



REGIONAL DISTRICT of Fraser-Fort George

Main Office: 155 George Street, Prince George, BC V2L 1P8
Telephone: (250) 960-4400 / Fax: (250) 563-7520
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1959 / www.rdfg.ca

REPORT FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

TO: Chair and Members, Public Safety and Emergency Management Standing Committee File No.: EP-FIR 1.4

FROM: Kenna Jonkman, MCIP, RPP, General Manager of Community and Development Services
Anita de Dreu, Emergency Services Coordinator
Colby Molcak, Emergency Services Coordinator

DATE: January 2, 2025

SUBJECT UBCM Community Resiliency Investment: Stream 3: FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response (CCWR) Organizations

SUMMARY: Purpose: To provide an update to UBCM's latest funding initiative
Attachments:
1. Background
2. 2025 CCWR Process and Funding Stream Applications email dated October 15, 2024 from BC Wildfire Service
3. UBCM CRI CCWR Program Guide and Application package
4. BC Wildfire Service CCWR Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Previous Reports: None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT the report dated January 2, 2025 regarding "UBCM Community Resiliency Investment: Stream 3: FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response (CCWR) Organizations" be received for information.

ENTITLEMENT	HOW VOTE COUNTED
All 1 Director/1 vote	Majority

ISSUE(S):

In September 2024, UBCM announced a new grant called the 2025 FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response (CCWR) Organizations. This grant, through the Community Resiliency Investment fund was created in response to the Premier's Expert Task Force recommendation to identify improvements in pathways to incorporate local community volunteer involvement in wildfire preparedness and response.

This pilot program offers funding for Regional Districts to provide wildfire training and personal protective equipment (PPE) for local community groups that are outside of established structural fire protection jurisdiction areas to help increase community resiliency and to build a cooperative pathway for wildfire response.

Regional Districts received an email on October 15, 2024 from BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) providing details on the CCWR program's expectations and responsibilities, including a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. The FAQ is attached to the report for information.

This report is provided to the Public Safety and Emergency Management Standing Committee for information purposes. The Committee is not being asked to make any recommendations.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

1. *Local Government Act*:
 - Fostering the current and future economic, social, and environmental well-being of its communities
 -

2. *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*:
 - establishes requirement for maintaining an emergency management program
 - identifies local government responsibilities
3. Local Authority Emergency Management Regulation 380/95:
 - establishes requirements to develop and implement emergency plans and other measures for the Electoral Areas of the Regional District under Bylaw No. 2162, 2006
 - currently under revision (for release in 2024-2025)
4. Emergency Preparedness Service Establishment Bylaw No. 2162, 2006:
 - establishes the service of emergency preparedness within each of the seven electoral areas
5. Emergency Management Program Administration Bylaw No. 2960, 2015:
 - provides for the administration and operations of the emergency preparedness service including the development, maintenance, and management of the Emergency Management Program.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT:

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous and Intergovernmental Partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Strength and Adaptability | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality Community Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness and Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory or Routine Business | | |

SERVICE RELEVANCE:

The Emergency Preparedness Service provides the operational capability of the Emergency Management Program; established to fulfil the requirements of the Regional District under the *Emergency Disaster Management Act* (EDMA).

The Emergency Management Program encompasses the strategic and operational development of the components of the emergency management plans to address the four pillars of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Emergency plans outline the authority and responsibility to act in emergencies and communicate the policies and procedures to be followed.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

The FireSmart Pilot CCWR Program (subject to available funding) covers 100% of eligible activities to a maximum of \$10,000 per CCWR organization and no more than a maximum of \$70,000 may be available to the RDFFG. Eligible CCWR expenditures include three required wildfire training courses, two optional wildfire training courses and PPE for each CCWR member.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

The application guide for the grant program is attached for Board's consideration. This guide identifies criteria that must be met by both the Regional District and a community group to be eligible for funding.

To qualify for this new funding, Regional Districts must have a FireSmart position, participate in a Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee (CFRC) and have an acceptable CWRP/CWPP in place. Grant intake is currently scheduled to remain open until May 30, 2025.

The Regional District currently operates with seasonal FireSmart position(s) which are funded through UBCM Community Resiliency Investment fund. This funding was utilized in 2024 to employ two part-time educators from May to October. The Regional District also participates in a wildfire roundtable which fulfills the Regional District's requirement for a CFRC and is in the process of completing CWRP's for all electoral areas.

Community groups are required to be a non-profit society, must be outside of a structural fire protection jurisdiction, demonstrate a genuine desire to participate and be willing to follow the command and direction of BC Wildfire Service.

DECISION OPTIONS:

1. Approve recommendations.
 - The report will be received for information.

Other Options:

- a. Request further information
 - Administration will return with a report with the requested information
- b. Request Administration to provide feedback to the Ministry of Forests
 - The current intent for BCWS is to assess the funding program after the initial pilot stage to determine if and/or how the program may operate in the future.
 - Regional Districts have been writing to the Ministry of Forests and/or UBCM to provide feedback on the program and its impact to existing and future resources for Regional Districts

COMMENTS:

Community Services Administration is committed to ensuring the longevity and long-term livability of our communities. Wildfires are growing in frequency and severity. The impacts of wildfires on people, landscapes and the environment are significant. All citizens play a role in wildfire prevention and mitigation on their own property, and in managing their recreational activities on public property.

The provincial government is responsible for prevention, mitigation, response and recovery from wildfires and all wildfire related activity. Areas outside of fire protection areas are solely BCWS responsibility. The establishment of CCWRs is an important aspect of ensuring that communities are knowledgeable and prepared for an emerging wildfire event, especially in areas where there is no volunteer fire department. CCWR groups have and will work directly with BCWS Zone office staff, as BCWS will continue to direct, coordinate and supervise these individuals. Historically the Regional District has not had any authority to deploy, direct or manage a CCWR.

Prior to 2025, the organization and training of CCWR's was exclusively within BCWS. Through the grant program, this is now the responsibility of Regional Districts. Under CCWR, the RDFFG will now be responsible for maintaining training and personnel records for BCWS. While program participation is currently voluntary, Regional District participation in the CCWR program is the sole path to available funding in 2025 for CCWR training and PPE. Engaged, trained and ready to deploy CCWR groups will likely expect this program to continue.

To date, the two trained and certified RDFFG community groups participating in the CCWR are Miworth and Dunster. If necessary, Administration is committed to facilitating funding for these two existing community groups to maintain their certification. However, new community groups wishing to participate in the program may have to wait until 2026 to allow time for Administration to determine how this initiative can fit into the current work plan and what supports are needed to ensure a successful program is deployed by the Regional District.

It will also be of interest to the Regional District to understand if the pilot program will continue past 2025. Depending on the number of groups wanting to participate in the CCWR program, significant resources could be required to coordinate, administer, deploy and procure training and PPE.

