



Partnering to build a Fire Adapted Community: A CWPP Engagement Guide

Identifying Collaborators for a Resilient, Fire-Adapted Community

This guide is designed to help county and neighborhood-scale Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) leaders identify and engage the right partners for meaningful, cross-sector collaboration. A strong CWPP reflects the values, priorities, and resources of the whole community. Getting the right people to the table is where that begins.

How to Use This Guide

- Use this resource when building your CWPP core team, mapping stakeholders, or identifying gaps in engagement.
- Not every partner needs to be engaged at once, prioritized based on your community's goals, project stage, and capacity.
- Each section below includes Key Partners, Their Role, and How to Engage.



Framework Acknowledgment: This resource is organized using the Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Framework, developed by the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FACNet). The framework highlights the interconnected roles that different sectors play in creating wildfire resilience across landscapes, built environments, and social systems.

Why Interdisciplinary Engagement Matters: Wildfire is not just a fire issue – it is a land use, public safety, health, infrastructure, environmental, economic, and social equity issue. If treated solely as a fire issue, the CWPP risks becoming an isolated plan. By engaging a wide range of partners—including those in planning, utilities, public health, education, emergency services, and community-based organizations—your CWPP becomes more holistic, actionable, and grounded in the realities of your community.

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Principles of Effective Engagement

- Meet people where they are: choose accessible locations, times, and formats.
- Acknowledge history: address mistrust or inequities in past planning processes.
- Share power: give community leaders and organizations meaningful decision-making roles.
- Provide mutual benefits: offer stipends, food, childcare, or recognition for participation.
- Celebrate success: highlight accomplishments and shared wins to build momentum.

Infrastructure, Utilities & Built Environment

Key Partners:

- County Public Works Department
- County Planning Department
- County Building & Permitting Office
- Local Public Utility Districts (PUDs) and cooperatives (electric, water, gas)
- County GIS and IT Departments
- Telecom providers
- Local/Regional Contractors & Builders Associations
- Insurance industry representatives (e.g., WA FAIR Plan, brokers, Insurance Advisory Boards, Office of Insurance Commission)
- State Department of Transportation
- Water Districts

Their Role: Ensure safe and resilient infrastructure, enforce fire-safe construction standards, harden utilities, and maintain access to evacuation routes. Influence policy, manage risk data, and help safeguard critical systems.

How to Engage: Include in technical advisory committees, request vulnerability and infrastructure data, coordinate on development codes, and co-develop fire-resilient standards.

Landscape & Fuels Management

Key Partners:

- WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildfire & Forest Health Divisions
- U.S. Forest Service & Bureau of Land Management (if applicable)
- County Noxious Weed Board or Vegetation Management Program
- Local Conservation District
- Tribal Natural Resources Departments
- Large landowners & Small Forest owners
- Private industrial forest landowners
- Watershed Councils & Salmon Recovery Lead Entities
- Fire Districts and County Fire Marshall

Their Role: Reduce hazardous fuels, restore ecosystems, protect water resources, and implement cross-boundary treatment strategies. Provide technical expertise and support for long-term resilience.

How to Engage: Align CWPP priorities with agency land management goals, collaborate on grant applications, share monitoring data, and host field tours and workshops for joint planning.

Community Engagement & Leadership

Key Partners:

- Local Firewise USA® or Fire Adapted Community representatives
- County Commissioners and Council Members
- Tribal Council representatives
- Local Granges, Lions Clubs, and neighborhood associations
- County Libraries & Extension Offices (e.g., WSU Extension)
- Local faith-based and cultural organizations
- Local Equity & Inclusion Offices or cultural liaisons

Their Role: Amplify community voices, ensure equity, and provide trusted leadership. Help build buy-in, strengthen communication, and foster volunteerism.

How to Engage: Establish advisory committees, co-host neighborhood meetings, provide translation and interpretation services, and offer leadership stipends or recognition programs.

Prevention & Education

Key Partners:

- County Code Enforcement
- County or Regional Fire Marshal's Office
- School District Safety Coordinators
- WSU Extension Forestry and Fire Educators
- Utility Vegetation Management Staff
- WA Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network members
- Local Conservation Districts
- Fire Districts
- County Department of Health and Public Safety

Their Role: Deliver public education, enforce ignition-reducing codes, and provide professional expertise in wildfire prevention. Develop youth and public education strategies.

How to Engage: Collaborate on safety campaigns, integrate wildfire topics into school curricula, co-brand outreach materials, and host prevention-focused training and events.

