

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 50 Oregon communities identified as having the highest fire exposure risk. The selection is based on a comprehensive analysis, incorporating data from the Social Vulnerability Index by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the 2018 Pyrologix report.

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*

Boardman	Gopher Flats	Parkdale
Bonanza	Grants Pass	Phoenix
Burns	Halfway	Prineville
Butte Falls	Hermiston	Redmond
Canyon City	Irrigon	Riddle
Canyonville	John Day	Rogue River
Cave Junction	La Grande	Talent
Central Point	La Pine	Terrebonne
Chenoweth	Madras	The Dalles
Chiloquin	Merlin	Trail
Cottage Grove	Metolius	Tri-City
Culver	Mission	Tutuilla
Days Creek	Mosier	Vale
Elgin	Mount Hood	Warm Springs
Fossil	New Hope	White City
Glendale	Odell	Williams
Gold Hill	Ontario	

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

*The community polygons are the city/census designated place (CDP) boundaries (city limits) plus a 1.5-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. The formula for determining eligibility is the **SVI rank + wildfire vulnerability rating rank = eligible communities through a formula combining both factors**. If an area has high SVI and high wildfire vulnerability, it is eligible. These are based on [social vulnerability index data from the CDC](#) and the [2018 Pyrologix report](#) which ranks the top 400 communities in Oregon susceptible to wildfire.

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.**

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

- 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 will be effective on March 11, 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.

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.