To fully support this grant program and the desired outcomes, the Regional District will require additional staffing resources and will need to consider operational items such as: program development costs, management, liability and insurance requirements, records management and the procurement, distribution and tracking of PPE. Emergency Preparedness Administration will be seeking additional resources from the Regional District Board through the 2025 budget process; however, even if approved, it will take time to develop, recruit and train any new personnel to be able to successfully work with community groups on this initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

"Kenna Jonkman"

Kenna Jonkman, MCIP, RPP
General Manager of Community and Development Services

“Anita de Dreu”

Anita de Dreu
Emergency Services Coordinator

“Colby Molcak”

Colby Molcak
Emergency Services Coordinator

KJ:AdD:CM:adD

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND - Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organizations.docx

Pre- 2019

For decades, BC Wildfire Service hired and coordinated local residents (as temporary employees) to assist during the wildfire season as a statutory hire (hourly) in the capacity of Fire Wardens and Emergency Fire Fighters under the *Wildfire Act*. Pre-positioned wildfire equipment caches were also stored in rural remote areas.

2019

BC Wildfire Service started working on a volunteer type program concept and teamed up with Fraser Basin Council in 2023 to connect with community groups via electoral area Directors to determine the interest and capacity to develop volunteer rural community wildfire fighting capabilities in areas outside of fire protection boundaries in the BC Interior.

The desired CCWR goal was to deliver training and provide equipment before the 2024 wildfire season in rural areas, to enable a cooperative working relationship with BC Wildfire Service and take advantage of rural community local knowledge and volunteer capacity to assist in wildfire response.

2023

The Premier's Expert Task Force (Task Force) on Emergencies was established in October 2023 to provide strategic advice and action-oriented recommendations on how the Province can better support people on the front lines of emergencies, enhance support delivery for evacuees and apply lessons learned in preparation for the next emergency. One of the Task Force goals was to identify improvements related to planning for the incorporation of local volunteer resources in wildfire response. The full report can be found here: [Summary of Recommendations - The Premier's Expert Task Force on Emergencies](#)

Pathways for Local Community Involvement:

Local people with working knowledge of the land can play a role in partnership-based wildfire response. Safety is paramount and the work begins well before the season with organizing, training, and preparing, based on a foundation of communication, co-operation and trust. Some of the most important roles residents can play to help protect their communities do not involve high-risk work on the fire line; local leadership is critical to promoting FireSmart, gathering local knowledge, supporting evacuation readiness, and ensuring that community members receive accurate and timely information.

Task Force Recommendations:

1. The Task Force recommended defining clear pathways for organized and trained local people to play a role in wildfire preparedness and response, based on consistent safety, pre-season training and readiness standards and plans, and integration into the BC Wildfire Service or local emergency management structure with appropriate coordination, accountability and oversight.
2. The Task Force recommended taking a ladder approach that matches opportunities with local capabilities and allows communities to build their capacity over time. Initial opportunities should focus on strengthening and empowering local expertise and leadership for preparedness, FireSmart, mitigation and recovery activities, such as prescribed burning and evacuation readiness.

2024

In 2024, BCWS organized and piloted a provincial wildfire response program involving 21 community fire brigades and response groups, established outside of fire protection areas. The intent of utilizing these groups by BCWS was for assistance with wildfire mop up activities, moving equipment and patrol of contained fires. Training for the 2024 program was offered by the Fraser Basin Council on behalf of BCWS, who worked directly with these groups. Four groups were activated for wildfire response support in 2024 in BC (outside of RDFFG). As of 2025, Fraser Basin Council is no longer involved in this program.

Anita deDreu

From: Anita deDreu
Sent: Thursday, January 9, 2025 9:25 AM
To: stephanie.weirda@rdffg.bc.ca
Subject: FW: 2025 CCWR Process and Funding Stream Applications
Attachments: external_faq_for_community_response_for_rural_remote_non-indigenous_communities.docx

From: BCWS Cooperative Community Wildfire Response FOR:EX <BCWS.CooperativeCommunityWildfireResponse@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 3:55 PM
Subject: 2025 CCWR Process and Funding Stream Applications

EXTERNAL EMAIL - This email was sent by a person from outside your organization. Exercise caution when clicking links, opening attachments or taking further action, before validating its authenticity.

You don't often get email from bcws.cooperativecommunitywildfireresponse@gov.bc.ca. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello all,

On behalf of BC Wildfire Service, I want to express our sincere thanks to your community groups for their interest and participation in the wildfire training that was offered by Fraser Basin Council this past spring in preparation for fire season. Of the 21 community groups that were trained, 4 were activated in low-complexity fire response. We appreciate your dedicated, commitment, and partnership during the 2024 fire season and we are committed to continuing to grow the Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Model now and into the future.

For the upcoming 2025 season we wanted to highlight some changes to the program and outline the new process moving forward.

Funding Process:

- The newly announced [FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organizations](#) provides funding to regional districts in BC to increase community resiliency and to help build a cooperative pathway for wildfire response by undertaking training and purchasing Personal Protective Equipment for local community groups in areas that do not fall within a structural fire protection jurisdiction area.

- The 2025 FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Community Wildfire Response Organizations will have an open intake. Funding permitting, Regional Districts can submit applications between October 1, 2024 and May 30, 2025.
- Moving forward the Fraser Basin Council will no longer be involved in this program and your lead contact will be through your local Regional District.
- For the purpose of funding, a Cooperative Community Wildfire Response (CCWR) organization is an incorporated business entity, such as a non-profit society or fire brigade, that is able to receive funding, has an accountable leadership structure, and that operates outside of structural fire protection jurisdiction.
- Community Groups can reach out to their local Regional District to identify their desire to develop and grow a local community response group.

Pre-season Readiness:

- Regional Districts can contact groups, or groups can contact their Regional district to express interest.
- Regional Districts should review the community group to ensure they meet all the eligibility requirements outlined in the program requirements.
- Regional Districts can submit applications to UBCM via the online portal. UBCM will review applications with BC Wildfire Service prior to approval to ensure they meet all conditions.
- Regional Districts are responsible for arranging training for the groups that have been approved for funding.
- Regional Districts are to gather all the documents once training is completed, distribute and collect the Stat Hire forms and send all completed documents into the local Fire Center for data entry.

Response/Activation:

- If a fire starts in an area that has a community group that has completed all the training and has the appropriate personal protection equipment, the local Regional Emergency Operations Center or Regional District can contact the local Fire Center or vice versa to determine if there are safe, low-complexity operations available to utilize the community group.
- A request would be made from BC Wildfire Service for activating the community group and provide information such as the meeting location, start time, etc
- The Regional District would reach out to the group lead to confirm members on the group are properly trained and provide a manifest to Fire Center. This process allows the Fire Center to ensure that all stat hire documents are in place for all community members.
- The BCWS designate will assign roles based on the group's experience and training. Groups may be asked to support activities such as:
 - o Expediting resources, like personnel, equipment, and supplies.
 - o Mopping-up. For example, cooling ash pits.
 - o Patrolling areas to prevent potential flare-ups.
- Without explicit direction from BCWS, rural and remote firefighters are not permitted to:
 - o Suppress wildfire.
 - o Enter or remain in an area that's under an evacuation order.
 - o Move or re-deploy BCWS resources.
- **Note:** Structural firefighting is not included in the rural and remote firefighter model BCWS is currently offering. Individuals or groups interested in combatting fires within buildings and other structures should consider joining a local volunteer fire department.
- There is no guarantee that the community groups will be activated.

