

The Kentucky Division of Forestry, in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service, is pleased to announce the 2026 Kentucky Firewise USA™ Community Grant Program. Grants may be awarded for projects aimed at reducing wildfire risks and hazards in Kentucky's wildland-urban interface communities. Priority for grant funding will be given based on the level of wildfire risk, the establishment of a local Firewise USA™ Community, and the type of project proposed. The following guidelines have been established to provide potential grant applicants with required grant program information.

The **2020 Kentucky Forest Action Plan** listed three important issues, in which wildfires are incorporated:

- Forest Health
- Forest management
- Funding

**Program Objectives:**

- Support the establishment of Firewise USA™ Communities.
- Provide cost-share funds for wildfire mitigation and Firewise USA™ activities.
- Strengthen collaborative relationships with fire departments, communities, counties, and interested organizations.
- Educate the public about the benefits of wildfire risk reduction and the Firewise USA™ program.
- Reduce the risk of wildfires and their impact in wildland-urban interface areas.
- Complete Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs).

**Eligible Grantees:**

- Local units of government: a city, county, urban county, charter county, consolidated local government, special district, or a quasi-governmental body authorized by the Kentucky Revised Statutes.
- Nonprofit organization: Must have IRS determination letter stating tax-exempt status. For more information, please visit the IRS website at: <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/exempt-organizations-affirmation-letters>.
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Grantees must certify that they are not debarred from a federal grant program, and they may not conduct business with individuals debarred from federal grant programs. Grantees must comply with all federal regulations regarding federal grants. The governing regulations applicable to this grant are Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 2 Part 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. The CFRs can be viewed electronically at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II>.

### **Funding Ranges:**

The funding range for grant money requested is \$1,000 - \$10,000. Award amounts will be limited to \$10,000 per federal identification number, with exceptions permitted at the discretion of the grant subcommittee of the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

### **Project Match Requirements:**

All project applicants **must** provide a match of 20 percent of the total project costs with non-federal cash or in-kind contributions. Other federal funds **cannot** be used as a match for this grant.

**Cash purchase matches** are direct, out-of-pocket expenditures for eligible project activities that are supported by paid invoices, canceled checks, and signed receipts or official payroll records.

**In-kind contribution matches** include on-hand supplies, third-party donations of supplies or equipment, professional services at the professional rate, or time spent by employees, non-federal grant funding, or volunteers on eligible project activities. Volunteer hours may be applied to the project at the specified rate of \$25 per hour. Assistance provided by federal employees may not be claimed as an in-kind match.

Grantees are required to maintain project records in accordance with all applicable federal regulations. This includes: (1) records shall comply with generally accepted accounting principles; (2) records will document allowable costs; (3) records will be supported by source documentation, such as canceled checks, paid invoices, payroll records, time, and attendance records, signed contracts; and (4) records will be maintained for three years following payment.

A grant packet containing supplemental forms for project documentation will be provided to awardees.

### **Deadlines:**

Applications must be **received** by the Kentucky Division of Forestry, by 4:30 p.m. EDT on **May 1, 2026**, via email to [KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov](mailto:KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov). Only scanned PDF documentation will be accepted, no other file types or photos will be accepted. No applications will be accepted after the deadline. Please ensure that your email settings will allow you to receive emails from [KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov](mailto:KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov) and that your email settings will not deposit them in spam. The Kentucky Division of Forestry will notify grantees of funding approval by August 1, 2026. All grantees will be required to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Kentucky Division of Forestry to outline the parameters of payment, chronological terms, and expected results of the project. Once the Grant Agreement is returned and finalized within the date guidelines, the grant will have an official start date of October 1, 2026, and an ending date of June 30, 2027.

Grantees may submit paperwork for reimbursement via email to: [KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov](mailto:KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov) as soon as the grant project is complete. Only scanned PDF documentation will be accepted, no other file types or photos will be accepted. However, all grantees must have projects completed and all required reimbursement documentation emailed by June 30, 2027.

### **Grant Application Review:**

All proposals will be graded and ranked by the grant subcommittee of the Kentucky Division of Forestry. The State Forester will allocate funds and award grants based on the recommendations of the grant subcommittee. 2

The following categories will be graded up to the maximum point value listed below. Scoring is dependent on how well the application relates to these categories. Clearly addressing each of these categories (if applicable) in your grant narrative will ensure that your application receives the highest grade possible.

