

Oregon State Fire Marshal

Defensible Space Assessment Incentive Reimbursement Pilot Program Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Creating defensible space — reducing or eliminating the things around a home and property that can catch fire — enhances community resilience and protects against wildfire damage. The Oregon State Fire Marshal's **Defensible Space Assessment Incentive Reimbursement Pilot Program** provides eligible participants in selected high-wildfire hazard and socially vulnerable communities with \$250 to help offset defensible space improvement costs. This program incentivizes proactive wildfire prevention and empowers Oregonians to create defensible space around their homes and properties, supported by *limited, one-time funding*.

ELIGIBILITY

Community Selection Criteria

The program incentivizes Oregon communities identified as having high fire exposure or areas located near a wildfire OSFM was mobilized to in the past 10 years. The selection is based on a comprehensive analysis, incorporating data from the Social Vulnerability Index by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the 2018 Pyrologix report, and mobilizations by OSFM to wildfires that directly threatened life and property in the past 10 years.

The \$250 funding level was determined based on the national volunteer wage of \$31/hour, reimbursing participants for about eight hours of defensible space work.

Participant Eligibility

- Participants must live in a selected high-hazard community.
 - Homeowners, renters, and property owners are eligible.
- Participants must request and receive a defensible space assessment by members of the fire service or OSFM personnel.
- To qualify for the incentive, participants must have at least two areas of improvement as identified on the OSFM's defensible space assessment checklist, including:
 - Flammable vegetation is removed from growing directly under the eaves - the edge of a roof that sticks out or hangs over the building's side. A minimum of five feet from the structure is recommended.
 - Leaves, conifer needles, deadwood, bark mulch, and other debris are removed from the surface of, around, and below decks and fences.
 - Trees spaced and pruned following the example on [page 2](#). Trim trees, shrubs, or bushes by cutting away dead or overgrown branches or stems.
 - Leaves, conifer needles, deadwood, bark mulch, and other debris are removed from within 100 feet of the structure or to the property line.
 - Fire-resistive plants are spaced within the designated defensible space area. Grass is mowed to less than four inches.
 - Firewood piles and lumber are at least 30 feet from any structure.
 - Combustible vegetation is 10 feet away from permanent propane tanks.
- Participants that qualify must opt-in to receive the \$250 incentive payment.

*Eligible Communities**

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Ashland | Hermiston | Pine Grove |
| Bay City | Huntington | Pine Hollow |
| Beavercreek | Idanha | Prairie City |
| Biggs Junction | Idaville | Prineville |
| Black Butte Ranch | Independence | Redmond |
| Boardman | Irrigon | Redwood |
| Bonanza | Jasper | Richland |
| Brogan | John Day | Riddle |
| Burns | Junction City | Riverside |
| Butte Falls | Juniper Canyon | Rogue River |
| Canyon City | Kerby | Rose Lodge |
| Canyonville | Kirkpatrick | Rowena |
| Cascade Locks | La Grande | Salem |
| Cascadia | La Pine | Scotts Mills |
| Cave Junction | Lincoln City | Selma |
| Cayuse | Lonerock | Shady Cove |
| Central Point | Lyons | Spray |
| Chenoweth | Madras | Springfield |
| Cherry Grove | Medford | Takilma |
| Chiloquin | Mehama | Talent |
| Cottage Grove | Merlin | Terrebonne |
| Crooked River Ranch | Metolius | The Dalles |
| Culver | Mill City | Tillamook |
| Days Creek | Mission | Trail |
| Dayville | Mitchell | Tri-City |
| Detroit | Monument | Tutuilla |
| Dufur | Moro | Tygh Valley |
| Eagle Crest | Mosier | Ukiah |
| Eagle Point | Mount Hood | Umatilla |
| Elgin | Mulino | Vale |
| Estacada | Neotsu | Wamic |
| Eugene | New Hope | Warm Springs |
| Fort Klamath | Newberg | White City |
| Fossil | Oakridge | Williams |
| Garibaldi | O'Brien | |
| Gates | Odell | |
| Glendale | Ontario | |
| Glide | Oregon Shores | |
| Gold Hill | Paisley | |
| Gopher Flats | Parkdale | |
| Grants Pass | Pendleton | |
| Grass Valley | Phoenix | |
| Halfway | Pilot Rock | |

One gift card per person (i.e., if a person owns more than one eligible property, they can only receive one gift card).

**Eligible Communities:*

As of December 2nd, 2024, there are two ways to meet the spatial criteria for financial incentive eligibility:

1. Being within an eligible community as defined below, and/or
2. Being within 3 miles of an area covered by a fire perimeter that was part of an OSFM immediate response mobilization or a conflagration in the past 10 years.

The eligible communities are the city/census-designated place (CDP) boundaries (city limits) plus a 3-mile buffer of wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas around the community, minus areas that overlap with neighboring communities as they may have different Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) or wildfire vulnerability ranking. If an area has high SVI and high wildfire vulnerability or it's within the footprint of an OSFM mobilization within 10 years, it is eligible. The SVI is based on [social vulnerability index data from the CDC](#).

PROGRAM DETAILS

Defensible Space Assessment

- [Participants can request a free defensible space assessment here.](#)
- The assessment will be conducted by a trained professional to evaluate the property's vulnerability to wildfires and provide recommendations for creating or improving defensible space.

Incentive Payment

- Upon completion of the defensible space assessment, eligible participants will receive a \$250 Visa® prepaid gift card¹ by mail from the OSFM. **Please allow up to eight weeks for the gift card to arrive by mail.**
- The \$250 Visa® prepaid gift card is intended to encourage residents to implement the recommendations received during the assessment to enhance the defensibility of their properties.

Effective Date

This program became effective on March 11, 2024, and the new criteria will become effective on December 2, 2024.

Program Administration

The incentive payment program will be administered by the Oregon State Fire Marshal. Local fire agency personnel will collaborate in certain areas by providing participants with free defensible space assessments.

Funding Allocation

Program funds were made possible by Senate Bill 762.

¹ Visa is a registered trademark of Visa International Service Association.

Public Awareness and Outreach

The Oregon State Fire Marshal will conduct a public awareness campaign to inform Oregonians about the program and encourage participation.

CONCLUSION

The OSFM Defensible Space Assessment Incentive Reimbursement Program is a crucial step toward building a more resilient community in the face of increasing wildfire risks. By empowering Oregonians to take proactive measures, we will reduce the impact of wildfires on lives, property, and the environment.