- The local Fire Center or Incident Management Team would update the local EOC or Regional District on progress of group, and time frames required etc.

Please refer to our internet site for more information [How we work with rural and remote firefighters - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://gov.bc.ca) - ****
Please note that this webpage has not been updated for the new process yet due to restrictions placed upon government during the election process.

Hopefully this will help guide your community group moving forward into the future, and if there are any questions, please feel free to reply back to this email and someone will respond. Thank you again for your dedication and commitments.



Cooperative Community Response Team

BC Wildfire Service

Ministry of Forests

Report Wildfires: 1 800 663-5555 or *5555

Acknowledging the unceded, traditional lands of the Syilx people where I work, live and play.



Community Resiliency Investment Program

2025 FireSmart™ Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organizations

Program and Application Guide

1. Introduction

The 2025 FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Community Wildfire Response Organizations will have an open intake. Funding permitting, eligible applicants can submit applications between October 1, 2024 and May 30, 2025 using the [LGPS Online Application Tool](#).

The [Community Resiliency Investment](#) (CRI) program was announced by the provincial government in 2018 and is intended to reduce the risk of wildfires and mitigate their impacts on BC communities.

As of October 2024, CRI includes three streams:

- Stream 1: FireSmart Community Funding and Supports, administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM).
- Stream 2: Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction, administered by the Ministry of Forests.
- Stream 3: FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organizations, administered by UBCM.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) for definitions of terms used in this guide. All defined terms are in **bold** in the program guide.

Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organizations

For the purpose of funding, a Cooperative Community Wildfire Response (CCWR) organization is an incorporated business entity, such as a non-profit society or fire brigade, that is able to receive funding, has an accountable leadership structure, and that operates outside of structural fire protection jurisdiction.

After a CCWR organization is established, trained, and equipped:

- The regional district will notify the Fire Centre prior to the first day of July
- If relevant work (e.g., mop up, patrol, gear demobilization) is available for the CCWR organization to safely assist, the Fire Centre will activate the CCWR organization.
- CCWR organizations are not guaranteed to be activated

For more information on how BC Wildfire Service works with CCWR organizations during response, refer to the [Collaborative Partnership Guide](#).

FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organizations

The FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organizations provides funding to regional districts in BC to increase community resiliency and to help build a cooperative pathway for wildfire response by undertaking training and purchasing Personal Protective Equipment for local community members in areas that do not fall within a structural fire protection jurisdiction area.

FireSmart in BC

[FireSmart BC](#) provides the tools and education necessary to enable citizens, communities, First Nations and local governments to increase their wildfire resiliency. FireSmart BC and the Community Resiliency Investment program both follow the seven disciplines of FireSmart as a holistic approach to reducing wildfire risk to communities. The [FireSmart BC Information Sheet](#) has been developed to provide applicants with an overview of available resources, training and materials that are eligible for funding.

2. Eligible Applicants

All regional districts in BC are eligible to apply. There is no limit to the number of applications that a regional district can submit, but each CCWR organization can only be funded once per intake.

3. Grant Maximum

The FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organizations can contribute a maximum of 100% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of \$10,000.00 per CCWR organization and no more than the regional district funding maximums identified in [Appendix 2](#).

The Evaluation Committee may recommend that an application be approved in part, based on available funding and the merit of the proposed project.

To ensure transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds, all other contributions for eligible portions of the project must be declared and, depending on the total value, may decrease the value of the funding. This includes any other grant funding and any revenue that is generated from activities that are funded by the program.

4. Eligible Projects

To qualify for funding, proposed activities must be used to increase community resiliency by undertaking required training and purchasing Personal Protective Equipment for local CCWR organizations.

In addition, to qualify for funding, projects must be:

- Located in electoral areas that have identified rural and remote CCWR organizations. CCWR organizations must:
 - Be an incorporated business entity, such as a non-profit society or fire brigade, that is able to receive funding and has an accountable leadership structure.
 - Be outside of structural fire protection jurisdiction, meaning their community or area is not covered by the services of a municipal or established fire department.
 - Demonstrate a genuine desire to participate.
 - Be willing to follow the command and direction of BC Wildfire Service.
- A new or a subsequent phase of a project (retroactive funding is not available).
- Capable of completion by the applicant within one year from the date of grant approval.

At this time, the FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response organizations is not using risk class to determine the eligibility of projects. However, if the program continues beyond the pilot stage, risk class may become an eligibility criteria.

5. Requirements for Funding

As part of both the development of the application package and the delivery of the **approved project**, local governments are encouraged to proactively engage with local First Nations and Indigenous organizations, such as Friendship Centres and Métis Chartered Communities. Engagement by local governments both locally and regionally can help build relationships with First Nations, benefit both communities and enhance reconciliation. More information on engagement best practices is available [here](#).

Required FireSmart Foundation

To qualify for funding, all regional district applicants are required to have a FireSmart Position, participate in a [Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee](#) and have an acceptable CWRP/CWPP.

Note: CWRPs and CWPPs must be complete and acceptable to the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), FNESS and/or, where applicable, BC Parks. To be considered acceptable, CWRPs must be developed in accordance with the template and guidance document and must include assessment and identification of FireSmart and fuel management priorities.

6. Eligible and Ineligible Costs and Activities

Eligible Costs and Activities

Eligible costs are direct costs that are approved for funding, properly and reasonably incurred, and paid by the applicant to carry out eligible activities. Eligible costs can only be incurred from the date of application submission until the final report is submitted.

Table 1 identifies activities that are eligible for funding. Other activities that support the intent of the program may be considered for funding. Eligible activities must be cost-effective.

