

Preparing our island communities for wildfires through Hawai'i's Firewise® USA program

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The national Firewise® USA program offers a framework for neighbors in fire-prone areas to get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and communities. It also catalogs every community in the country that is working to build in wildfire resiliency and preparedness.

In partnership with the state's Division of Forestry & Wildlife (DOFAW) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) has been working with island communities across the state to help them achieve and maintain Firewise® USA recognition. The Hawai'i-Firewise approach is one of community building and capacity building within and between all of our communities. This includes actions that reduce wildfire hazards, such as promoting both individual and community-level responsibility for safer home construction and design, ongoing landscaping and vegetation maintenance, and taking actions that ensure effective emergency response.

If your community is interested, we can help you through the simple and achievable steps of the recognition process. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, our mission is to support your community wildfire preparedness efforts, so we work hard to secure grant and donated funds to provide these services at no cost to you or your community. Becoming a nationally-recognized Firewise® USA community is an excellent step toward safeguarding your family, home, and neighborhood. Additionally, the community organizers (residential leaders) across Hawai'i have opportunities to get together, support each other, and learn from one another on an on-going basis.

Benefits of becoming a Firewise® USA community

- ✓ Increase wildfire safety and resiliency/readiness
- ✓ Unite together as a community
- ✓ Build new partnerships
- ✓ Gain greater access to to federal grant funding for projects
- ✓ Be part of a growing movement in Hawai'i
- ✓ Have lots of fun!



FIREWISE USA®
Residents reducing wildfire risks



Learn more:

www.hawaiiwildfire.org/firewise-program
directors@hawaiiwildfire.org
808/885-0900

Steps to becoming (and staying) a Firewise® USA community

- 1 Form a Firewise Board**
 This will be the governing body that will be in contact with HWMO representatives throughout the application process. Residential leaders also have the opportunity to be active members of the Hawai'i-Firewise network once the recognition is granted. **One time requirement.**
- 2 Complete a Community Hazard Assessment**
 A half- or full- day assessment (depending on the size of the community) that HWMO and other wildfire experts can help complete. **Needs updating every 5 years.**
- 3 Create an Action Plan**
 After sitting down and reviewing the assessment with your committee and broader community, formulate an action plan to prioritize a list of risk reduction projects/investments, suggested homeowner actions, and education activities. **Needs updating every three years minimum.**
- 4 Hold a Firewise Day**
 Plan and carry out at least one wildfire risk reduction educational outreach event or related activity per year. Projects can range from workshops to vegetation reduction projects to evacuation drills. HWMO can help support the community's initial projects to get the community moving forward. The first Firewise Day could even be a community-wide Ready, Set, Go! Wildfire Preparedness Workshop put on by HWMO. **Per year basis for annual renewal.**
- 5 Invest a Minimum of \$27.20 Per Dwelling Unit**
 This includes cash, grants, and all volunteer hours (1 hour = \$27.20 based on the 2022 National Hourly Volunteer Rate) related to wildfire risk reduction actions for the calendar year. **Per year basis for annual renewal.**
- 6 Submit Application**
 The final application must be submitted through the Firewise USA portal on portal.firewise.org. DOFAW reviews the application and NFPA approves it. Then your community will be a nationally-recognized Firewise® community in good standing for the next calendar year. **Renewal applications are due every year in December.**

7 Join the ranks alongside 15 other Firewise-recognized communities across Hawai'i!
 Residential leaders are invited to participate in statewide meetings, technical workshops and trainings, and a Facebook community group, all coordinated and hosted by HWMO. They can also sign up for regular communications and newsletters, one-on-one check-in's, and reimbursements for community mitigation expenses when funding is available. By default, residential leaders are part of our Hawai'i-Firewise program so long as they are in active status with NFPA.

