligible to apply for a grant under the program unless the grant can be separately managed with no conflict of interest concerns.

Location of Projects

An eligible applicant may apply for grant funding for a project proposal to be conducted on lands with the



following ownership types as long as the project proposal directly reduces wildfire risk to a community. With the exception of Federal lands held in trust for Indian Tribes, F, federal lands are not eligible for on-the-ground projects.

- Private
- Local government
- Homeowner associations
- State government
- Tribal/Alaska native corporation (includes Trust lands)

Project Objectives

A project proposal must advance objectives and priorities identified in a community wildfire protection plan that is not more than 10 years old.

A project proposal must be designed to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- a. Assist a community with planning to address management of wildfire risk.
- b. Assist a community with mitigation measures or actions to reduce wildfire risk.

Projects to be Given Priority

Applicants will have the responsibility to indicate on the application if they meet any or all of the three priorities. The applicant will also need to provide supporting documentation or a link to such documentation for each priority that is checked. Priority will be given to project proposals that:

- Are located in an area identified as having a high or very high wildfire hazard potential;
- Benefit a low-income community; or
- Are located in a community impacted by a severe disaster within the previous 10 years.

General Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for grant funding, a project proposal must meet the following criteria:

1. Projects must be for a qualifying activity
2. Meets the cost-share match or waiver requirement
 - a. The cost-share match can be in the form of a cash or in-kind contribution.
 - b. A cash match cannot utilize other federal funding.
3. The maximum grant amount is:
 - a. \$250,000 to develop or revise/update a CWPP
 - b. \$10,000,000 to carry out projects described in a CWPP
4. Funds cannot be used on Federal lands with the exception of those Federal lands held in trust for Indian Tribes.
5. The grant term is for a total maximum of five (5) years.
6. Communities that request funding for mitigation projects or the development/ update of a CWPP must verify if they currently have in place an ordinance or regulation that requires that roofs for new building construction as well as the reroofing or replacement of a roof on existing buildings adheres to standards that are similar to, or more stringent than the roof construction standards established by the National Fire Protection Association or applicable model building code established by the International Code Council. *(Note: It is not a requirement to have a roofing ordinance for grant eligibility)*
7. Communities that request funding for mitigation projects must:
 - a. meet the definition of an “at-risk community” as defined, and
 - b. be following a CWPP, Tribal hazard mitigation plan, or FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan with a wildfire component that is not older than 10 years, or
 - c. have a CWPP or FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan in place by the application deadline, and at the time of obligation of grant funds for mitigation projects, and
 - d. have the project(s) requested for funding described in the CWPP or similar plan.



PROJECT PROPOSAL TYPES

Applications may be submitted to fund the following types of project proposals:

Planning:

Local and Tribal governments are encouraged to conduct planning and exercises to assist their communities with wildfire preparedness, response, and adaptation efforts. One of the fundamental building blocks in creating a fire adapted community is the development, adoption and continuous use of a well-prepared Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). In some cases, a community may choose to utilize a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan or Tribal hazard mitigation plan with a wildfire component that meets the same objectives of a CWPP. A well-prepared CWPP or similar plan should address issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness (which includes smoke readiness), structure protection, or a combination of these issues, and will greatly assist a local government body in planning and prioritizing project work.

Specific CWPP development guidance, as well as any more stringent requirements of the relevant state government, may be obtained by contacting your state forestry agency.

In addition to the development of a CWPP or similar plan, local governments should also consider how tools such as zoning, building codes and land use planning may be used to effect change in how and where homes and businesses are constructed and located so that wildfire risk is reduced, and firefighter safety is improved if protective actions are required. In developing any planning tools, and determining risk both now and into the future, a community should consider the most recent climate data available for the planning area involved, as appropriate. Finally, communities are encouraged to continuously refer to their CWPPs or similar plans, keep them updated, and conduct tests and exercises to ensure that recommended practices and objectives are being achieved.

