

## Community Resiliency Investment program

# Webinar for 2021 FireSmart Community Funding & Supports and Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction Streams

## Q & A

This document is a summary of the questions that were received on the webinar held August 12, 2020. Answers have been modified for clarity and to provide specific links to the Program & Application Guide or other resources.

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### 1. What are examples of eligible FireSmart activities?

Table 1 in the CRI FireSmart Community Funding & Supports [Program & Application Guide](#) provides all of the eligible activities by FireSmart category.

### 2. All applications are required to include an education component – does this mean one education component for each application or one education component per electoral area. For example, if four electoral areas were applied for, does that mean 4 different education components?

An educational component must be included in each Worksheet 1 that is submitted. For regional district applications that include multiple electoral areas, an educational component will be required for each electoral area.

Refer to activity category 1 - Education of Table 1 in the Program & Application Guide for information on eligible educational activities.

### 3. Page 2 of the Guide states that we may exceed the base funding maximum for fuel management activities on Provincial Crown land. How much additional funding may be applied for above the maximum?

There is no maximum amount for eligible Crown land fuel management, but proposed activities are required to be completed within two years and must meet the criteria described on page 2 of the Program & Application Guide. The funding amount would also be determined through co-ordination with the Crown Land WRR program and conversations with the WPO and/or FNESS FMS to ensure alignment between program streams and effective fuel treatment design.

Refer to Section 4 of the Program & Application Guide for information on the requirements of funding.

**4. If a regional district has four electoral areas does that mean it can apply for \$250,000? \$50,000 base funding + an additional \$50,000 for each electoral area?**

The base funding would depend on whether the regional district is lower or higher risk (i.e. \$50,000 or \$150,000) plus up to \$50,000 for FireSmart activities only for each electoral (EA) that is included in the application.

In the case of a lower risk class community, the funding would be: Base funding of \$50,000 plus up to \$50,000 (FireSmart activities only) for each EA. With four EAs, maximum funding would be up to \$250,000.

Refer to Section 3 of the Program & Application Guide for more information on eligible projects and types of applications.

**5. Could an eligible item for a First Nation be purchasing/installing pipes to an existing well to extend water flow from a reservoir so that sprinklers could be better setup to defend homes that are adjacent to a forested area?**

This is not an eligible activity/cost under this program.

Refer to Section 6 of the Program & Application Guide for eligible and ineligible expenditures and activities.

**6. Is there a cost for LFR online courses?**

There won't be a cost to attend the course, although there may be an associated cost for the work materials which are still being developed by FireSmart Canada. Updates regarding the LFR Workshops can be found under 'Courses' at [FireSmartBC.ca](https://www.fire-smartbc.ca).

**7. UBCM previously denied the part of the (local government's) 2020 CRI grant for fuel management prescriptions because it felt the quote provided by a local contractor was too high, so that begs the question: What does UBCM consider to be a reasonable cost to perform an fuel management prescription for one hectare of land?**

Fuel management project costs are evaluated by the BCWS WPO and/or FNESS FMS as the subject matter experts for the program. They perform an analysis on the proposed costs and provide a funding recommendation and feedback on costs as part of the technical review of applications.

Based on an evaluation of similar types of works occurring under Forest Enhancement Society of BC or the new WRR program a cost benchmarking analysis is underway to help guide this process. This information will be available to the WPOs and FMSs. A very small prescription may generally have higher costs/ha because of fixed costs. A very large prescription in a similar ecosystem may generally have a lower cost/ha for the same reason. There isn't one answer: every project is unique. Remote locations also will have higher costs, for example.

An appropriate level of rationale is required to justify high costs, and working with your WPO or FMS is essential to see what synergies may exist with the WRR program.

**8. Is there an estimated cost range available for the development of the new CWRP?**

Costs to develop a CWRP are anticipated to be in a similar range to the costs for a CWPP, as the new template was built from some examples of comprehensive CWPPs. Costs will vary depending on the size of the area of interest, the number of collaborating jurisdictions, etc. Plan costs are not anticipated to move significantly up or down. Remember to provide a cost breakdown so that the evaluators can see what estimated costs are based on.

Refer to the instructions on page 1 of Worksheet 1, as well as Section 2.2 (Planning) on Worksheet 1 for details on required cost break downs.

**9. Is it an eligible activity to update a Community Wildfire Protection Plan? We have one, but it is over 10 years old.**

If your CWPP is ten years old, we would strongly suggest that you look at the new CWRP process and move forward with that new guidance.

Refer to activity category 2 - Planning in Table 1 of the Program & Application Guide for examples of when it may be appropriate to update an existing CWPP.

**10. Can this funding be used for an updated CWPP?**

Small updates to a CWPP are still fine if the document is current (less than five years old) and the community's circumstances have not significantly changed.

Refer to activity category 2 - Planning in Table 1 of the Program & Application Guide for examples of when it may be appropriate to update an existing CWPP.