Table 1: Activities Eligible for Funding
1. Minimum training requirements for Emergency Fire Fighters to participate in response activities with BCWS. This is limited to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">S-100 Basic fire suppression and safety (basic fire suppression training) and S-100A (annual refresher)S-185 Fire entrapment avoidance and safety (general knowledge course on wildfire safety and entrapment avoidance for local governments, contract crews, and First Nations)ICS-100 (Incident Command System - introduction to an effective system for command, control, and coordination of response at an emergency site; available online)<i>Optional:</i> Wildfire Risk Reduction Basics Course (free, online course for non-forest professionals that provides an introduction to the key concepts to minimize the negative impacts of wildfires in BC.)<i>Optional:</i> FireSmart 101 (free, online course from FireSmart Canada that provides an introduction FireSmart principles.)
2. Personal Protective Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wildland firefighting personal protective equipment for each emergency fire fighter in the CCWR organization:<ul style="list-style-type: none">One WorkSafe BC approved hard hat complete with chinstrap and attached earmuffs or other approved hearing protectionOne high visibility vest for working around heavy equipment

- One pair of work gloves as described in Section 8.19 of the BC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation
- One pair of CSA certified safety eyewear for working around helicopters, foam, or hose nozzle
- One pair of footwear appropriate for the work conditions, with coverage above the ankle and no nylon or running shoes
- Flame resistant clothing that meets CAN/CGSB 155.22-2014 (or 97) or NFPA 1977 standards. Flame resistant clothing must be in any colour other than red
- One 4 (four) inch compress dressing

Additional Eligible Costs and Activities

In order to support eligible activities identified in [Table 1](#), the following expenditures are also eligible provided they relate directly to eligible activities:

- Incremental applicant staff and administration costs (e.g., creating a new position or adding new responsibilities to an existing position). Eligible expenses include wages/salary, mandatory employment related costs as required by federal or provincial law, and other employment related costs as required by the approved applicant.
- Consultant/contractor costs. Please note: if you intend to hire a qualified professional to support proposed activities, professional consultant rates will only be considered for activities that represent respective professions.
- Presentation to Board, community organizations, etc.
- Public information costs (e.g., workshops, printed materials) that align with the intent of the funding stream and provide benefit to the community at large.

Ineligible Costs and Activities

Any activity that is not outlined in [Table 1](#) or is not directly connected to activities approved in the application is not eligible for grant funding. This includes:

- Routine or ongoing operating costs or activities (e.g., heating, cooling, and lighting; security; software or service subscriptions; or membership fees).
- Routine or ongoing planning costs or planning activities that are not incremental to the project.
- Regular salaries and/or benefits of **primary applicant** or **sub-applicant(s)** staff or partners.
- Purchase, construction, siting or maintenance of Fire Danger rating signs.
- Purchase of emergency supplies (e.g., first aid kits, evacuation supplies) for community members or households.
- Major capital improvements or major renovations to existing facilities, and/or construction of new, permanent facilities.
- Purchase of promotional items, door/raffle prizes, give-away items, and/or gifts for community members.
- Legal, audit, or interest fees or fees to incorporate a society.
- Purchase of defibrillators and/or training on their use.
- Purchase of first aid kits and/or training related to all levels of first aid, occupational first aid, disaster first aid, and wilderness first aid.
- Purchase of tools (e.g., Pulaskis, shovels), power tools (e.g., chainsaws, brush saws) or fire line equipment (e.g., pumps, hoses, sprinklers, etc.)
- Purchase of IT equipment
- Lease of equipment and/or vehicles

7. Application Requirements and Process

The [LGPS Online Application Tool](#) is required to be used. Refer to [Appendix 3](#) for full information.

Application Deadline

The 2025 FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Community Wildfire Response Organizations program will have an open intake. Funding permitting, eligible applicants can submit applications between October 1, 2024 and May 30, 2025 using the [LGPS Online Application Tool](#).

Applicants will be advised of the status of their application within 60 days of submitting a complete, eligible application.

Required Application Contents

As of July 1, 2024 applicants will have the option to submit a local government resolution OR a letter of support from the CAO or CFO for applications that are from a single applicant and request less than \$50,000 in funding.

All applications requesting more than \$50,000 in funding will require resolution(s) to be submitted.

All applicants are required to complete the Online Application Form and submit an electronic copy of the following:

- Completed Application Worksheet with all required attachments.
- Local government resolution OR a letter of support from the CAO or CFO for applications that are from a single applicant and request less than \$50,000 in funding. Resolutions and letters need to indicate support for the current proposed activities and willingness to provide overall grant management. All applications requesting more than \$50,000 in funding, will require resolutions to be submitted.
- Detailed budget that indicates the proposed expenditures and aligns with the proposed activities outlined in the Application Worksheet. Although additional funding or support is not required, any other grant funding or **in-kind contributions** must be identified. Applicants are encouraged to use the [LGPS Budget and Financial Summary Tool](#).

Submission of Applications

Applications are required to be submitted in two steps prior to the application deadline:

1. [LGPS Online Application Form](#): This online form must be completed for all applications to LGPS funding programs and includes questions that are common to all grant applications. When the LGPS Online Application Form is submitted, the applicant will receive an email confirmation including the file number that has been assigned to the application, and a copy of the Application Worksheet that must be completed as part of Step 2.
2. Application Worksheet: This worksheet contains questions that are specific to the funding stream and must be submitted by email to UBCM with all other required attachments.

Refer to [Appendix 3](#) for more information on this process and the information that will be required to be submitted during each step, including all application questions.

Review of Applications

UBCM will perform a preliminary review of applications to ensure the required application contents have been submitted and to ensure that basic eligibility criteria have been met. Only complete application packages will be reviewed.

As required, the Evaluation Committee will assess and score all eligible applications. Point values and weighting have been established within each of these scoring criteria. Only those applications that meet a minimum threshold point value will be considered for funding.

All application materials may be shared with the Province of BC and the BC FireSmart Committee.

8. Grant Management and Applicant Responsibilities

Grants are awarded to eligible applicants only and, as such, the applicant is responsible for completion of the project as approved and for meeting reporting requirements. Applicants are also responsible for proper fiscal management, including maintaining acceptable accounting records for the project. UBCM reserves the right to audit these records.

Notice of Funding Decision and Payments

All applicants will receive written notice of funding decisions. Approved applicants will receive an Approval Agreement, which will include the terms and conditions of any grant that is awarded, and that is required to be signed and returned to UBCM.

Grants are awarded in two payments: 50% at the approval of the project and when the signed Approval Agreement has been returned to UBCM, and the eligible remainder when the project is complete and UBCM has received and approved the required final reporting.

Please note that in cases where revisions are required to an application, or an application has been approved in principle only, the applicant has 30 days from the date of the written notice of the status of the application to complete the application requirements. Applications that are not completed within 30 days may be closed.

Progress Payments

To request a progress payment, approved applicants are required to submit the [Interim Report Form](#). The form will require the following information:

- Description of activities completed to date.
- Description of funds expended to date.
- Written rationale for receiving a progress payment.

Changes to Approved Projects (Amendment Requests)

Approved grants are specific to the project as identified in the approved application, and grant funds are not transferable to other projects. Generally speaking, this means funds cannot be transferred to an activity that was not included in the approved application or, for the purpose of fuel management, to a new or expanded location.

Approval from UBCM and/or the Evaluation Committee will be required for any variation from the **approved project**. Depending on the complexity of the proposed amendment, requests may take up to 60 days to review.

To propose changes to an **approved project**, applicants are required to submit the [Interim Report Form](#). If UBCM determines the amendment is eligible for consideration, applicants will be required to submit:

- Amended application package, including updated, application worksheet(s), and an updated resolution/letter of support.
- Written rationale for proposed changes to activities and/or expenditures.