<b>Grading Scale:</b>	<b>Points</b>
Grant Application is complete, legible, and accurate with clearly stated objectives and project actions to be taken.	20
The community has not received funding through the Firewise USA™ Community Grant Program in the past.	5
The community is located within the Project Priority Area as identified in the attached map.	15
Project Evaluation – The proposal contains criteria for evaluating performance through measurable outcomes.	15
Program Objectives – Meets the Firewise USA™ Community Grant program objectives.	15
Value Added – The project demonstrates improvement to the community.	15
Project Budget – The detailed budget is outlined and correct, including the required match.	10
Partners – Identifies federal, state, local, and private supporters of the project.	5
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

**Eligible Projects:**

- Development or update of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
- Development of local Firewise USA™ Communities.
- Completion of community and/or home wildfire risk assessments.
- GIS mapping of at-risk communities.
- Consulting services to complete a community wildfire risk assessment(s) or a (CWPP).
- Firewise USA™ or fire mitigation activities that follow the intent of the National Fire Plan.
- Wildfire mitigation/risk reduction educational activities or materials that can be used to educate residents (No structural firefighting educational supplies).
- Signage to identify roads and residences.
- Mechanical removal or reduction of hazardous fuels.
- Fuel treatments that increase a community’s defensible space, which could include the leasing or contracting of equipment and other resources to complete an eligible project.
- Development or improvement of existing fire breaks that provide community mitigation.

The following is a list of approved Firewise USA™ equipment and services that can be purchased with federal mitigation funds administered by the Kentucky Division of Forestry. This cost-share program is for programs, projects, or activities not currently being funded and is not intended to be a substitute for existing funding levels. The focus of this program is to support new initiatives that would not otherwise occur without grant funds.

**No single piece of equipment costing \$10,000.00 or more will be permitted.**

### Approved Equipment

Chain saws and carrying cases  
Chipper  
Industrial leaf blowers  
Industrial string trimmers  
Brush hog  
Pole pruners  
Ropes and ladders  
Wheelbarrows  
Safety helmets or hard hats  
Chaps  
Leather gloves  
Safety glasses, goggles, and ear plugs  
  
Fuel cans, bar and chain oil, files, etc.  
Fire rakes and Pulaskis (fuel reduction projects)  
Drip torches (fuel reduction projects)  
Nomex clothing (fuel reduction projects)  
Crew first aid kit  
Firewise USA™ literature printing  
Firewise USA™ signs and banners

### Approved Services and Expenses

Equipment rental (fuel reduction or firebreaks)  
Prescribed burning contracts  
Firewise USA™ workshop expenses  
Tree service contracts (chipper, chainsaw operators, etc.) for removal, thinning and pruning of trees for defensible space.

### Non-Approved Equipment

Generators  
Lawn mowers  
Megaphones  
Fire hose  
Cameras  
Boots  
Fire shelters  
Foam and/or skid units  
Backpack pumps  
Uniforms  
Radios  
Single piece of equipment over \$10,000

### Non-Approved Expenses

Salaries for firefighters  
Mileage for personal vehicles  
Projects not listed in the grant  
Food

### Ineligible Projects:

- Consulting services other than for wildfire hazard mitigation.
- Promotional literature for a community.
- Any other project outside the intent and scope of the National Fire Plan as interpreted by the Kentucky Division of Forestry.

### Grant Payment Policies

- All grant recipients are required to establish a Firewise USA™ Community through the development of a (CWPP).

- Home Wildfire Hazard Assessments will be paid or considered in-kind at a flat rate of \$25 per home address assessed. Assessments must be submitted using the Kentucky Division of Forestry Home Wildfire Risk Review Survey on Survey123 Application. Training will be provided.
- Fuel reduction projects and home mitigations will be paid or considered in-kind at the specified volunteer rate. **Fuel reduction and mitigation sites must be pre-approved by the Kentucky Division of Forestry before any work is done.** Please keep before and after pictures of work accomplished for each address on file.
- Supply and Equipment requests must directly relate to a project being performed (Example: Purchasing chainsaws to complete home mitigations).
- Volunteer hours for educational or fuel reduction activities will be reimbursed or considered as an in-kind match at the specified volunteer rate of \$25 per hour. Signatures of all volunteers are required on the volunteer tracking sheet.
- Assembly and installation of 911 reflective address signs will be reimbursed or considered as in-kind at a flat rate of \$25 per sign installed with photo proof of installation, plus reimbursement for supplies with receipt.
- Grant administrator fees will be paid or considered in-kind at the rate of \$100 per month, not to exceed \$900 per grant cycle.
- Firewise meetings will be paid or considered in-kind at a rate of \$100 per meeting, not to exceed \$900 per grant cycle. Meetings will no longer be calculated by volunteer hours.
- Home mitigation projects cannot be performed on homes owned by members of the fire department or their immediate family (Parents/Siblings/Children).
- Mitigation projects and Home Assessments can only be repeated for reimbursement at the same location every 5 years and in conjunction with updating a CWPP.
- Communities that have received Firewise Grant funding for more than 3 years can apply again but at least 50% of requested funds must be for fuel reduction activities.
- Use of computers, office space, and telephones will no longer be accepted as an in-kind match.
- Unapproved grant expenses will not be paid.