Examples of Planning Projects	
Eligible Projects	Ineligible Projects
Creation of a CWPP or development of a wildfire section for a hazard mitigation plan.	GIS and database systems unless they support a CWPP, wildfire risk reduction planning or fuels mitigation initiative or project
Update of an existing CWPP/hazard mitigation plan (Existing plan must be over five (5) years old.)	Creation and/or update of Forest Stewardship Plans
Contract support to assist a community with developing building codes, zoning ordinances or land use planning.	Economic development projects
Direct staff funding support to assist a community with developing building codes, zoning ordinances or land use planning.	Small business start-up funding
Tabletop or functional exercises to test effectiveness of community wildfire planning.	Research and development projects



Examples of Planning Projects	
Eligible Projects	Ineligible Projects
Plan and address public health and safety effects of smoke and mitigation from wildfire and projects that use prescribed fire (“Smoke Ready” efforts)	
Direct staff support for community wildfire mitigation leadership/coordination	
Training in the use of proven effective mitigation practices, such as the Forest Service’s mitigation best practices	
Direct staff support to assist in creation of a local or regional mitigation partnership	

Table 1 - Eligible Planning Projects

Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Education/Outreach:

Local and Tribal governments can provide leadership to result in reduced wildfire risk to their communities by coordinating, developing, and distributing educational programs. These programs and outreach may be delivered in association with states, insurance companies, non-governmental organizations, and other partners. Educational and outreach projects must raise awareness of what is the main cause of wildfires, what the risks are, and what actions they can take to reduce that risk.

Projects should lead to actions such as the use or establishment of one or more fire program elements such as fire safety codes, implementation of Firewise USA© practices, establishing local fire safe councils, and fuels treatments within fire-prone communities.

Projects should be concise and clearly demonstrate deliverables and measures of success of wildfire prevention/mitigation education and outreach activities.

Wildfire Prevention/Education/Outreach	
Eligible	Ineligible
Firewise USA© or similar programs outreach to communities and property owners	Printing of paper-based materials without an organized outreach/education program
Fire education presentation such as Project Learning Tree	
Property inspections and/or assessments	
Training to conduct property inspections and/or assessments	
Implementation of WUI Structure / Parcel / Community Fire Hazard Mitigation Methodology (HMM) for community hazard reduction	



Table 2 - Eligible Prevention/Education/Outreach Projects

Reduce Hazardous Fuels / Restore Fire-adapted Ecosystems:

Fuel reduction projects and vegetation treatments have been identified as an effective means of mitigating wildfire hazards. Recipients shall facilitate and implement mitigating fuel treatments in, or adjacent to communities to reduce the threat of wildfire to such communities.

Effective fuels mitigation treatments can be implemented across jurisdictional boundaries, on adjoining private lands, or within the respective communities. Communities may consider fuel treatments that extend out from community boundaries by 1.5 miles. Projects of this type include fuel breaks, thinning, pruning, landscape modifications, etc. The overall purpose is to modify or break up the fuels in such a way as to lessen wildfire risk and its threat to the public, provide for firefighter safety, and reduce damage to property. Such treatments may have additional desirable outcomes, such as providing sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits.

Project proposals must consider all elements required to implement treatments on the ground, which includes acquiring the necessary permits and consultations needed to complete plans and assessments, as well as treatment prescriptions and measures of success. Projects should also consider any necessary maintenance treatments especially in those areas of the country where woody vegetation regrows rapidly.

Examples of Hazardous Fuels Reduction/ Restoration Projects	
Eligible	Ineligible
Defensible space around homes, businesses, and other structures	Capital improvements including construction/infrastructure (building remodel, bridges, road construction, water development)
Development, creation, and/or maintenance of fuel breaks and fire breaks, including shaded fuel breaks	Home hardening, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof upgrades or replacements • Fire resistant siding • Metal gutters and vents
Fuels reduction beyond defensible space adjacent to at-risk communities.	Fire suppression training (unless course is a requirement for prescribed fire qualifications)
Removal of standing woody vegetation by cutting, piling and burning.	Fire suppression equipment and apparatus
Removal of standing woody vegetation by cutting and chipping.	Drones
Removal of standing woody vegetation using a mechanical mulcher or masticator type equipment mounted on mobile equipment.	
Reduction of hazardous fuels through the application of prescribed fire.	