Applicants are responsible for any costs above the approved grant unless a revised application is submitted and approved prior to work being undertaken.

Extensions to Project End Date

All approved activities are required to be completed within the time frame identified in the approval letter and all extensions beyond this date must be requested in writing and be approved by UBCM.

The [Interim Report Form](#) will be required to be submitted for all extension requests over six months.

Extensions will not exceed one year from the date of the original final report deadline.

Recognition of Funding and Funders

Approved applicants should contact UBCM for more information on recognizing funding and for information on the appropriate use of logos. Please contact lgps@ubcm.ca or (604) 270-8226 ext. 220. Guidelines on using the BC logo, including downloadable files, are available [here](#).

9. Final Report Requirements and Process

All funded activities must be completed within one year of notification of funding approval and the Final Report is due within 30 days of project completion.

Final Reports

Applicants are required to submit an electronic copy of the completed Final Report, including the following:

- Completed Final Report form with all required attachments.
- Detailed financial summary that indicates the actual expenditures from the program and other sources (if applicable) and that aligns with the actual activities outlined in the Final Report Form. Applicants are encouraged to use the [LGPS Budget and Financial Summary Tool](#).
- Examples of any materials that were produced with grant funding.
- Photos of funded activities and/or completed projects.
- Links to media related to the funded project.

Submission of Reports

Reports should be submitted as Word, Excel, or PDF files. Total file size for email attachments cannot exceed 20 MB.

All reports should be submitted to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities by email: cepf@ubcm.ca.

Review of Final Reports

UBCM will review Final Reports to ensure the required report contents have been submitted.

All final report materials may be shared with the Province of BC and the BC FireSmart Committee.

10. Additional Information

Union of BC Municipalities

E-mail: cri@ubcm.ca

Phone: 604-270-8226 ext. 220

Appendix 1: Definitions

Approved project: Activities included in the approved application and costs included in the approved budget.

In-Kind expenditures: The use of resources of the approved **primary applicant** or **sub-applicant(s)** for the development or implementation of the **approved project**. For example, the use of meeting rooms owned by the approved **primary applicant** or **sub-applicant(s)** can be an in-kind expenditure.

Primary applicant: Eligible applicant that is the primary contact for the application and that is responsible for project oversight, grant management and all reporting requirements.

Appendix 2: Funding Maximums Per Regional District

Regional District	No. of Electoral Areas	Maximum Funding
Alberni-Clayoquot	6	\$60,000.00
Bulkley-Nechako	7	\$70,000.00
Capital	3	\$30,000.00
Cariboo	12	\$120,000.00
Central Coast	5	\$50,000.00
Central Kootenay	11	\$110,000.00
Central Okanagan	2	\$20,000.00
Columbia Shuswap	7	\$70,000.00
Comox Valley	3	\$30,000.00
Cowichan Valley	9	\$90,000.00
East Kootenay	6	\$60,000.00
Fraser Valley	8	\$80,000.00
Fraser-Fort George	7	\$70,000.00
Kitimat-Stikine	6	\$60,000.00
Kootenay-Boundary	5	\$50,000.00
Metro Vancouver	1	\$10,000.00
Mount Waddington	4	\$40,000.00
Nanaimo	7	\$70,000.00
North Coast	4	\$40,000.00
North Okanagan	5	\$50,000.00
Okanagan-Similkameen	9	\$90,000.00
Peace River	4	\$40,000.00
qathet	5	\$50,000.00
Squamish-Lillooet	4	\$40,000.00
Strathcona	4	\$40,000.00
Sunshine Coast	5	\$50,000.00
Thompson-Nicola	10	\$100,000.00

Appendix 3: LGPS Online Application Tool

As outlined in [Section 7](#), applications are required to be submitted in two steps **prior to the application deadline**:

1. [LGPS Online Application Form](#): This online form must be completed for all applications to LGPS funding programs and includes questions that are common to all grant applications. When the LGPS Online Application Form is submitted, the applicant will receive an email confirmation including the file number that has been assigned to the application, and a copy of the Application Worksheet that must be completed as part of Step 2.
2. Application Worksheet: This worksheet contains questions that are specific to the funding stream and must be submitted by email to UBCM with all other required attachments.

STEP ONE: LGPS Online Application Form

The following questions are required to be answered on the LGPS Online Application Form:

1. Name of the intake of the funding program that you want to apply for (select from menu).
2. Name of the **Primary Applicant** (select from menu). Please note: if the name of your organization is not included in the menu, contact UBCM in order to determine eligibility and next steps.
3. Primary and secondary contact information: name, position, email, phone.
4. **Primary Applicant** mailing address.
5. For regional projects only: name of sub-applicant(s) and rationale for regional project.
6. Project title.
7. Proposed start and end date.
8. Estimated total project budget.
9. Estimated total grant request.
10. Other funding amount and source.
11. Project summary (provide a brief summary, no more than 500 characters).
12. Progress to date. Provide an update on the status of previously **approved projects** if previously funded under same funding program/funding stream.
13. Certification that the information is complete and accurate.
14. Name and email of person submitting application.

When the LGPS Online Application Form is submitted, the applicant will receive an email confirmation including the file number that has been assigned to the application, and a copy of the Application Worksheet that must be completed as part of Step 2.

STEP TWO: Application Worksheet and Required Attachments

Available shortly

Cooperative Community Wildfire Response (CCWR)

Frequently Asked Questions

For rural/remote non-Indigenous communities

General

1. What is Community Response?

Community Response, also known as Cooperative Community Wildfire Response, is an initiative by the BC Wildfire Service to understand existing wildfire response capacity in rural and remote communities. Solutions, or pathways to cooperation, are being explored in collaboration with community response societies, local governments and emergency response agencies.

To date, this work has focused on the most high-risk communities outside of fire protection areas.

2. What are the goals of the initiative?

Goals are to:

- Understand and support the development of Indigenous and rural non-Indigenous community wildfire preparedness and response capacity.
- Develop pathways, building on what already exists, for both Indigenous and rural, non-Indigenous community wildfire response, in cooperation with BC Wildfire Service.
- Acknowledge and highlight local and traditional knowledge and experience in fire management.
- Improve engagement and cooperation between communities and BC Wildfire Service and local authorities.

1. What is a Cooperative Community Wildfire Response (CCWR) Group??

For the purposes of wildfire response, a CCWR Group is a community response society that is a self-organized community group that has some sort of business entity (i.e., incorporated as a non-profit society) and can maintain a bank account, take out insurance, receive funds, own property and equipment, and has an accountable leadership structure. These societies are distinct from fire departments, which are formed by First Nations or local government.

The term “fire brigade” refers to a self-organized group of individuals who are willing and ready to respond to a wildfire, but that may or may not be incorporated as a society.

The BC Wildfire Service does not oversee structural fire departments.

