



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) Program

Update for the National Cohesive Strategy Workshop

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Agenda

- Synopsis of Round #1
- Overview of Program Changes from Round 1
- Synopsis of Round #2
- Timeline
- Feedback and Discussion

CWDG Program Purpose

- The CWDG is intended to help communities in the wildland urban interface (WUI) implement primarily the first two goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy:
 - **Resilient Landscapes:** Landscapes, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries, are resilient to fire, insect, disease, invasive species and climate change disturbances, in accordance with management objectives
 - **Fire Adapted Communities:** Human populations and infrastructure are as prepared as possible to receive, respond to, and recover from wildland fire
 - **Safe, Effective, Risk-based Wildfire Response:** All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions

Synopsis of Applications from Round 1

Synopsis of CWDG Round #1

Grant Applications

- 417 applications
- From 36 states and one territory
- From over 40 Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations
- Request >\$525 million
- 183 applications were for CWPP development or revision (44%)
- 234 applications were for projects (56%)

Synopsis of CWDG Round #1

Awarded Grants:

- 99 awarded applications for approximately \$197 million
- 22 States
- Seven Tribes
- 36 CWPP development or revision
- 63 projects

Synopsis of CWDG Round #1

Top three states for number of projects:

- California: 33
- Washington: 13
- North Carolina: 11

Top three states for funding:

- California: approximately \$112,000,000
- Washington: approximately \$24,000,000
- Oregon: approximately \$23,000,000

Awarded projects with highest amount of funding requested: \$10,000,000

Awarded project with smallest amount of funding requested: \$17,785

Synopsis of CWDG Round #1

- **100% met at least two of the three priorities of eligibility**
- **84% met all three priorities of eligibility**
- **86% met the definition of underserved communities**
- **54% contained a roofing ordinance**

Overview of CWDG Program Changes from Round 1

Grant Application Portal

All four Notice for Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) used the <https://cwdg.forestrygrants.org/> portal for application submittal

- For Round 2, the NOFOs were advertised in grants.gov as required
- NOFOs pointed applicants to apply in the cwdg.forestrygrants.org portal, which is where applicants found the actual application form
- Applicants were required to submit UEI # and certify they have an active SAM.gov registration

Low Income Communities

Applicants for Round 2 had access to community-level data for low-income, verses county-level used in Round 1

- A significant concern was the inability to analyze income status at a scale smaller than county-level
- Round 2 data was available for county, Tribe, and community income levels
- Low-income is based upon having a median household income less than 80% in comparison to the state, as well as national, median incomes, verses only state level incomes used during Round 1 (mitigating bias against states with a lower overall income)
- The Wildfire Risk to Communities project team developed a new, easy-to-use web tool that provides CWDG eligibility and scoring data for all U.S. communities, counties, and Tribal areas. The tool made it easier for underserved and lower-capacity communities to find the necessary data required to apply for grants. <https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool>