Examples of Hazardous Fuels Reduction/ Restoration Projects	
Eligible	Ineligible
Vegetation management (pruning, mowing, chemical treatment, grazing), including rights-of-ways for roads.	
Maintenance of fuels projects. Up to two (2) maintenance treatment allowed per project during the grant term.	
Monitoring components of projects for effectiveness (must have established baseline)	
Prescribed fire training, including training on smoke management associated with prescribed fires	
Design and installation of dry hydrants and cisterns	
<p>Purchase of mechanical equipment that meets, or does not exceed the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brush/wood chippers that are towable or mountable to a skid steer, compact track loader or tractor with a maximum chipping capacity of no more than 15 inches. • Self-propelled forestry mulchers up to a maximum 200 horsepower. • Forestry mulcher attachments designed for skid steers, compact track loaders, excavators or crawler dozers. • Heavy duty brush mowers that can be utilized for maintaining road rights-of-ways and fire breaks. • Trailers necessary to transport equipment that is determined eligible in this section, including box-type trailers to store and transport prescribed fire equipment. 	
Purchase of equipment for brush/fuel disposal, such as air curtain burner/trench burner	



Examples of Hazardous Fuels Reduction/ Restoration Projects	
Eligible	Ineligible
<p>Purchase of the following equipment and supplies to support the use of prescribed fire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal protection equipment, including fire shelters and N95 filtering face respirators • Drip torches • Wildland hand tools • Backpack blowers • Chainsaws • Portable wildfire pumps • Wildland hose • Portable folding water tanks • Cache of air filtration units for use by the public 	

Table 3 - Eligible Hazardous Fuels Reduction/Restoration Projects

Cost Share Match Requirements and Waivers

Matching Requirements

Cost-share is required for all applications funded under the CWDG Program. The cost share rates for this program are:

- not less than 10 percent for a grant awarded to develop or revise a CWPP; and
- not less than 25 percent for a grant awarded to carry out projects described in a CWPP that is not more than 10 years old.

This means Federal funding is available for up to 90 percent of eligible costs for developing or revising CWPPs and 75 percent for projects described in a CWPP. The non-Federal cost-share may consist of cash, donated or third-party in-kind services, materials, or any combination thereof. Cash and third-party in-kind matches must consist of eligible costs (i.e., same eligibility as the Federal share).

- Cash match is from the applicant’s budget, such as personnel salary, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, and supplies, or cash provided by another party. Source of cash match cannot be derived from another Federal award or grant.
- In-Kind match is a non-cash contribution of value. A non-Federal entity’s in-kind match must meet the following criteria:
 - Are verifiable from the non-Federal entity's records (See Appendix K for examples);
 - Are not included as contributions for any other Federal award;
 - Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives;
 - Are allowable under subpart E of 2 CFR 200;
 - Are not paid by the Federal Government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program



- can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs;
- Are provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and
- Conform to other provisions of 2 CFR 200, as applicable.

Applicants cannot apply other Federal award funds toward the CWDC non-Federal cost share unless the other Federal statutory authority allows the funds to be used to meet cost-share requirements. Ultimately, the recipient is responsible for ensuring that it contributes the proper cost share to its actual project costs. If actual total project costs exceed the projected total project costs stated in the Federal award, the recipient will not receive any additional Federal funding and will be responsible for contributing additional funds above the required cost match. If actual total project costs are less than the projected total project costs stated in the Federal award, the recipient will be responsible for contributing a cost match calculated as a percentage of those actual project costs.

Cost-Share Waiver

The Forest Service may waive the cost-sharing requirement for a project that serves an underserved community as determined by the Social Vulnerability Index. In considering a waiver for the cost-sharing requirement, sufficient supporting documentation to demonstrate that the community meets the requirements set forth within the definition will need to be included as part of the waiver request.



Scoring Criteria for Community Wildfire Adaptation Grants (100 points total)

Clearly and concisely address each of these criteria in the Project Narrative Form:

1. Project Description (10 points)

The application should clearly define the scope of the project, what the project proposes to accomplish, why it is important, and how it links to the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and relevant State Forest Action Plan.

2. Budget (10 points)

	Grant	Match	TOTAL
	Funds Requested	Non-Federal Funds	Total Project Cost
Personnel/Labor:			
Fringe Benefits:			
Travel:			
Equipment:			
Supplies:			
Contractual:			
Other:			
Indirect Costs:			
TOTAL:			

The budget narrative must describe how the grant funds will be spent with specific detail for each grant expenditure. It must describe how expenditures are applicable and relevant to the goals and objectives of the project. A project proposal must also show how the applicant will meet matching requirements or qualify for a waiver.