**11. Can a regional district apply for additional funding for both municipalities and electoral areas?**

Yes and no. In 2021, there are two options for regional applications.

One is the standard regional application that we have had from day one in this program, and many of our other programs, which allows any combination of eligible applicants to apply together under one application. In this case a regional district may be the primary applicant on behalf of a couple of their electoral areas, a municipality and an indigenous community.

New in 2021, regional districts can apply for multiple electoral areas within their area, and benefit from additional funding specific for FireSmart activities within those EAs. So, this additional funding is not for fuel management.

Regional districts will have to decide which of these kinds of applications to submit, or just submit a simple, non-regional application that requests the base funding. UBCM will be reaching out to all regional districts to make sure that the new option is understood. This change was developed to recognize the size and geography of regional districts, and the amount of WUI in unincorporated areas, and to increase opportunities for regional districts to participate in the program.

Refer to Section 3 of the Program & Application Guide for more information on eligible projects and types of applications.

**12. How does someone apply for or assist in recommending CRI WRR funding? Does it differ from the CRI FCFS funding application process? An answer we previously received this year was 'the WRR is administered internally'.**

Yes, it is different. UBCM administers the FireSmart Community Funding & Supports program that has the distinct application process that we have discussed today.

For Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction for all communities, including indigenous communities, the WPOs are your place to start for initiating conversations on treatments, and the ongoing investment in plans or prescription development and identifying potential fuel treatments on Crown land. WPOs work closely with the land managers in developing an annual operating plan for the following fiscal year.

Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committees (CFRC) are a great place to further proactive planning and amalgamate ongoing information within each area on any potential fuel treatments. Definitely reach out to the Fire Centre WPOs to start those conversations, as well speak with neighbouring First Nations and local governments to start a CFRC. These committees are funded through the FCFS program, to help create a place for those conversations to happen.

**13. Can we apply for funding to develop a CWRP in conjunction with applying for funding to perform the HRVA, or must we complete the HRVA first?**

The Hazard, Risk & Vulnerability Analysis is part of the *Emergency Program Act* and is the required component that all First Nations and local governments have to complete as part of an emergency response plan. Our program does not fund activities that are legally required, including that kind of emergency planning process.

However, regardless of where you are in your emergency plan, you may apply to develop CWRP funding at any time. The emergency response plan and CWRP are meant to complement each other.

Refer to the new [CWRP Template and Guidance document](#) for more information.

**14. So, a low risk RD can apply for \$50,000 base for fuel management, but each additional \$50,000 per EA can only be for other FireSmart items (not fuel related)?**

Regional districts may apply for the appropriate amount of base funding, depending on whether they are considered to be at lower or higher risk. That base funding can be used for any combination of FireSmart or fuel management, with the understanding that an educational component is now required for all applications. So, an application that comes in which is all or primarily fuel management needs also to be accompanied by a Worksheet 1 proposing an educational component.

The ability for additional funding for Electoral Areas is limited to FireSmart activities only, which is in Table 1, categories 1-8, and not category 9 which is Fuel Management.

Refer to Section 3 of the Program & Application Guide for more information on eligible projects and types of applications.

**15. In reference to an earlier question where an application was denied due to the cost estimate in the application being considered too high, would UBCM consider approving a % of the application cost estimate rather than simply denying the application all together?**

The FCFS program very rarely fully denies or declines to fund an application. We have had situations where applications were “approved in part.” An example from the fuel management world is that the prescription was approved but not the treatment. This might be a question of readiness, or how much can actually be accomplished within the grant’s two-year period. We have had a handful of fuel management applications for extremely large areas, which were simply not realistic.

Our process involves screening applications and working with the applicant even before the adjudication process starts. In the process of technical review, we expect the WPO and FMS and the applicant work together to improve or revise the proposal. And even at the Evaluation Committee stage, we have the ability to go back to communities one more time and say, these revisions are required if you are going to be funded.

It is generally highly unlikely for an application to be declined outright unless the applicant chooses not to make the requested revisions or persists in an application that is ineligible under the program.

**16. Can a local government apply for a joint project for a regional district?**

Yes, regional applications include a primary applicant and one or more secondary applicants (local governments and/or First Nations). The primary applicant may be any eligible applicant, municipality, regional district or First Nation.

Refer to Section 3 of the Program & Application Guide for more information on eligible projects and types of applications.

**17. If a regional district was to apply to update a CWPP for an EA under the new 'multiple EA' application, can we still include a First Nation that resides within that EA? Assuming a BCR would be required?**

An applicant must pick which type of application they submit. They must choose either the general regional application, which is multiple applicants (i.e. a regional district, a municipality, electoral area and First Nation all together), or select the funding option for a regional district that includes multiple electoral areas, or select as a single applicant. You can’t merge these together.

We are doing some specific outreach to regional districts so that is more clearly understood.

