

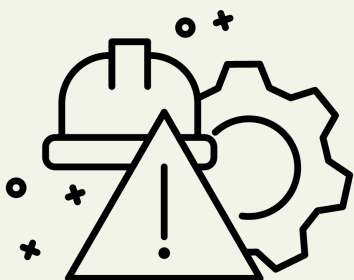
THE FIREWOOD BANK COMMONS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTING FIREWOOD BANK STORIES AND RESOURCES



"Help Build the Start-up Toolkit" discussion

Join the National Wood Bank Project and Larry Brockman from the EPA Burn Wise Program on January 25th at 2pm EST for a discussion on the Wood Bank Start-up Toolkit. Do you have advice for wood banks just starting out? What do you wish you had known? Or are you just starting up and you have questions for wood banks that have been at this for years? Come share your questions and stories and help us build a Start-up Toolkit for future wood banks! [Register here.](#)



POLL: Interest in an online safety training

We'd like to gauge interest in an online safety training for firewood bank leadership. [Click here](#) to take a quick poll!

New Resource Sheet for Firewood Banks

FIREWOOD BANK RESOURCES

ASK YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS TO VISIT!

WHY INVITE YOUR CONGRESSPERSON TO VISIT?

Representatives of the district that your firewood bank serves should be aware of the great work that is happening among their constituents, as well as the urgent need that makes the existence of your firewood bank necessary. A visit from your congressperson can help you raise your profile, raise money, get more volunteers and more firewood – and possibly get more federal funding for the Forest Service to keep providing grants to firewood banks. Looking for more inspiration? We used the National Alliance to End Homelessness' checklist to help formulate the steps in this guide!

1. PLAN AND SEND AN INVITATION

Talk to the organizers and volunteers about the benefits of having a high profile visit from your member of Congress. Do you want them to know about heating needs in your community? Do you want media coverage that could help you get more volunteers, donations or firewood? Designate a point person to call the local district office of the member of Congress and ask about their process and which staff person you should deal with. If you don't know who your member of Congress is, locate them with [Common Cause's search tool](#). AGH staff can help with any of these steps as well.

2. SCHEDULE

It can take many months for a visit to happen so be patient and don't be afraid to keep following up with their office. Ideally, a visit can happen when you have a lot of volunteers processing or distributing wood, so they can see your firewood bank in action. A staffer might tell you that they'll "be in touch with more information," or that "We'll give you a call back later." Don't be discouraged! If they can't come during one of your scheduled volunteer days, consider organizing your volunteers to come whenever the member of Congress can come. Try to work around their schedule.

3. PREPARE & HOST

Reach out to local news organizations to let them know a member of Congress is visiting. You can use this template for a press release. Be sure to prepare some key messages you want to convey. If you received Forest Service funding (via AGH) be sure to tell them about how that helped your operation and to thank them for making that happen (even if they weren't directly involved). Tell them that future funding is vital for many banks to expand and carry on. Be prepared to turn off all noisy equipment when the member of Congress is there. Be sure to capture some photos or video footage of the visit.

4. FOLLOW UP

Be sure to thank the congressperson and their staff with a letter or email. Make sure they see any media coverage or coverage in your own newsletter. Keep in touch with the staffer periodically to let them know how many families you served each year!

ALLIANCE FOR GREEN HEAT

Questions? Email info@forgreenheat.org

Now is the time to contact your member of congress!

We recently added a new resource sheet for firewood banks, "[Ask Your Member of Congress to Visit](#)," to help you do just that.

Need help formulating outreach materials? Want us to hand deliver a letter to your congressperson's office on Capitol Hill? [Email us!](#)

Here are more examples of the resource sheets available on our [resources page](#):

- [Fire Department](#)
- [Volunteering 101](#)
- [Shed Building](#)

Think your firewood bank volunteers would like to receive this newsletter?

Send them to [this link](#) to sign up for THE FIREWOOD BANK COMMONS.



The Wood Shed

Profile in Compassion: Pattiann Bennett

This month we feature Pattiann Bennett, leader of the St Michael & All Angels Wood Ministry in Fortine, Montana.

[Read it here!](#)

"We're doing something for someone else. It feels good to serve. Fun is a motivator... We have a lot of fun at the Wood Bank."



The Mystery Volunteer

Submitted by Ed Hultgren, with the SURV Firewood Bank out of Ozark, Missouri.

A short story about a mystery volunteer that, after one text, bucks an entire load of logs for their local firewood bank...even though the leader has never met them! Sparked your curiosity? [Find the story here.](#)

Firewood Banks in the News

Volunteers in Surry help keep some Maine homes warm for another winter

"We would love to say 'yes' to everybody that calls us up, but we just can't do that. We don't have the inventory to do that. So, what we're trying to encourage people in outlying communities... wherever you might be from and you don't have a program like ours, get one started in your community, let your church take care of it. Let your town get involved. Individuals like us can just jump in and get involved."



Fortine, MT wood bank

Firewood banks helping

earns grant



"The wood bank has provided supplemental firewood to low-income veterans, the elderly, the disabled and families since 2011. It is operated completely by volunteers and donations all these years."



Americans who can't afford to heat their homes, PA

"“We see the need constantly. If you look at the economy, people are hurting. Electricity is skyrocketing, home fuel oil is skyrocketing.”
Lawler added.”



"The firewood bank Lawler runs serves Blair County, Pennsylvania, a community where the median income hovers around \$28,000. Calls come in from residents across the area struggling to pay their energy bills."

Wood banks looking for help this winter



"All of the existing wood banks are distributing their wood almost as quickly as they can produce it and dry it," said Dr. Jessica Leahy.



Do you have firewood bank stories to tell or resources to share?

[Email us!](#)

THANKS FOR READING...

**THE FIREWOOD
BANK COMMONS**

VISIT FIREWOODBANKS.ORG FOR MORE INFO

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