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# Biden-Harris Administration Invests Nearly \$200M from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to Reduce Wildfire Risk to Communities across State, Private and Tribal Lands

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**WASHINGTON, March 20, 2023** – Today, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service is investing \$197 million in 100 project proposals benefiting 22 states and seven tribes, as part of the [Community Wildfire Defense Grant program](#). Funded by President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Community Wildfire Defense Grant program helps communities, tribes, non-profit organizations, state forestry agencies and Alaska Native corporations plan for and mitigate wildfire risks as the nation faces an ongoing wildfire crisis.

USDA’s Forest Service worked with states and tribes through an interagency workgroup to develop the Community Wildfire Defense Grant program, originally [announced in June of 2022](#). Grant proposals underwent a competitive selection process that included review panels made up of state forestry agencies and tribal representatives.

The 100 grant proposals from 22 states and seven tribes that were impacted or threatened by wildfires were selected in the initial round of funding under the Community Wildfire Defense Grant



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“Thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this initial round of investments from the Community Wildfire Defense Grant program is yet another way that the Biden-Harris Administration is taking crucial steps to make communities safer and protect critical infrastructure and natural resources from the threat of destructive wildfires,” said Secretary Vilsack. “These grants will help to ensure that local communities, especially low-income and tribal communities, have the tools they need to keep communities safe, and that we are working together in the right places and at the right scale to confront this crisis.”

“Drought, climate change, increasing development in the wildland urban interface combined with years of excluding natural fire from the ecosystem have led to year-round fire activity and increased the destruction and scale of wildfires,” said Dr. Homer Wilkes, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. “These initial investments address wildfire risks on state, private and tribal land, and contribute to the ongoing work under the agency’s [Wildfire Crisis Strategy](#).”

“Projects were selected using a collaborative, inclusive process that engaged tribes and state forestry agencies,” said Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. “All projects include at least two of the primary selection criteria mandated in the legislation. And in all cases, these projects are taking critical steps to protect homes, property, businesses, and people’s lives from catastrophic wildfires.”

This initial round of investments will assist communities in developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans, key roadmaps for addressing wildfire risks locally, as well as fund immediate actions to lower the risk of wildfire on non-federal land for communities where a Community Wildfire Protection Plan is already in place.

Examples include:


- In California, the Kern County Fire Department will receive more than \$2.2 million for fire equipment and two transport trailers for their prescribed fire program. More than \$500,000 will train cadre members to provide planning, direction and technical expertise when using prescribed fire around high-risk communities. More than \$500,000 will provide the Kern Fire Safe Council with training for a project manager, outreach coordinator and home ignition zone assessors to help communities and homeowners reduce wildfire risk as part of their “Be Aware, Be Prepared: Defend Your Space!” project.
- In Washington, more than \$5.5 million will fund the Mt. Adams Resource Stewards, West Klickitat County Wildfire Defense Project to build approximately 35 miles of strategic fuel breaks around seven high-risk rural communities, along with an outreach and assistance program. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources, White Salmon Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project will receive \$400,000 to build a fuel break around the entire



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- In North Carolina, California Land and Lakes Resource Conservation and Development, North Carolina Forest Service and other partners, will receive approximately \$1.4 million to update and create Community Wildfire Protection Plans in counties with high wildfire risk. Each plan will identify areas to reduce hazardous fuels and recommend ways to protect structures in at-risk communities.

For more information on funded proposals by state, visit [www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/grants/funded-proposals](http://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/grants/funded-proposals).

Federal agencies, states, tribes and local communities are all working together to address the wildfire crisis. The Community Wildfire Defense Grant program will help communities in the wildland urban interface maintain resilient landscapes, create fire-adapted communities and ensure safe, effective wildfire response -- all core goals of the unifying [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#) .

The Forest Service will announce another round of funding later in 2023. The number of selected proposals in future rounds will depend on available funding.

Along with establishing the Community Wildfire Defense Grant program, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides an historic \$3.5 billion investment in wildfire management through a suite of programs aimed at reducing wildfire risks, detecting wildfires, instituting firefighter workforce reforms and increasing pay for federal wildland firefighters. This announcement also comes on the heels of the president's fiscal year 2024 budget, which proposes a permanent pay solution for wildland firefighters, increased capacity, vital health and well-being services, as well as funds for housing improvements.

A press kit is available at [www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/grants/press-kit](http://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/grants/press-kit).

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