#### **Program Assistance:**

For further information or assistance regarding the Firewise USA™ program, eligible projects, or the application process, please contact:

- Kessley Baker - Wildfire Mitigation Specialist  
606-260-5651  
[KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov](mailto:KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov)

## Narrative Format

Written proposals must be included with the application form. Grant proposals should clearly indicate a need for wildfire risk reduction efforts. This template may be used to assist with developing your narrative.

**1. Introduction** - Provide a of couple paragraphs that includes the following information:

- Describe your community (location, population, topography, etc.).
- Describe your wildfire risk (wildfire history, fuels, vulnerable residents, etc.).
- Justify why wildfire mitigation is needed in your community.

For information about your area’s wildfire risk, surface fuels, wildfire behavior, and other data that may be used to support your proposal, please visit [southernwildfirerisk.com](http://southernwildfirerisk.com) and/or [wildfirerisk.org](http://wildfirerisk.org).

**2. Project Proposal** - List in detail your objectives and the supporting activities that you will be doing to accomplish them. The example below demonstrates the format that should be used for each objective:

*Objective One: Complete 150 home wildfire risk reviews within the community to gather CWPP data and help educate residents on how to mitigate their wildfire risk.*

*Supporting Activities:*

- *Schedule a Firewise Workshop with KDF’s Wildfire Risk Reduction Coordinator to train selected personnel and/or volunteers on how to properly access home and structures for wildfire risk.*
- *Use the newly trained personnel to conduct home wildfire risk reviews on 150 homes in the district.*  
*COST: 150 completed assessments × \$25 per assessment = \$3,750 Requested*

**3. Conclusion** - Describe how accomplishing these objectives will benefit your community and help reduce wildfire risk.

**4. Budget Narrative** - The budget narrative lists and describes in detail all costs in the budget worksheet portion of the application and in the body of your narrative.

<b>Requested Funds:</b>	<b>Amount</b>
•	
•	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>In-Kind Match:</b>	
•	
•	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Total Grant Amount (Total of Requested Funds + In-Kind Match)</b>	

*To determine if you have enough in-kind match, multiply the **Total Grant Amount** by 0.20 (or 20%). If the result is less than or equal to your in-kind match, then your match is sufficient. However, if the result is greater than your in-kind match, your project does not meet the required 20% match.*

*EXAMPLE: \$7,600 requested funds + \$2000 In-Kind = \$9,600 Total Grant Amount  
\$9,600 × .20 = \$1,920 required match*

*In this example, the applicant would need a required match of at least \$1,920. Because they are providing \$2,000 in-kind, they more than meet the requirements of the grant.*



**KENTUCKY FIREWISE USA™ COMMUNITY HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT APPLICATION (Continued)**

Budget Worksheet: (Reminder that grantee must provide 20 percent of total project (Requested + In-Kind))

<b>Categories (Describe in detail)</b>	<b>FEDERAL Funds Requested</b>	<b>In-Kind Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Assessments:</b>			
<b>Mitigation:</b>			
<b>Supplies:</b>			
<b>Equipment*:</b>			
<b>Contractual:</b>			
<b>Educational:</b>			
<b>Meetings:</b>			
<b>Other:</b>			
<b>Total</b>			

\*Equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of less than \$10,000 per unit.

**Authorized Approval:**

To the best of my knowledge, the above information is true and correct and I am authorized by

\_\_\_\_\_ to represent their interests.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Send Application To:** Kessley Baker - Firewise USA™  
 Kentucky Division of Forestry  
 154 Grant Vue Plaza  
 Hazard, Kentucky 41701  
[KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov](mailto:KDFGrants.Firewise@ky.gov)

**Application Deadline:** May 1, 2026 4:30 PM EDT

# National Incident Management System Certification

I \_\_\_\_\_ do here by certify that the \_\_\_\_\_  
(Fire Chief's Name) (Fire Department's Name)

Fire Department uses the National Incident Management System (NIMS) when responding to all emergencies.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Fire Chief)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Project Priority Areas