Public Health & Vulnerable Populations

Key Partners:

- County Public Health Department
- County Emergency Management Division
- Area Agency on Aging and Disability Services
- Local Hospitals and EMS Providers
- Air Quality Management Agency (e.g., NW Clean Air Agency)
- Behavioral Health and Crisis Response Providers
- Tribal Health Services

Their Role: Address smoke impacts, shelter operations, and health risks for vulnerable populations. Provide critical health guidance and support during emergencies.

How to Engage: Include health leaders in CWPP committees, coordinate messaging on smoke and sheltering, establish plans for continuity of care, and ensure resource access for at-risk residents.

Recovery & Resilience Planning

Key Partners:

- County Emergency Management Division
- VOADs & COADs (e.g., Red Cross, Team Rubicon, faith-based disaster networks)



- Community Foundations & United Ways
- County Assessor's Office (for post-fire property valuation and tax relief)
- Behavioral health and trauma recovery programs
- Local economic development agencies

Their Role: Facilitate equitable recovery, coordinate relief services, rebuild infrastructure, support trauma recovery, and connect communities with financial resources.

How to Engage: Formalize MOUs for post-fire coordination, involve partners in scenario planning, integrate CWPP action plans with recovery frameworks, and host recovery planning workshops.

Land Use, Regulations, & Policy Alignment

Key Partners:

- County Planning & Zoning Department
- County Long Range & Comprehensive Plan Coordinators
- County and Tribal Legal Counsel
- County Boards of Commissioners or Planning Commissions
- Municipal Planners from incorporated cities
- Regional Planning Organizations

Their Role: Integrate wildfire resilience into land use codes, zoning decisions, and comprehensive planning. Provide legal expertise and ensure consistency across jurisdictions.

How to Engage: Collaborate on updates to land use codes, embed wildfire goals into comprehensive plans, and create cross-agency working groups on fire-safe development.

Home & Parcel-Level Mitigation

Key Partners:

- County Fire Marshal or Prevention Office
- Fire Districts & Wildland Coordinators
- Local Conservation District (cost-share & technical assistance)
- Firewise USA site leaders
- Local grant administrators (for chipping, defensible space, home retrofits)
- Neighborhood associations and HOAs

Their Role: Support defensible space creation, home hardening, retrofitting, and resident-level mitigation. Offer cost-share funding, technical support, and training.



How to Engage: Provide grants and incentives, organize community mitigation workdays, train local contractors and volunteers, and establish peer-to-peer learning programs.

Emergency Response & Evacuation

Key Partners:

- Local Fire Districts and Mutual Aid Partners
- County Sheriff's Office (evacuations & incident command)
- 911 Dispatch and Emergency Communications Centers
- WA Emergency Management Division (for coordination and grants)
- School Districts (school closures, shelters, transportation)
- Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs)
- Volunteer organizations (e.g., CERT, ham radio clubs, animal evacuation teams)

Their Role: Lead incident command, ensure evacuation execution, manage communication systems, and coordinate across agencies to protect lives and property.

How to Engage: Integrate partners into evacuation and response planning, conduct joint drills, review and test communication systems, and plan transportation/shelter strategies for vulnerable populations.

Safety & Evacuation

Key Partners:

- Emergency managers and evacuation coordinators
- Public works (road access, signage, maintenance)
- Transit and paratransit agencies
- School districts and shelter providers
- Volunteer social service groups

Their Role: Develop realistic, inclusive evacuation plans; maintain evacuation routes and signage; ensure accessible transportation support services; operate shelters; and coordinate social support during evacuations. Provide critical knowledge on local infrastructure capacity and vulnerable population needs.

How to Engage: Convene cross-agency evacuation planning workshops, conduct tabletop and full-scale evacuation drills, integrate evacuation needs into county and school transportation plans, establish agreements for transportation/sheltering services, develop multilingual communication strategies, and test messaging through community outreach campaigns.



Evacuation success depends on inclusive, realistic planning. These partners help ensure safe evacuation routes, clear communication, and shelter access for everyone – including those with mobility or language barriers.

Additional Partners to Consider

- **Youth Engagement:** 4-H, Scouts, youth climate/wildfire councils.
- **Agriculture:** Large agriculture landowners and Advocacy organizations for farm workers
- **Business & Economic Sector:** Chambers of commerce, local employers, tourism boards.
- **Media & Communications:** Local radio, newspapers, trusted messengers.
- **Academic & Research Partners:** Local universities, wildfire research labs.