3. Accomplishments (10 points)

A proposal must clearly define how a project will be accomplished, timelines and milestones, as well as measures and metrics. Examples include:

- a. How the selected objectives will lead to measurable outcomes for community wildfire risk reduction.
- b. How the applicant will measure progress towards those outcomes (such as, acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels, change in fire regime).
- c. The proposed metrics for measuring progress, which must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

4. Collaboration (10 points)

The application should clearly define collaborative elements including support from partners, agencies, landowners, and communities. A project proposal must identify partners that will be actively engaged in carrying out the project and add value to project planning and implementation. Collaboration may be qualitative in nature, and the contribution of a partner may be more than the number of partners.

5. Landscape Impacts (10 points)

The application should clearly define the scale of the project including relationships with past, present, or future projects that, when combined, offer more benefits than when taken individually. The overall



landscape that the project influences, in addition to the defined project area, should be clearly described, as well as the land ownerships within the area. Specify areas targeted for planning or mitigation. Clearly describe each proposed activity and include details on where they will be occurring. Include the approximate number of structures that will benefit from the proposed action.

6. Project Sustainability (10 points)

The application should clearly define how or if the project will sustain itself after the grant period is over. Any steps or plans that will be carried out to continue the project benefits beyond the life of the grant should be described.

7. Low Income Community (10 points)

The application should clearly demonstrate and document whether the project benefits a low-income community.

8. Affected by a Severe Disaster (10 points)

The application should clearly demonstrate and document whether the project benefits a community that has been impacted by a severe disaster within the previous ten (10) years, and clearly exhibit how the severe disaster increased wildfire risk and/or hazard, and was of a scale and scope to have had landscape impacts (please see full definition on page 18 of this NOFO).


9. Area of Wildfire Hazard Potential (20 points)

The application should clearly demonstrate and document whether the project is located in an area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential as defined by a local, state, Tribal, regional, or national wildfire hazard potential assessment.

Criteria Scoring Rubric: This rubric is for the review team members to reference while scoring the applications.

Criteria Scoring Rubric			
Criteria	High Score	Medium Score	Low Score
1. Project Description	7-10 points Clearly defined purpose and goals. Paints clear picture of what project is trying to achieve and how it will be accomplished. Links to Cohesive Strategy and/or State Forest Action Plan goals and strategies	3-6 points Project described in general, but misses one or two elements that would clarify goal and intent. Outlines project well but does not clearly address risk or hazard. Mentions Cohesive Strategy or State Forest Action plan only cursory	0-2 points Weak description of purpose of project or how it will protect community. Unclear on how it will be accomplished. No linkage to Cohesive Strategy or State Forest Action Plan.
2. Budget	7-10 points Budget is complete, easy to understand, and budget items are clearly labeled. Narrative provides clear and concise explanation of each budget line item and its function within the project.	3-6 points Budget items are present and detailed, but one or more budget line items lacks explanation and function within project description.	0-2 points Major errors in budget calculations. Expenditures and budget line-item functions are unclear. Poorly written.
3. Accomplishment	7-10 points	3-6 points	0-2 points



Criteria Scoring Rubric			
Criteria	High Score	Medium Score	Low Score
s	Compelling, clear and concise description of qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Measures are specific, achievable and clear.	Description of how outcomes will achieve one or more objectives of grant. Outcomes are commensurate with budget	Weak description, or lack of clarity for measures. Outcomes are not commensurate with budget.
4. Collaboration	7-10 points Demonstrates strong collaboration with, and commitment by, partners. High coordination with other entities. Cross boundary collaboration	3-6 points Limited to moderate coordination with partners. Demonstrates some, but not strong, commitment by partners.	0-2 points A simple assertion, or very little or no meaningful collaboration. Little to no coordination with neighboring entities or complementary programs
5. Landscape Impacts	7-10 points Clearly demonstrates forethought given to project location, orientation and/or scope/magnitude of positive impact on a landscape and/or community beyond the defined project area.	3-6 points Landscape level activities or community reach are described in general or other nearby projects are listed, but it is not clear how or why the project complements directly at a landscape or community level.	0-2 points Narrative not clearly written; key descriptions of landscape community level activities, and overall project impact are absent.
6. Project Sustainability	7-10 points Application well-written and clearly shows that items described have been planned in advance and/or have had past success. Describes who is responsible for maintenance, duration, and if any processes or long-term plans are in place to support the project after grant funding is expended.	3-6 points Missing key details or specificity of how project will be maintained beyond life of grant, but is otherwise well written, detailed, and descriptive.	0-2 points Omits multiple details on how project will be sustained, and/or is poorly detailed and unclear. No mention of how project will provide benefit beyond the life of the grant
7. Low income community	10 points All, or part of a project area is located in a low-income community as defined.	not applicable 	0 points All of a project is located outside the footprint of a low-income community, as defined, or is not documented