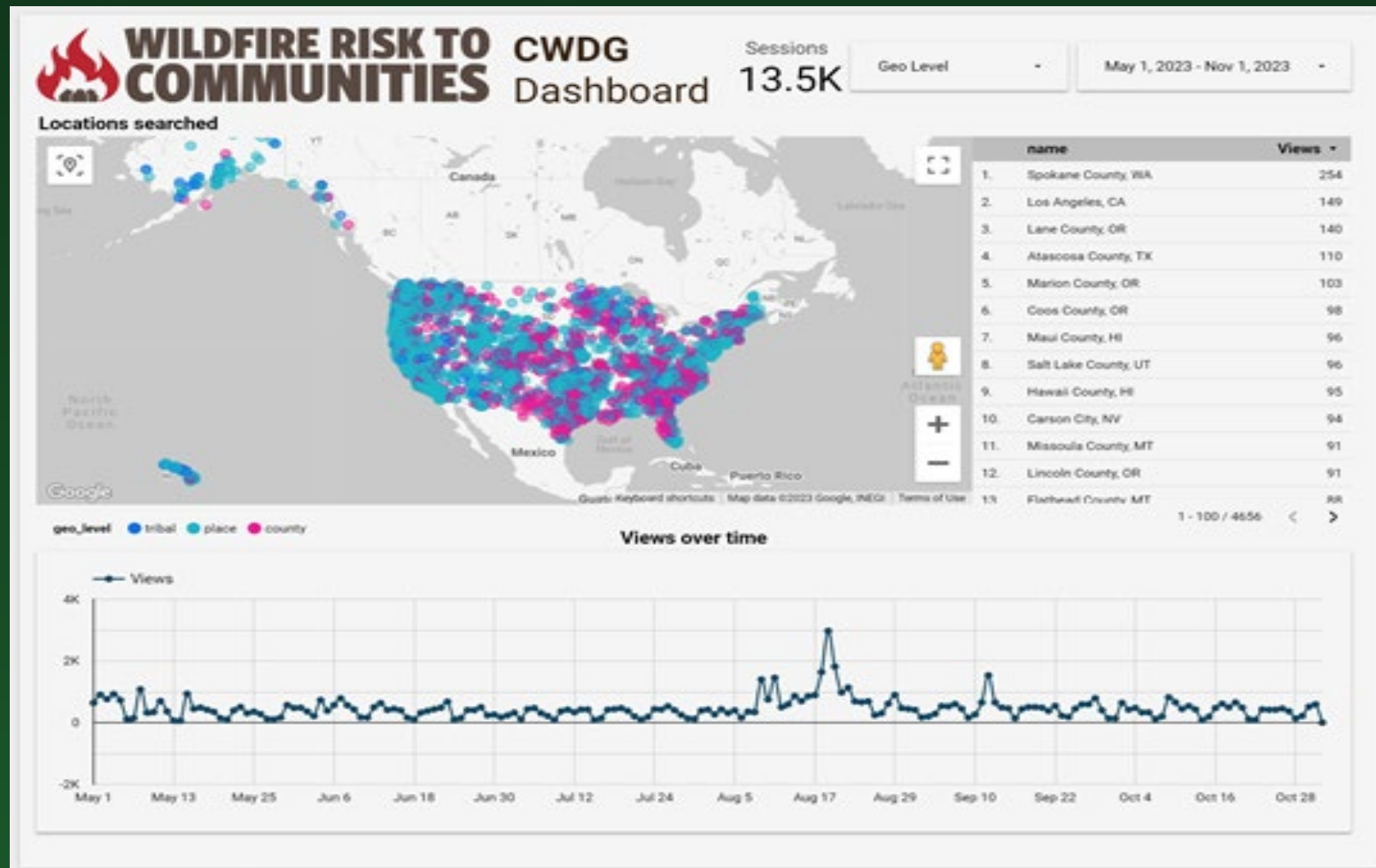
CWDG Tool

An easy-to-use, online dashboard provides data to include in your CWDG application.

www.wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool

- ✓ **Immediate information about eligibility status**
- ✓ **Populates key criteria (wildfire risk, low-income, and severe disaster declarations)**
- ✓ **Cost-share waiver eligibility**
- ✓ **GIS coordinates**
- ✓ **Copy and paste options to easily populate your application**

CWDG Tool in Wildfire Risk to Communities website



- Viewed more than 13,500 times since it was launched in May
- 4,656 unique locations searched

Underserved Communities

The determination of underserved community for Round 2 migrated from the Social Vulnerability Index to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

- CEJST was still in development during Round 1.
- This conversion complied with the Administration's EO.
- In addition, the NOFO was updated to include waivers for Tribes and Pacific Islands.
- Communities that meet the Low-Income definition are also eligible for the match waiver

Application Period

Application period was open for 90 days

- To allow applicants more time to develop proposals, the application period for Round 2 was >90 days, verses 60 days used in Round 1.
- A four (4) day extension to CWDG application period was provided due to an unexpected announcement of a four-day closure of grants.gov during the final days of CWDG application period

Prioritization of CWPPs

The CWDG workgroup suggested dedicating a minimum amount of Round 2 funding to target applications requesting the creation of CWPPs, or revisions to existing CWPPs, so long as they meet a minimum score.

- Only 3.4% of funding in Round 1 went to applicants requesting the development or enhancement of CWPPs.
- To apply for CWDG project funding communities must have a CWPP. However, not every community has a CWPP which creates disparity in funding opportunities.
- Feedback from multiple applicants and states asked for priority for the development of CWPPs during the early years of the CWDG funding. By doing so, these communities can do follow-up submissions for project implementation before the depletion of CWDG funding opportunities.
- Minimum score TBD based upon an analysis of applications and scores.

Use of Two Scoring Rubrics

Separate scoring rubrics were developed for CWPPs verses Projects

- The development of separate scoring rubrics are in place for CWPPs verses projects allowing for better clarification to both applicants and reviewers regarding the information needed to answer questions.

Clarification of Questions

Based upon feedback per the Headwaters Economics analysis and an After Action Review, several points of confusion were identified in Round 1 questions (such as impacted by a severe disaster)

- Round 2 adjustments made to address:
 - Updates to NOFO introducing additional clarity for applicants regarding important details expected within answers
 - Changes in the Round 2 scoring rubric

Community Navigators

CWDG served as the pilot program for a new initiative by the FS called Community Navigators, which assists communities in applying for FS funding opportunities.

- The three main goals of the Community Navigator project are to:
 1. Help Communities engage with the Forest Service;
 2. Assist Communities in applying for Grants; and
 3. Help Communities stay in compliance with Grant requirements and reporting.
- The organizations initially developing Community Navigators are The Watershed Center, Coalitions and Collaboratives (CoCo), and the Hispanic Access Foundation

CWDG “Office Hours”

- Bi-weekly two-hour timeslots
- No structured presentation
- Dedicated time for Q&A
- Attended by Cooperative Fire, Prevention and Community Mitigation, and Grants and Agreements staff
- Five were conducted; well attended
- Questions will be used to add to our FAQ document

Synopsis of Applications from Round 2

Synopsis of CWDG Round #2

Grant Applications

- 534 applications
 - 361 West
 - 100 South
 - 41 Tribal
 - 32 Northeast-Midwest
- From 38 states and 2 territories
- 223 CWPP development or revision
- 311 Implementation Projects

Proposed Timeline of CWDG Round #2

- **11/04/23 – Deadline for Round #2 Applications**
- **November thru December, 2023 – Verification process of applications**
- **January-February, 2024 – Review and Scoring of applications by regional and Tribal panels**
- **Late February thru March – Potential timeframe to release list of Round #2 awardees**
- **Late Spring/Early Summer 2024 – Release of Round #3?**

Feedback and Discussion

- **General Comments?**
- **What worked with Round #2?**
- **What needs improved before Round #3?**