Structural Fire Departments:

- Training standards for structural fire departments are overseen by the Office of the Fire Commissioner of BC;
 - Structural fire departments may be administered and funded by a local government, an improvement district, a First Nation, a non-profit society or a strata;
 - Typically, local government administered structural fire departments are funded by taxation, whereas a non-profit society fire department may charge fees or operate based on donations and fundraising;
 - Structural fire departments are established and operated as a Local Authority service responsible for the prevention or suppression of fires in a defined Fire Protection Area by a Local Authority or a board, or commission of a registered society having the responsibility for the management or conduct of work or services through a service agreement, or equivalent of any of the above;
 - A key concept is “area having jurisdiction” which is deemed as a geographic area that the structural fire department operates in;
 - Most structural fire departments are cross trained to respond to wildfires and can utilize the inter-agency agreement with BC Wildfire Service.
-

3. What are the requirements for a society to participate?

To be considered, interested communities must be outside of structural fire protection jurisdiction, show an earnest desire to be involved, be organized as a cohesive society able to receive funding (e.g. non-profit society or association), and be eager to work under the BC Wildfire Service command and direction.

Societies activated for wildfire response must follow the Standard Operating Guideline for Rural and Remote Cooperative Community Wildfire Response: Hiring Emergency Fire Fighters.

4. What are the requirements for individuals to participate?

Each society member must complete a [Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire \(PAR-Q\)](#) to ensure they are cleared for physical activity, and have the following:

- One WorkSafe BC approved hard hat complete with chinstrap and attached earmuffs or other approved hearing protection;
- One high visibility vest when working around heavy equipment;
- One pair of work gloves as described in Section 8.19 of the BC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OH&S Regulation);
- One pair of CSA certified safety eyewear for working around helicopters, foam, or hose nozzle;
- One pair of footwear appropriate for the work conditions, with coverage above the ankle and no nylon or running shoes;
- Flame resistant clothing that meets CAN/CGSB 155.22-2014 (or 97) or NFPA 1977 standards. Flame resistant clothing must be in any colour **other** than red; and
- One 4 (four) inch compress dressing.
- Enough food and water for the workday (minimum of 2 litres of water per workday).

BC Wildfire Service will provide any required flagging tape.

5. How does a society get involved in Community Response?

Societies can reach out to their local authority (Regional District, Electoral Area) to express interest to participate in community response. The local authority can apply for funding for training through the [Community Resiliency Investment - FireSmart Pilot Program for Regional District Cooperative Community Wildfire Response Organizations](#).

6. My community response society meets criteria to participate, but we were not offered training. What can we do to be involved?

Please reach out to your local authority to determine eligibility for training.

There are several other ways to support your community during an emergency:

- Monitor and report. If you see a fire, report it to 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on a cellphone. Wildfire reports can also be made on the BC Wildfire Service mobile app.
- Become an Emergency Support Services (ESS) [volunteer](#). Contact your local authority or ESS team for training opportunities.
- Visit the BC Wildfire Service [website](#) for firefighting and heavy equipment contract opportunities.
- Consider joining the BC Wildfire Service. The Province is opening the door for more wildland firefighters with in-depth knowledge of local terrain to join the service.
- Learn more about how you can [FireSmart](#) your home and community.
- Connect with your local government regarding other funding opportunities for training ([Community Resiliency Investment](#), [Community Emergency and Preparedness Fund](#), Natural Resources Canada's [Fighting and Managing Wildfire in a Changing Climate program training fund](#), and ClimateReadyBC's [Funding and investment opportunities](#)).
- Stay connected with your local government as more information becomes available and a longer-term model for cooperative response takes form.
- Join your local volunteer fire department or emergency services organization.

7. What is the nearest organization to me that I can join? How do I contact them/get involved?

Societies interested in potentially supporting wildfire response are self-organized. Connect with your local authority and/or community members to learn more.

8. Can we sign up/join mid-season?

Newly formed societies meeting all eligibility requirements should have a designated contact person notify their local authorities. Local authority will reach out to societies via the designated contact person if their support is required by the BC Wildfire Service. There is no guarantee that a society will be asked to participate in wildfire response locally regardless of when they were identified.

9. What is the minimum age to be able to do this?

19 years old per the [Age of Majority Act in BC](#).

10. Do I need to be physically fit to participate?

Firefighting is a dangerous, physically demanding activity and is done by highly trained firefighters who undergo an annual [WFX Fit Test](#). The fit test is not currently a requirement of community response societies, however each society member must complete a [Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire \(PAR-Q\)](#) to ensure they are cleared for physical activity.

11. Are there any other roles I can support if I am not able to physically participate?

There are several ways individuals or societies can support their communities and get involved:

- Monitor and report. If you see a fire, report it to 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on a cellphone. Wildfire reports can also be made on the BC Wildfire Service mobile app.
 - Become an Emergency Support Services (ESS) [volunteer](#). Contact your local authority or ESS team for training opportunities.
 - Visit the BC Wildfire Service [website](#) for firefighting and heavy equipment contract opportunities.
 - Consider joining the BC Wildfire Service. The province is opening the door for more wildland firefighters with in-depth knowledge of local terrain to join the service.
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 - Connect with your local government regarding other funding opportunities for training ([Community Resiliency Investment](#), [Community Emergency and Preparedness Fund](#), Natural Resources Canada's [Fighting and Managing Wildfire in a Changing Climate program training fund](#), and ClimateReadyBC's [Funding and investment opportunities](#)).
 - Stay connected with your local government as more information becomes available and a longer-term model for cooperative response takes form.
 - Join your local volunteer fire department or emergency services organization.
-

12. What are the societies/community's area of responsibility?

Societies will respond under the direction and supervision of BC Wildfire Service, who will determine where work will occur. Response societies do not have jurisdiction or areas of

responsibility.

13. Will there be an opportunity for on-site training for communities mid-season?

It is best to invest in preparedness versus trying to seek training during a response situation. Working with your Local Government, all communities that meet the requirements are welcome and encouraged to pursue training through [approved contractors](#).

Expectations

14. When will response societies be activated or asked to assist?

Societies will be activated upon BC Wildfire Service's request, as necessary. A Wildfire Officer or Incident Commander will contact the Local Government, who in turn will reach out to the society via their representatives and provide direction. The BC Wildfire Service will not deploy societies outside of their local area.

15. How will BC Wildfire Service communicate with and dispatch my society?

The BC Wildfire Service will reach out to the local authority directly or through the Emergency Operations Centre to activate local response groups. The local authority will then reach out to the local contact to dispatch the local group.

16. If I see fire or smoke, can I/my society act?

If you see fire or smoke, report it to the BC Wildfire Service at 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on a cellphone. Wildfire reports can also be made on the BC Wildfire Service mobile app.

Firefighting is inherently dangerous, and there are significant safety concerns—including danger trees, smoke inhalation, unknown explosives, and live power lines—for community response societies without firefighting experience and knowledge to participate in initial attack or to respond without BC Wildfire Service supervision or guidance.

If a society responds voluntarily, it is not part of integrated response with BC Wildfire Service as an Emergency Fire Fighter. Members should be aware of the risks and liability.