Criteria Scoring Rubric			
Criteria	High Score	Medium Score	Low Score
8. Impacted by Severe Disaster	10 points All, or part of a project area has been impacted by a severe disaster, as defined, and is documented	not applicable [Greyed out]	0 points None of project area has been impacted by a severe disaster, as defined, or is not properly documented
9. High/Very high wildfire hazard potential	20 points All, or part of project is located within an area of high or very high wildfire hazard potential, and is properly documented	not applicable [Greyed out]	0 points Project is located outside any area with high or very high wildfire hazard potential, or is not documented properly

Preparing an Application

Submit all applications for this funding opportunity through [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov). Search for grant Opportunity Number **USDA-FS-2022-CWDG-NEMW**. Only authorized Grants.gov Workspace representatives for the applying entity are eligible to submit applications through Grants.gov. See [Appendix I](#) for Grants.gov instructions.

Prior to preparing an application, carefully read this document to ensure eligibility requirements, purposes, match requirements, and what the review panel will be looking for during scoring and ranking. Applicants should also be familiar with the relevant [State's Forest Action Plan\(s\)](#) as well as the [Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#). ***It is highly recommended to work with the appropriate state contact (see list in this NOFO) early on in the application process for guidance.***

Complete application packages include the following (complete all forms in your Workspace at Grants.gov):

Required Forms Available in the Grants.gov Application Package:

- SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance (OMB Control Number 4040-0004). Note: The Catalog of Domestic Assistance number is 10.720.
- SF-424A Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (OMB Control Number 4040-0006)
- Attachments Form (must be included in the application package in order to attach additional forms below)

Documents Submitted using the Attachments Form in Grants.gov (attach in this order):

- Community Wildfire Defense Grant Project Narrative Form (required)
- Screenshot showing an ACTIVE registration in SAM.gov (required)
- Documentation of at-risk community, wildfire hazard potential, low-income, and/or impacted by a severe disaster (required if applicable).
- Maps or photos to accompany the narrative (optional)
- Application worksheet (optional)
- Letters of Support (optional)

Completed application packages are due by midnight, October 7th, 2022.



Project Narrative Form Instructions

Clearly and concisely respond to each section in the Project Narrative. For the longer sections, we encourage you to include sub-headings, line spacing, and/or other formatting for ease of reading (rather than fill every line with words). You may format text in MS Word and then copy and paste it into the Form. Some text formatting is available in the PDF form, e.g., bold, underline, and italic. To format text in the Form: Highlight the text, right click, and select "Text Style."

