



Community Service Project Ideas

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NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards



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Make an important contribution in helping your community be better prepared for future wildfires. These community service project ideas will guide you in finding an activity that fits your objectives, interests and abilities; while making the place where you live a safer place.

Projects that reduce wildfire risk and increase preparedness can be accomplished by a broad range of ages; and come in a variety of time commitments ranging from a few hours to an entire day or weekend. You might be asking - what can I do in one day to be safer from wildfire? And the answer is a lot!

To get you started, more than two dozen project ideas have been developed; most can be accomplished without power tools or monetary costs. Connect with your local fire department, forestry agency or emergency manager to find out if they have projects you can participate in.

Wildfire safety also means making others aware, and there are plenty of options to help you accomplish that too. Make your actions

speaking loudly and reduce your community's wildfire risk. To make an even larger impact enlist the help of friends, a sports team or youth organization and get something GREAT accomplished! Challenge a school club or faith based group to develop a project too, and see who can make the biggest changes.

Remember to ALWAYS request and receive permission from a land/homeowner before doing any type of work or activity on all property that's not owned by your family!

Before getting started, make sure everyone has reviewed these safety gear and safety tips information (Hyperlink to: <http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/outdoors/wildland-fires/national-wildfire-community-preparedness-day>)



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← **30ft** →

Work with the local fire department or forestry agency to locate a neighborhood with a wildfire risk and coordinate a project at multiple homes and rake and remove pine needles and dry leaves within a minimum of 5 feet of the homes foundation. As time permits – continue up to a 30 foot distance around the home.



- » Dispose of collected debris in appropriate trash receptacles.
- » Get out your measuring tape and see how close wood piles are located to the home. If closer than 30 feet, they need to be relocated and moved at least 30' away from structures.
- » Sweep porches and decks clearing them of leaves and pine needles. Rake under decks, porches, sheds and play structures and dispose of debris.
- » Mow grasses to a height of four inches or less.
- » Collect downed tree limbs and broken branches in your community and take them to a disposal site.

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EVACUATION PLANNING PROJECTS

- » Visit the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association ([hyperlink to rmiia.org](http://rmiia.org)) and download free home inventory software and help elderly or disabled relatives videotape their possessions; to ensure they'll have the documentation needed to replace belongings that could be lost in a fire.
- » Develop and practice a home evacuation plan ([hyperlink to ready.gov](http://ready.gov))
- » Create a Family Communication Plan (available in both English and Spanish) ([hyperlink to www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/plan](http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/plan))
- » Build or update a 72-hour kit ([hyperlink to ready.gov/build-a-kit](http://ready.gov/build-a-kit))
- » Contact your local Office of Emergency Management and ask if your jurisdiction requires individuals to register cell phones to receive emergency notifications on mobile devices and share the information with everyone you know
- » Organize an outreach campaign to reach teen babysitters and the families they work with about the importance of learning the family's emergency plan and what to do if a wildfire starts, or an evacuation issued, while babysitting
- » Work with neighbors to develop a phone/text tree that can be used to alert everyone about a wildfire or evacuation order
- » Volunteer to help elderly or disabled neighbors build an evacuation kit

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HELP COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS

- » Help neighbors identify if their home address number can be seen from the street? If not, help them trim overgrown vegetation covering or blocking the numbers. Your actions will help responding firefighters
- » Inquire with your local Chapter of the American Red Cross if they need assistance helping prepare their resources for disasters
- » Help a family build an evacuation kit for each member of their household
- » Build pet evacuation kits and donate them to your local animal shelter for distribution ([hyperlink to our new pet evacuation kit](#))
- » Build horse evacuation kits and donate to the local organization that shelters horses during wildfires ([hyperlink](#))
- » Solicit donations of pet food and supplies for local shelters that board animals during wildfires
- » Help elderly or disabled neighbors register their cell phone to receive public alert/emergency notifications (contact the local emergency manager to get details on local alert processes)
- » Hold a fund raising activity and contribute the proceeds to:
 - » Your local volunteer fire department
 - » A local agency that shelters and feeds pets during a wildfire
 - » The local Community Animal Response Team or national Disaster Animal Response Team (NDART)
 - » Build wildland firefighter comfort kits that will be donated to a volunteer fire department: Include lip balm w/sunscreen, bandana, small tube of sunscreen, small individual pack of tissues, wrapped mints or hard candy

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- » Distribute wildfire safety information to neighbors, or staff a table at a grocery or hardware store (other high-traffic locations work too) and distribute free Firewise and emergency preparedness materials (hyperlink to <http://firewise.org/Catalog.aspx>)
- » Help an elderly relative or neighbor get emergency numbers and the names of close relatives entered into their cell phones; and in large font post their phone number and street address above their home landline so it can easily be seen when providing information to emergency dispatchers
- » Educate neighbors on the importance of screening patio and deck areas with wire screening no larger than 1/8" mesh to help keep embers out of that area during a fire.
- » Work with a homeowner association or local park to create a demonstration garden and signage that promotes the types of local fire resistant plants in your region. For a list of Firewise plants visit firewise.org/Information/Research-and-Guidance/Firewise-Landscaping-and-Plant-s.asp
- » Develop a wildfire buddy system in the neighborhood where you live. A buddy system is a prearranged process where residents agree to check on neighbors animals during a wildfire in case you aren't home. Agree to do the same for them. Exchange information on veterinarians and have a permission slip put in your file at the vet, authorizing your "buddy" to get necessary emergency treatment for your animal should you not be able to be reached. If someone watches your animals while you're family is on vacation, talk with them about your disaster plan that should be used to evacuate and care for your animals in your absence
- » Organize a babysitter evacuation training meeting and teach parents the importance of sharing their evacuation and communication plan with their babysitters.

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- » Solicit a donation of sand and sandbags from a local company and get classmates to fill sandbags that will be distributed to residents with a post-fire flooding risk
- » Contact the local water department to see if there's a project you can participate in to help with watershed issues
- » Connect with the state and/or national forestry district office to ask about reseeding, mulch, straw wattles or silt fence projects that you could help with



DISCLAIMER

NFPA has not assessed or evaluated individual student plans for community projects, activities or initiatives and in no way implies endorsement or approval of a project, its safety or effectiveness, and the supporters disclaim all liability in connection with any such project, activity or initiative.

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