



FireSafe Helena

*making Helena a wildfire adapted community
(Managed by TriCounty FireSafe Working Group)*

Property Owner's Guide to Cost-Share Funding

Treatment of the home ignition zone by removing hazardous fuels and retrofitting ignitable construction materials is one of the most proactive ways a property owner can reduce potential loss of life and property in the event of a wildfire. **FireSafe Helena** is a program funded through FEMA for areas within Helena to assist property owners through technical assistance and cost-share funding. The program is managed by TriCounty FireSafe Working Group (TCFSWG), a local non-profit committed to helping property owners reduce their ignition risks and co-exist with wildfire.

GETTING STARTED: It's easy! We encourage you to join us and rally your neighbors!

1. **Determine if your property is located within the project area.** Go to <http://tcfswg.org/firesafe-helena/> for a map of the project area and general program information. If your property is not within this area and you would like assistance through one of our other grants, please fill out a standard cost-share application at <http://tcfswg.org>
2. **Submit a FireSafe Helena Home Ignition Zone Safety Visit Assessment Application**
Applications are available at <http://tcfswg.org/firesafe-helena/> Once an application is submitted you will be scheduled for a **FREE** assessment.

WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE ELIGIBLE? Focusing on the Home Ignition Zone

Hazardous Fuels Removal: Removing and/or pruning trees and flammable vegetation and material within 100' of structures, including your neighbor's.

Home Hardening Ignition Resistant Construction Retrofits (IRC): The replacement of flammable construction materials with fire and ignition resistant materials that meet program guidelines. Examples include replacing wood shake roofs, wood siding, decks and fences. Hazardous fuels removal is a requirement for IRC approved projects.

HOW DOES THE COST-SHARE PROGRAM WORK?

1. **Timeline:**
 - 2020-Assessments and project proposals and cost estimates will be prepared. **Any activities conducted before a project agreement is signed will not be reimbursed.*
 - 2021-2022 Implementation of mitigation activities.
2. **Assessments:** Assessments are FREE!
 - On receipt of your application, one of our risk assessors will make an appointment to visit your property and discuss your wildfire mitigation concerns. The assessor will recommend an appropriate treatment, prepare general cost-estimates, and explain the cost-share guidelines.
 - At least one property owner is required to be in attendance during the assessment.
3. **Project Proposals:** If you decide you want to proceed with the recommended treatments, a TCFSWG representative will draft a project proposal specifying the work to be performed, estimated costs and other terms and conditions including cost-share requirements.
 - Individual proposals will be combined into an overall program proposal to be reviewed and approved by FEMA (winter 2020-2021) for final approval for implementation beginning spring 2021.
 - Individual project agreements will be finalized in spring 2021 and mitigation activities can begin and must be completed no later than December 2022.
4. **Cost-share Match: Approximately 65/35%.** The program is striving to cover 65% of the expenses, up to \$25,000 per property. The actual percentage will be determined after the Phase I benefit cost analysis. The cost-share will be determined before your project agreement is finalized.

- You may satisfy your cost-share requirement in cash or in-kind, or in some combination of the two. In-kind contributions include the value of work that property owners do themselves as part of their project (ie. liming, piling, brush removal).
- Mitigation Work:** You will be responsible for completing the work-doing it yourself, hiring a professional contractor or some combination thereof. Upon request, TCFSWG can provide a list of contractors who have indicated an interest in doing such projects. Inclusion on the list does not constitute an endorsement of listed contractors, or qualifications and experience. Getting competitive bids, checking references, and looking at previous work is highly recommended. *(If three or more adjacent property owners work together on hazardous fuels removal, TCFSWG can administer the contract if the property owners desire).*
 - After you have selected a contractor and before work begins, a meeting will be arranged among you, a TCFSWG representative and the contractor so all parties understand the work to be performed and the specifications to be met.
 - When the project is completed, you will need to request an on-site inspection by a TCFSWG representative, who will either verify that the work has been completed according to the specifications in the agreement specifications or will identify incomplete work items that need further action. When all work has been satisfactorily completed, you and the TCFSWG representative will both sign a project completion form.
 - Upon project completion, you will submit invoices showing that the work has been paid and documentation of property owner in-kind or cash share. Once the invoices and match are approved, you will be reimbursed for the agreed-upon amount of grant share.
 - Ignition Resistant Construction Mitigation:** Property owners are responsible for obtaining quotes, contracting, and paying for the services. Reimbursement of grant share will be made following the processes outlined above.
 - Mitigation Maintenance:** The property owner must agree to maintain the hazardous fuels modification/vegetation work for a minimum of 10 years or until they no longer own the property.

Process Summary

Task	Responsible Party		
	Property Owner	TCFSWG	Contractor
Assessment <i>(Summer/Fall 2020)</i>	X	X	
Project Proposal and Cost Estimates <i>(Fall 2020)</i>	X	X	
FEMA- Cost Benefit Analysis and Review		X	
Project Agreements <i>(Winter/Spring 2021)</i>	X	X	
Quotes	X		
Onsite Prework Meeting	X	X	X
Mitigation Work <i>(must be completed by Dec. 2022)</i>	X		X
Project Inspection	X	X	
Project Completion Form		X	
Invoice and match documentation submitted to TCFSWG	X		
Reimbursement to property owner from grant		X	
Maintenance for 10 years or until property changes ownership.	X		

Let's all do our part to live less dangerously from the threats of wildfire!

Contact **FireSafe Helena** at apps@tcfswg.org or visit the webpage at www.tcfswg.org.