- **Project Title:** Provide a uniquely descriptive title for this project. Use this full title consistently on all submission communications and supplemental documents, including letters of support, until an official application number is assigned by the Eastern Region S&PF.
- **Project Applicant:** Enter the name of the organization applying for Federal funding.
- **Program Contact:** Enter the name and contact information for the project or program, i.e., who would be the lead for implementing the project if funded.
- **Brief Project Overview and Purpose:** Provide a brief purpose statement or synopsis for the project.
- **Grant Component Type:** Check the box that best describes the project for which you are applying. Due to differing requirements for match and funding limits, check only one box per application and do not combine CWPP development proposals with project implementation proposals.
- **At-risk community:** Check either the "yes" or "no" box. This is a fundamental eligibility requirement, so if you check "no" you are not eligible for funding under this opportunity. Please verify with state forestry agency or equivalent prior to applying. Documentation and verification will be required. This may be accomplished by either entering a link to the verification source in the application narrative, or by submitting/uploading documentation as an attachment in grants.gov (such as the optional application worksheet signed by an authorized individual). ***An at-risk community is defined as an area that is comprised of:***
 - Option 1: An interface community as defined in the notice entitled "Wildland Urban Interface Communities Within the Vicinity of Federal Lands That Are at High Risk From Wildfire," issued by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with title IV of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (114 Stat. 1009) (66 Fed. Reg. 753, January 4, 2001);***
 - or***
 - Option 2: A group of homes and other structures with basic infrastructure and services (i.e., utilities, collectively maintained transportation routes, etc.) at risk from wildfire as recognized by a state, regional, or national wildfire risk assessment, in which herbaceous or woody fuel conditions in and adjacent to the community are conducive to a wildland fire disturbance event which threatens human life or values-at-risk.***
- **Roofing Code/Ordinance:** Check either the "yes" or "no" box. A roofing ordinance is not a requirement for this program but may dictate the available source of funds.
- **GIS Coordinates of Project Area:** Include either a reference point with acreage, or boundary points for the project in lat/long entered in the following format: 39.000, _104.300. A "Reference Point" displays a single marker with name on the map and can be used for indicating a general region without specifying exact boundaries. An "Area" defines a region with a boundary defined by straight lines. At least three points are needed to define an area. For projects such as fuel treatments, provide sufficient points to define the area. For CWPP development, please include a description of the planning area and type (e.g. municipality boundary, fire response district, township, etc.). Coordinate data must be in WGS84 datum.
- **Project Description (10 points):** Provide a comprehensive but succinct overview of the proposed project that includes basic details of who is doing what, where, and why this is important. Provide linkages to the tenets of the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and the State Forest Action Plan. Specify if benefits to traditionally underserved or marginalized audiences are a component of the



work.

- **Applicant Budget:** Provide dollar figures (rounded to nearest dollar) for each cost proposed for each relevant budget category. This information should match your SF-424A.
 - **Personnel:** Expenses for personnel and staff salary
 - **Fringe Benefits:** Fringe benefits should be based upon actual known costs or established formula. Fringe benefits are for the personnel listed in the above category, and only for the percentage of time devoted to project.
 - **Equipment:** Non-expendable items with a single-item value >\$5,000 to be purchased. Applicants should analyze the cost benefits of purchasing versus leasing equipment, especially high-cost items. Rented or leased equipment costs go in the “Contractual” category.
 - **Supplies:** Expenses for supplies <\$5,000
 - **Contractual:** Expenses for product or services to be paid to a consultant, contractor or lease/rental
 - **Other:** any other eligible costs not captured in the categories above
 - **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs must be tied to an established rate. Recipients must utilize either their approved overhead rate or the standard de-minimus rate for budget calculations.
- **Project Budget Explanation (10 points):** Provide any additional remarks needed to clarify and justify your budget request. Clearly explain how the budget will be spent by line item, sources of match, and how expenditures are applicable and relevant to the goals and objectives of the project.
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Measurable Outcomes Table: Provide the Planned output amounts, as relevant, for both the number and type of activities, as well as planned costs associated with those activities.
- **Accomplishments (10 points):** Clearly define how the project will be accomplished, including describing the planned activities in the previous table, as well as identifying measurable outcomes and timelines (are the proposed activities clear and achievable, goals defined, outcomes measurable, # of acres treated, # of education/outreach programs, planning/assessment efforts clearly described, etc.)
- **Collaboration (10 points):** Identify partners that have demonstrated a commitment and add value towards planning and carrying out the project, and describe what these partners and collaborators contribute. Demonstrate residual positive benefits, as a result of collaboration, related to capacity, skills, knowledge, infrastructure, or a replicable approach.
- **Landscape Impact (10 points):** Clearly define the scale of the project, including relationships with past, present, or future projects that, when combined, offer more benefits than when taken individually. Describe overall landscape that the project influences.
- **Project Sustainability (10 points):** Clearly define how, or if, the project will sustain itself after the grant period is over. Describe any plans or steps that will be taken to continue the project benefits beyond the life of the grant.
- **Low Income Community (10 points):** Check either the “yes” or “no” box. This is a priority for funding, so if you check “no” you are still eligible for funding but will not score as high. Please verify with the appropriate state contact prior to applying. Documentation and verification will be required. This may be accomplished by either entering a link to the verification source in the application narrative, or by submitting/uploading documentation as an attachment in grants.gov. **Low-income community - means: (1) A community where the median household income is less than 80% of the county’s median household income or less than 80% of the state’s median household income, whichever is higher. --Or-- (2) A county or tribal area where the median household income is less than 80% of the state’s median household income.--Or-- (3) An area with low to moderate income as most recently determined by U.S. Department of Housing and**



