



**ALLIANCE
FOR GREEN HEAT**
low carbon, renewable and local

Guidelines for Firewood Banks Receiving Funding from the Alliance for Green Heat

Updated May 2024

Required Activities

Bank Account and Financial Information: Firewood banks must have a bank account, or have a local fiscal sponsor, and unique entity identifier (UEI) to receive funding. If your wood bank does not already have any of these, please see the application requirements section for information on how to get them.

Safety plan. Firewood banks will have a basic safety plan that includes: (1.) Name of a safety coordinator to oversee training (2.) An explanation of how volunteers and workers are trained; (3.) Assurance that all volunteers and workers are using appropriate personal protective equipment and (4.) Posting of a [Firewood Bank Emergency Information Sheet](#).

Use of Safety Equipment: Firewood banks will have on site (or purchased with grant funds) loggers first aid kit that meets OSHA Standard 1910.266 Appendix A (an example can be found [here](#)) and will require volunteers and/or staff to wear appropriate personal protective equipment while using dangerous equipment.

- Gloves when stacking wood.
- Boots, gloves, and eye protection when splitting wood with a maul or axe.
- Boots, gloves, eye, ear, and head (helmet) protection when using a wood splitter.
- Boots, gloves, eye, ear head (helmet), and chaps (leg protection) when using a chainsaw.

Age Restrictions: Firewood banks shall require all firewood bank volunteers or staff working shall require all firewood bank volunteers or staff working with dangerous woodcutting tools and equipment, such as chain saws and splitters, to be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

Liability Waivers: Firewood banks must have their volunteers and/or workers sign a liability waiver. (The liability waiver must also include holding Alliance for Green Heat harmless.) This protects you, your firewood bank, and the Alliance for Green Heat, in the event of an accident and helps to educate and warn about potential dangers. Click [here](#) to view our sample liability waiver that we encourage you to use, or you can add the Alliance for Green Heat to the liability form you use and send a copy to us.

Testing and Reporting Moisture Content of Wood: Firewood banks must have moisture meters to regularly test the moisture content (MC) of their wood in order to deliver seasoned wood ((less than 20% MC). More information can be found [here](#). Grant funds will cover the purchase of one or more moisture meters. AGH sample sheet for banks to start with is [here](#).

Delivering Seasoned Wood: Firewood banks must have and use moisture meters and use to track firewood moisture and do their utmost to deliver seasoned wood (less than 20% MC) during the heating season. Wood that is higher than 20% MC burns poorly, produces less heat, and causes damage to air quality (particulate matter) and chimneys (creosote). For homes in towns or suburbs, the moisture content requirements are even more important, as the airshed for those homes is shared by more people.

Education and Outreach: Firewood banks agree, to the extent they can: (1.) offer educational information to recipients of firewood about how to burn wood as cleanly and safely as possible and to (2.) provide recipient households with information about how to sign up for free or subsidized energy audits and weatherization services. AGH will provide sample literature and information about energy audits and weatherization in your state.

Impacts of Grant: We encourage you to share stories and photos about how this grant has benefitted your firewood bank. We will provide a sample press release you can use to help spread the word about your work, attract more volunteers, get more free wood, and achieve your other goals.

Contract and Reporting: Firewood banks must sign a contract that spells out the terms of the grant and basic reporting requirements. In addition, all firewood banks must provide an interim and final report describing how the money was spent and what was achieved. shall submit an interim financial report within two weeks of receiving the grant funds, showing that at least 80% of the funds were spent. A second, final report is required upon completion of the project. Both reports shall be submitted via our online reporting platform.

Other Recommended Activities

Deliver kindling too! The dirtiest part of a wood stove fire and sometimes the most frustrating too, is getting a good fire going. A lot of folks simply don't use enough kindling, often because they don't have it handy. So, consider delivering lots of kindling (in boxes or paper bags?). Splitting wood usually makes lots of kindling anyway, so keep that stuff, let it dry too, and give it to folks with all the big pieces.

Weatherization services

Many low-income households are eligible to get [free weatherization services](#) that include furnace tune-ups, better insulation, and things like energy saving light bulbs, low-flow shower heads, etc. [Check this map](#) to see the eligibility rules and sign-up process in your state. We urge wood banks to help recipients of firewood check their eligibility and help them get signed up. This is one of the best

things you can do for homes struggling to pay utility bills and a great job for one or more volunteers to focus on. Remember, firewood goes much further in a home that is not constantly leaking its warm air!

Please let us know if any of your firewood recipients have had a recent energy audit, we would like to be in touch with them to see if the auditor inspected their wood stoves. Many auditors don't, and AGH will work with energy audit companies to encourage them to include stove inspections in their audits.

Home Fire Safety: Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors save lives. Many fire departments and/or American Red Cross offices are working to install free smoke alarms and carbon dioxide detectors and may be interested in working with your firewood bank. We urge you to check to see if homes you deliver firewood to have smoke and CO detectors.

Woodstove safety: In addition to delivering seasoned wood to needy households, we urge you to take additional steps to see if the wood stove of the homes receiving wood are not accidents waiting to happen. Many stoves in homes are very old, were self-installed and have seen better days. Some old stoves are still safe, and others are not safe at all due to furniture or firewood too close to the stove, smoke leaking into the home or other issues. You may be able to partner with a local chimney sweep or fire department, or you may have someone capable of inspecting stoves. AGH has developed a guide to doing [stove safety inspections](#).

Other Issues

Check If Your Area Has “No-burn” Days

Some cities and counties have higher air quality standards and may restrict when you can use your fireplace or wood stove. Check with your local air quality agency and [this resource page](#) from the EPA to see what restrictions may exist in your area.

Portable Air Monitors

One of the eligible expenses in your budget can be a portable air monitor. These monitors can give you, your volunteers, and your community minute-by-minute readings of air pollution in the immediate vicinity of the monitor. We like [Purple Air](#) monitors that cost \$250.

Weights & Measures – In every state, firewood dealers are required to leave a written receipt when they deliver wood with the amount (in cords), price, name, address, and phone number of the company, and sometimes the species of wood. Since you are not selling firewood, weights & measures regulations probably don't apply to firewood banks, but you should get acquainted with the regulations in your state to make sure that they don't apply to your firewood banks.

Wood Size – If you find that your wood is not under 20% moisture content, one strategy is to split it into smaller pieces. Smaller pieces dry quicker and are easier to burn. Larger pieces of wood are often wetter and produce more smoke and creosote. They require more tending of the fire and usually don't produce as nice of a flame as smaller pieces. We recommend a maximum thickness, or diameter of 4 – 6 inches, depending on the size of the stove. Here is some general guidance for your volunteers:

- Less than 3 inches in diameter? No split (use as is).

- 3 to 6 inches in diameter? Split in half.
- 6 to 12 inches in diameter? Split into four equal pieces.
- Greater than 12 inches? Split three or more pieces off the outside edge. Split the remaining core piece to produce pieces within the 6-inch maximum rate used in this example.

Contact Us

If you have submitted a grant application, you will be assigned a Grant Manager, and should direct any questions to them. If you have not yet submitted a grant application, send questions to:
info@forgreenheat.org