In the case of a regional application that is able to include a First Nation (or any other eligible applicant) as a secondary applicant, a BCR (or council/board resolution) is required to indicate that the primary applicant is allowed to apply for, receive and manage funding on the secondary applicant’s behalf.

Refer to Section 3 of the Program & Application Guide for more information on eligible projects and types of applications.

**18. What sort of extensions are available for 2020 funded projects that could not be carried out due to COVID?**

Across all of our funding programs at UBCM, we are trying to be as flexible as possible for communities that have been affected by COVID. Contact Peter Ronald at UBCM to explain what has happened in your community and see what might be possible. It is in everyone's best interest to support good projects to complete rather than be stopped because of a deadline. Some projects have had up to six-months extensions. Others have activities that may not be completed due to factors resulting from the pandemic.

**19. What city will the 2021 FireSmart Conference be held in? How much will it approximately cost?**

We have not yet established the location, and indeed have not yet established if it will be an in-person or a virtual conference. Pre-pandemic, we had planned to hold a physical conference, in February or March, in central BC. We are doing our best to follow public health guidance, and we will make that decision and communicate it to everyone.

For now, best case scenario, if we are able to hold a conference and that is something your community would be interested in, please apply for it. See the specific information in activity category 4 - Interagency Cooperation in Table one of Worksheet 1. If we can't be together in person, an online symposium may be the way to bring everyone together.

**20. Who do you foresee initiating the Regional FireSmart and Resiliency Committees? Presumably the costs for hosting, managing and coordinating such a committee would be eligible for funding under the CRI FCFS program?**

It will vary and may depend if someone has already begun this work in your community. In some cases, it is regional district staff, or fire department staff, or an interested community member. Look at the [Terms of Reference](#) document for CFRCs, as it gives a list of suggested parties, and a good first step is getting in touch with those groups.

The costs for a CFRC are eligible under the program. We strongly support this being a grassroots, locally-led process. Hopefully there will be broad support and participation from all local jurisdictions. There are some great examples of these committees already, whose contact information we can share with you.

**21. If a CWPP is still valid, but requires an update for an addition of land acquisition or new subdivision etc., is the updated portion required to be to the CWRP standard, or is the 2018 CWPP template to be used?**

This depends on the individual circumstance. It would be a conversation with the WPO or FMS to see where the community wants to go, what makes sense for you. There is also some advice in Table 1 of the Program & Application Guide.

Refer to Section 2 (Planning) in Table 1 in the Program & Application Guide for examples of when it may be appropriate to update an existing CWPP.

**22. When will the benchmark costs be ready?**

We are working on those, hoping to have a draft for our working group in the next few weeks. It will be providing a range of costs. Follow up with the WPO or FNESS FMS for more information on benchmarks for your area.

**23. Is the Home Partners program expected to be brought out of the 'pilot program' phase and be available for other jurisdictions to partake in/apply for funding for?**

Not as of yet. The Home Partners program is not in the 2021 Program & Application Guide. We are doing a pilot this fall/spring with the updated version. We intend that it will be fully rolled out in the summer of 2021. Hopefully by next year's program everyone will be able to access this as an eligible activity.

**24. Is the 30m zone around structures still excluded from CRI funding?**

Vegetation management for areas closest to structures can be applied for under FireSmart for Residential Areas, for planning, rebate program, off-site debris disposal, etc. under activity category 8 of Table 1 in the Program & Application Guide.

FireSmart Home Ignition Zone includes non-combustible zone, priority zones 1, 2 and 3, up to 100 metres from structures. Fuel management, as under activity category 9, is meant to be outside of these zones, beyond 100 metres from structures. There are some areas in the province where this does not necessarily work on the ground. We will work with applicants as the need arises.

**25. Are we to use the Construction Blue Book for costing for certain items? And do you account for extra costs due to remote locations in costing?**

Applicants propose the costs for all activities by providing an estimate and costs breakdown. If those costs seem reasonable, because cost-effectiveness is always a screen that we apply, then they would be funded. Geography and location and shipping options can be factors in costs. We do not have a requirement that the Blue Book be used for costing building improvements under the rebate program of activity category 8 - FireSmart for Residential Areas.

**26. Do you need a separate worksheet for initial base funding and then each Electoral Area?**

If you are submitting an application as a regional district—and a reminder this only applies to regional districts—you will need to submit an Application Form, potentially a Worksheet 2 (if within your base funding request you are asking for fuel management), and a Worksheet 1 for each electoral area you are including in the application, in order to apply for the additional, up to \$50,000 per electoral area for FireSmart activities only.

It could be that the regional district is proposing the same activities in all electoral areas, say a FireSmart campaign and rebates. We will require an individual Worksheet 1 for each electoral area even if it is the same activities which are being included.

Refer to Section 3 of the Program & Application Guide for more information on eligible projects and types of applications.