Urban Development: <https://hud.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=ffd0597e8af24f88b501b7e7f326bedd>

- **Impacted by a severe disaster (10 points):** Check either the “yes” or “no” box. This is a priority for funding, so if you check “no” you are still eligible for funding but will not score as high. Please verify with the appropriate state contact prior to applying. Documentation and verification will be required. This may be accomplished by either entering a link to the verification source in the application narrative, or by submitting/uploading documentation as an attachment in grants.gov. **Impacted by a severe disaster means any event declared, designated, or recognized by a government authority as having caused damage, loss, or destruction to an extent and scale that an unusual or abnormal increase in wildfire risk or hazard potential to a community has occurred. Examples may include Federal, State, Tribal, or county disaster declarations or declared emergencies, events declared by the USDA Farm Services Agency, communities impacted by a FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant, or widespread insect and disease mortality.**
- **High or Very High Wildfire Hazard Potential (20 points):** Check either the “yes” or “no” box. This is a priority for funding, so if you check “no” you are still eligible for funding but will not score as high. Please verify with the appropriate state contact prior to applying. Documentation and verification will be required. This may be accomplished by either entering a link to the verification source in the application narrative, or by submitting/uploading documentation as an attachment in grants.gov. **High or very high wildfire hazard potential means the project is located within an area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential as defined by a local, state, Tribal, regional, or national wildfire hazard potential assessment.**

Project Evaluation and Selection

The competitive process is intended to support projects that will make substantial contributions to reducing wildfire risk to communities, and advance priorities identified in a State Forest Action Plan and the Cohesive Strategy.

A regional CWDG review panel will be responsible for reviewing/scoring all CWDG grants using the established scoring criteria and process. Panel members will collaboratively review, evaluate, and prioritize project applications for each application assigned to them. Scoring comments will be made public once the scoring process has closed.

Once all submitted grant applications have been reviewed and scored by each regional competitive grant committee and the Tribal grant committee, they will be normalized.

The results will then be provided to the USDA Forest Service Washington Office where they will be combined into one nationally ranked list. The number of projects selected on that list will be determined by available funding. Projects not awarded funding will not automatically be considered for funding the following year; they will be required to submit a new application under the appropriate opportunity number.

Contacts for Further Information

Applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to the relevant State Forester and Forest Service Cooperative Fire Specialist during application development to ensure the project aligns with program purpose and eligibility and receive input to strengthen your application.

US Forest Service FAM Washington Office Program Contact for CWDG:

- Brad Simpkins, 603-312-8326, brad.simpkins@usda.gov

**Contacts by State and Territory:****Connecticut:** Helene Hochholzer; Helene.Hochholzer@ct.gov; 860-424-3632**Delaware:** Kyle Hoyd; kyle.hoyd@delaware.gov; 302-698-4548**Illinois:** accessga@usda.gov; 773-299-4831**Indiana:** Mark Huter; mhuter@dnr.in.gov; 765-792-4570**Iowa:** accessga@usda.gov; 773-299-4831**Maine:** Robby Gross; Robby.Gross@maine.gov; 207-287-4991**Maryland:** Lance Carroll; Lance.Carroll@maryland.gov; 410-742-6520**Massachusetts:** David Celino; David.celino@state.ma.us; 617-626-4981**Michigan:** Dan Laux; LAUXD@michigan.gov; 517-256-6378**Minnesota:** Allissa Reynolds; Allissa.reynolds@state.mn.us; 651-259-5288**Missouri:** accessga@usda.gov; 773-299-4831**New Hampshire:** accessga@usda.gov; 773-299-4831**New Jersey:** Gregory McLaughlin; Gregory.mclaughlin@dep.nj.gov; 609-292-2977**New York:** David Kallen; David.kallen@dec.ny.gov; 518-866-4509**Ohio:** Aaron Kloss; Aaron.Kloss@dnr.ohio.gov; 614-265-6896**Pennsylvania:** Michael Kern; mikern@pa.gov; 717-783-7957**Rhode Island:** accessga@usda.gov; 773-299-4831**Vermont:** Dan Dillner; dan.dillner@vermont.gov; 802-777-3079**West Virginia:** Jeremy Jones; Jeremy.c.jones@wv.gov; 304-352-4877**Wisconsin:** Jolene Ackerman; Jolene.Ackerman@wisconsin.gov; 608-575-9846**Burden Statement**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0596-0XXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1.25 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal relay at (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Appendix I. Instructions for Submitting Applications through Grants.gov