Societies will be activated upon BC Wildfire Service request, as necessary.

17. Does this give me permission to stay behind during evacuations?

Evacuation orders are put in place to ensure the safety and protection of people and first responders during dangerous and unpredictable situations. Just as any BC Wildfire Service staff member or structural firefighter with residence in an evacuation order area would not be exempt from abiding by evacuation orders, neither are society members.

18. What happens if BC Wildfire Service asks that an individual or group leave the fire area and they refuse?

Community response is not an alternative to complying with evacuation orders.

The [Emergency and Disaster Management Act](#) (EDMA) grants response powers to First Nations or local authorities to implement Evacuation Orders and Alerts in response to an emergency. Evacuation Orders are put in place to ensure the safety and protection of people and first responders during dangerous and unpredictable situations. Evacuation Orders and Alerts fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR); they are not under the jurisdiction of the BC Wildfire Service.

Under Section 13 of the [Wildfire Act](#), when the government is engaged in fire control tactics, an official order may be made that requires all persons in an area specified by the official to leave the area. This section of the Wildfire Act does fall under the BC Wildfire Service Jurisdiction. Section 13 is an important tool for the BC Wildfire Service to ensure a safe worksite when government is engaged in fire control and is an important part of meeting [WorkSafeBC](#) requirements.

If there is an order to leave a specified area under Section 13 of the Wildfire Act and individuals refuse, BC Wildfire Staff may notify the RCMP.

Section 13 of the Wildfire Act states:

“Requirement to leave specified area

(1) If the government is engaged in fire control, an official by order may require all persons in an area specified by the official to leave the area.

(2) Each of the persons that is the subject of an order under subsection (1) must comply with the order.

(3) An order under subsection (1) may be different for different categories of persons.”

Further to that, Section 43 of the Wildfire Act states:

“Offences

(4) A person who contravenes section 2, 6 (3) (d), 7 (1), 11 (2), 13 (2) or 22 (3) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5 000, or to imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or to both.”

Additionally, a person can be issued the following:

- A Violation Ticket for an offence of: s.13(2) – “Fail to comply with order to leave specified area”. This is subject to a total fine amount of \$1150 (\$1000 plus the 15% Victim Surcharge of \$150).
- A maximum administrative penalty of \$10 000 as per: s. 33(2)(b) of the Wildfire Regulation.

A summary of fines associated with the new Wildfire Act and Regulations can be found on the BC Wildfire Service [website](#).

19. Is there a plan to engage non-organized societies?

We understand many societies and individuals want to be involved, but at this time the BC Wildfire Service has limited capacity to engage and supervise individuals with minimal fire suppression and incident command system experience, in addition to regular operations. We recognize the value of local knowledge and relationships and encourage these societies to consider forming a society or association, or get involved in other ways:

- Monitor and report. If you see a fire, report it to 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on a cellphone. Wildfire reports can also be made on the BC Wildfire Service mobile app.
 - Become an Emergency Support Services (ESS) [volunteer](#). Contact your local authority or ESS team for training opportunities.
 - Visit the BC Wildfire Service [website](#) for firefighting and heavy equipment contract opportunities.
 - Consider joining the BC Wildfire Service. The Province is opening the door for more wildland firefighters with in-depth knowledge of local terrain to join the service.
 - Learn more about how you can [FireSmart](#) your home and community.
 - Connect with your local government regarding other funding opportunities for training ([Community Resiliency Investment](#), [Community Emergency and Preparedness Fund](#), Natural Resources Canada’s [Fighting and Managing Wildfire in a Changing Climate program training fund](#), and ClimateReadyBC’s [Funding and investment opportunities](#)).
 - Stay connected with your local government as more information becomes available and a longer-term model for cooperative response takes form.
 - Join your local volunteer fire department or emergency services organization.
-

20. How are these societies different than volunteer or local fire departments?

Cooperative response societies are outside of fire protection areas, and not serviced by a fire department. The BC Wildfire Service already works with structural fire departments through the Interagency Agreement.

Some of the community response societies engaged expressed interest in building a volunteer fire department. Municipalities are responsible for the provision of fire protection through their local fire departments and should be the first point of contact for societies interested in this pathway.

Key qualities of structural fire departments:

- Minimum training standards for structural fire departments are overseen by the Office of the Fire Commissioner of BC.
 - Structural fire departments may be administered and funded by a local government, an improvement district, a First Nation, a non-profit society or a strata.
 - Typically, local government administered structural fire departments are funded by taxation, whereas a non-profit society fire department may charge fees or operate based on donations and fundraising.
 - Structural fire departments are established and operated as a Local Authority service responsible for the prevention or suppression of fires in a defined Fire Protection Area by a Local Authority or a board, or commission of a registered society having the responsibility for the management or conduct of work or services through a service agreement, or equivalent of any of the above.
 - Most structural fire departments are cross trained to respond to wildfires and can utilize the inter-agency agreement with BC Wildfire Service.
-

21. What consultation was done with local governments to ensure success?

Local zones and fire centres have engaged with the local government to ensure that they are aware of the new funding stream and processes prior to the fire season.

Safety

22. Who oversees safety expectations?

BC Wildfire Service is the prime contractor. Standard processes are to be followed for supervision and safety.

23. Is the work dangerous?

Firefighting is a dangerous, physically demanding activity and is done by highly trained firefighters who undergo annual fitness testing. There are several risks present every

day when firefighting:

- Burns,
 - Smoke inhalation,
 - Hazards like dangerous burnt-out trees and ash pits,
 - Various topography and terrain which may increase the likelihood of slips, trips and falls,
 - Weather which influences fire behaviour,
 - Working for extended periods of time in varying weather conditions.
-

24. What do we do if we think the work isn't safe?

Safety is the topmost priority for the BC Wildfire Service.

BC Wildfire Service supervisors are expected to assign Emergency Fire Fighters to tasks that are appropriate for their level of skill and experience. However, individuals should be aware that this work will still be physically demanding and done under varying weather conditions.

In British Columbia, the [Workers Compensation Act](#) and [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations](#) provide all workers with the right to refuse unsafe work.

25. Will there be first aid available on site with us?

As the prime contractor, BC Wildfire Service is required to meet WorkSafe regulations for first aid coverage. This may be done with BC Wildfire Service staff or contracted first aid on site.

26. Are we covered by insurance?

Once someone has entered a statutory hire agreement with the BC Wildfire Service, they become a temporary employee covered by WorkSafe BC. WorkSafe BC provides benefits if you're injured because of, or during, your duties.

Volunteers are generally not covered by WorkSafeBC. Societies should be aware that voluntary response not conducted under BC Wildfire Service supervision is not covered by WorkSafeBC and is done at the society's own risk.

Training

27. Which courses are required?

The following courses will be required for completion either online or by correspondence through Justice Institute of BC:

- S-100
- S-185
- ICS-100
- FireSmart Wildfire Risk Reduction Course (recommended)
- Wildfire Risk Reduction Basics Course - free, online course for non-forest professionals that provides an introduction to the key concepts to minimize the negative impacts of wildfires in BC. (recommended)

First aid training is not part of the requirements but is highly recommended.

BC Wildfire Service staff, its contractors and community response society members will require recertification on an annual basis.

28. Who is supplying the training/certifications for identified societies and associations?

Trainers on the BC Wildfire Service [recognized instructor list](#) are providing training to pre-identified societies.

29. Are we held to the same physical testing standards as BC Wildfire Service crew members?

BC Wildfire Service crew members must complete the annual WFX Fit Test and maintain a high level of fitness throughout the year.

Individuals hired as Emergency Fire Fighters will be hired on an as-needed basis and supervised by a BC Wildfire Service staff member. If activated, individuals may participate in physically demanding work such as mop up and patrolling. Individuals must complete a [Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire \(PAR-Q\)](#) to ensure they are cleared for physical activity.

Contracts / Compensation

30. Is this a volunteer or paid position?

If activated by a BC Wildfire Service staff member for response to a wildfire, societies will be paid for their efforts.

31. How much will I be paid?

Rates are standardized and dictated by [legislation](#).

32. Who is paying for this initiative?

The BC Wildfire Service is funding training for identified community response societies through the Community Resiliency Investment Program. Societies will work with their local authorities to secure funding and organize training for upcoming fire seasons.

33. Will there be a contract in place in advance?

Community response societies and associations will engage with local authorities to establish pre-organization and may sign a statutory hire agreement with the BC Wildfire Service then. The contract is not initiated unless the society is activated by the BC Wildfire Service, through the local authority. Societies that were not engaged or who would like to get involved during the season, and who meet eligibility criteria, may be employed through a statutory hire agreement as needed.

34. When am I “on the clock”? Is there a standby rate?

Societies will only be paid for time working under BC Wildfire Service supervision when they are requested to activate. A daily time report needs to be completed and submitted for each day worked.

35. Might I be called for patrol, detection, education, i.e. Fire Warden program? Can I sign up for this program?

Fire Wardens have a specific job description and additional hiring criteria. This is an eligible Statutory Hire position if standards are met. Hiring fire wardens is through local BCWS zones and is separate from the CCWR program.

36. Can I receive reimbursement for PPE, equipment or other purchases?

The BC Wildfire Service will not reimbursement societies or individuals for PPE, equipment or other purchases required to participate in cooperative response.

Equipment

37. Do I get a uniform or PPE?

No, a uniform and PPE will not be provided by the BC Wildfire Service. Society members must have the following:

- One WorkSafe BC approved hard hat complete with chinstrap and attached earmuffs or other approved hearing protection;
- One high visibility vest when working around heavy equipment
- One pair of work gloves as described in Section 8.19 of the BC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OH&S Regulation);
- One pair of CSA certified safety eyewear for working around helicopters, foam, or hose nozzle;
- One pair of footwear appropriate for the work conditions, with coverage above the ankle and no nylon or running shoes;
- Flame resistant clothing that meets CAN/CGSB 155.22-2014 (or 97) or NFPA 1977 standards. Flame resistant clothing must be in any colour **other** than red; and
- One 4 (four) inch compress dressing.
- Sufficient amount of food and water for the Work Day (minimum of 2 litres of water per Work Day).

BC Wildfire Service will provide any required flagging tape.

38. I don't want to do the training, but I have equipment you can use – do I give it to the community organization or contract to BC Wildfire Service directly?

Most equipment is hired prior to and early in the fire season (March to May) by the local fire centre(s). To supply equipment listed in the BC Wildfire Service Equipment Rates, equipment owners should contact their local fire centre to be registered for “as and when required” work. Contact information for fire centres in B.C. is available [here](#). For more information on the BC Wildfire Service contracting process and opportunities, please visit the [website](#).

Fireline

39. Will I have to work if we are called?

No. If a society is activated, individuals pre-identified as having the required training have the option to participate.

40. Can I work near to my home?

Emergency Fire Fighters will work under the direction of the BC Wildfire Service, which will determine the worksite. Societies will not be deployed outside of their local area.

41. What kinds of situations will I be working in (initial attack, urban interface, mop up, etc.)?

If a society is activated, they will be employed for activities such as mop up, patrolling, and other support roles.

Firefighting is inherently dangerous, and there are significant safety concerns for community response societies without firefighting experience and knowledge to participate in initial attack or to act in situations where there is no BC Wildfire Service supervision or guidance.

Staff, experienced members of the public and contractors have all expressed significant safety concerns that must be addressed if we expand this model.

For individuals or societies interested in participating in structural protection or defense, it's recommend you consider joining a local volunteer fire department.

42. How long are the expected shifts?

Shift length is situationally dependent.

43. Will I always be working with BC Wildfire Service staff?

Yes, society members hired as Emergency Fire Fighters will always operate under direct BC Wildfire Service supervision.

44. Who will be giving us work assignments and making sure the work is right?

A BC Wildfire Service staff member will supervise the society and give direction.

45. Am I working only in the forest?

The work location is situationally dependent.

46. Can we protect homes/businesses?

Structural fire fighting requires additional training and PPE to be conducted safely and is not included in the community response model the BC Wildfire Service is currently pursuing.

The BC Wildfire Service works closely with structural fire services societies responsible for fire activity near structures. For individuals or societies interested in participating in structural protection, it's recommended to consider joining a local volunteer fire department.

The best action communities can take to protect homes and businesses is to engage in prevention early on. [FireSmart BC](#) has several resources to guide this work.

47. Can I ride in helicopters or in the airtankers?

No, only authorized personnel essential to the mission are to be on board aircraft hired by the Ministry.

Other

48. Are meals / drinks provided?

No. Each society member must have enough food and water for the workday (minimum of 2 litres of water per workday), as mentioned in the Standard Operating Guideline for Rural and Remote Cooperative Community Wildfire Response: Hiring Emergency Fire Fighters.

49. Do we stay in camps, or are we allowed to stay at home even if there is an evacuation order?

No person is permitted to stay in evacuation order areas. Just as any BC Wildfire Service staff member or structural firefighter with residence in an evacuation order area would not be exempt from abiding by evacuation orders, neither are society members. The accommodation requirements are situationally dependent.

50. How do I organize my community or society to meet the requirements to be considered eligible?

To be eligible for participation in wildfire response as an Emergency Fire Fighter, community members must:

- Be outside of structural fire protection jurisdiction;
- Show an earnest desire to be involved;

- Be organized as a cohesive society able to receive funding, such as a non-profit society;
- Be willing to work under the BC Wildfire Service command and direction.

Non-profit societies/organizations follow a simple business structure that enables them to create and maintain a bank account, take out insurance, have a WorkSafe BC account, hold assets and more. For information on how to form a society within your community, please visit the resources on the BC Government [website](#).

Self-organized societies must also meet the minimum training and safety requirements for statutory hires.