Submit all applications for this funding opportunity through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Search for grant Opportunity Number **USDA-FS-2022-CWDG-NEMW**. Applicants submit your application to [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) by midnight, Eastern Time Zone, **October 7, 2022**. The following section provides guidance on how to submit applications through Grants.gov.

Please read the following instructions carefully and completely. Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and by email at support@grants.gov.

1. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Organizations must have an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM.gov), which will generate a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Applicants must also have a Grants.gov account to apply for grants. Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but **a SAM registration may take several weeks or more to complete**. Therefore, ensure you apply for your SAM registration promptly.

Complete Grants.gov organization registrations instructions can be found here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

- a. [Register with SAM](#): All organizations must register with the System for Award Management; registration must be renewed annually. This registration will generate a UEI.
- b. [Register with Grants.gov](#).
- c. [Add a profile to a Grants.gov account](#): A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant) or an individual applicant. If you work for or consult with multiple organizations and have a profile for each, you may log into one Grants.gov account to access all your grant applications.
- d. [EBiz point of contact authorized profile roles](#): After you register with Grants.gov and create an organization applicant profile, the organization applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the EBiz point of contact. The EBiz point of contact will then log into Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the authorized organization representative role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization.
- e. [Track role status](#).

Electronic Signature: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR role that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize people who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role.

2. How to Submit an Application via Grants.gov

Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, you can create individual instances of a workspace. **Note: Grants.gov applicants are required to use Workspace to apply online. Package forms must be completed in or downloaded from Workspace.**

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov using Workspace. For access to complete instructions and training videos, refer to the [Grants.gov "Get Started on Your Workspace Application" web page](#).



- a. **Create a Workspace:** Log in to your Grants.gov account first. Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- b. **Complete a Workspace:** Add participants to the Workspace to work on the application together, complete the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. For page-specific help: click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page.

Mandatory Fields in Forms: In the forms, fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color are mandatory and must be completed to successfully submit your application.

Complete SF-424 Fields First: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name and address. Once the SF-424 is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

Note: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms, you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device then accessed through Adobe Reader. Visit the [Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov](#) to download the appropriate version of the software.

- c. **Submit a Workspace:** Submit your application through Workspace by clicking the *Sign and Submit* button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.
- d. **Track a Workspace Submission:** After successfully submitting a Workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number is listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted Workspace.

Applicant Support: For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to the [Grants.gov Training page](#). Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and by email at support@grants.gov. If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number to track your issue.

3. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

All applications must be received by midnight, Eastern Time Zone, October 7, 2022. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application, serving as proof of their timely submission.

Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role attempting to submit the application. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.



Appendix II. Community Wildfire Defense Grant Application Requirements

Checklist

This is as an aide for applicants submitting CWDG applications through Grants.gov and is not an exhaustive list of grant requirements.

We prioritize applications that show a clear benefit to underserved/historically marginalized people and the communities where they reside or the forest areas that they value. Where this is the case, this should be described in the “Project Narrative Form.” This supports [Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#).

Requirements:

- Applicant is a unit of local government, nonprofit organization (501c3), Indian Tribe, State Forestry Agency (includes US territories and interests), or Alaska Native Corporation.
- Applicant organization must have an active [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) registration, and Grants.gov account.
- Project is focused on reducing wildfire risk to an at-risk community.
- Project is located on non-federal lands (with exception of Trust lands)
- Project is not listed in the “Ineligible” column on pages 5 thru 9
- Required match is met for requested federal funds (10% for CWPP development/revision; 25% for project implementation)
- Submit all forms in Grants.gov by midnight, October 7, 2022

Forms Required:

- SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance (located in grants.gov)
 - SF-424A Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (located in grants.gov)
 - Screenshot that shows ACTIVE registration in SAM.gov
 - Community Wildfire Defense Project Narrative Form
-