

WILDFIRE SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

In collaboration with the California Fire Foundation

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BACKGROUND

Major wildfires in California for the last four years have sharply increased in destructive power due to an increasingly dry and prolonged period of high temperature climate. 2020 set a historical record with acres burned and had (2) State of Emergencies declared due to widespread wildfires. This year doubled the previous record of acres burned in a year, growing from 1.6 million acres in 2018 to over 4 million acres burned in 2020.[1]

OBJECTIVES

Since 2018, the Wildfire Safety and Preparedness Program has been an annual effort by the California Fire Foundation (CFF) in partnership with Pacific Gas and Electric to raise awareness on wildfire safety and bring resources to underserved communities in high fire threat areas in California with a focus on rural areas. The WSPP is a reflection of major efforts by the State of California to build fire resiliency in our communities.

APPROACH

The Wildfire Safety and Preparedness Program (WSPP) components included:

1. **GRANT PROGRAM | $532,000**
   A statewide wildfire prevention grant open to firefighting agencies and organizations

2. **SAFETY EDUCATION CAMPAIGN | $550,000**
   A fire safety and awareness campaign targeting high wildfire risk areas and traditionally underserved communities

GRANT PROGRAM

CFF and PG&E launched a competitive grant program administered by CFF with funding from PG&E to support firefighting agencies and organizations in California, specifically groups serving communities identified by the CPUC as extreme or elevated fire risk areas. From June 15 to July 15, the WSPP received nearly 200 grant submissions.

[1] https://www.fire.ca.gov/stats-events/







IMPACTS AND RESULTS

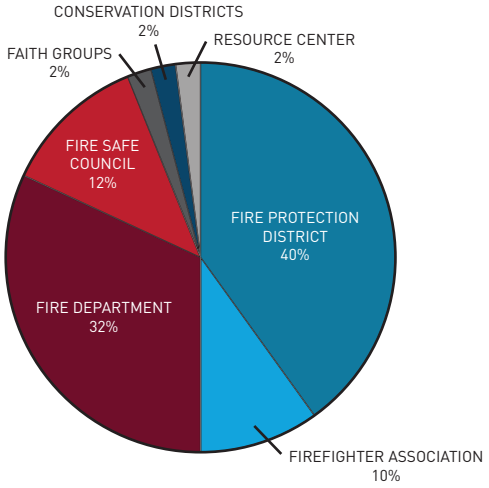
Funding was provided to 50 grantees that include local fire departments, fire protection districts, and fire safe councils. Grantees used funding for specialized equipment, PPE, programs to increase fire prevention and emergency preparedness education, defensible space programs, senior citizen wildfire preparedness programs and supported fuel/hazard reduction programs.

$517,000 DISBURSED

AVERAGE GRANT AMOUNT: ~$10,000

50 GRANTEES

GRANTEE SUMMARY



- **FIRE DEPARTMENT: 32%**
- **FIRE SAFE COUNCIL: 12%**
- **FAITH GROUPS: 2%**
- **CONSERVATION DISTRICTS: 2%**
- **RESOURCE CENTER: 2%**
- **FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT: 40%**
- **FIREFIGHTER ASSOCIATION: 10%**

GRANTEE LIST

1. Amador Fire Protection District
2. Apple Valley Fire Protection District
3. Arcata Volunteer Firefighter's Association
4. Bodega Bay Fire Protection District
5. Brooktrails Township Fire Department
6. Butte County Fire Department
7. Central Calaveras Fire & Rescue Protection District
8. Chester Fire Department
9. City of Sonora Fire Department
10. Colton Fire Department
11. Comptche Volunteer Fire Department
12. Dunsmuir Fire Department
13. El Dorado County Fire Safe Council
14. Fairfield Fire Department
15. Fire Safe Council of Nevada County
16. Foresthill Fire Protection District
17. Graeagle Fire Protection District
18. Grass Valley Fire Department
19. Hammond Ranch Fire Zone
20. Hopland Fire Protection District
21. Hornbrook Fire Protection District
22. Kings Mountain Volunteer Fire Department
23. Leggett Fire
24. Mayten Fire Protection District
25. Mi Wuk Sugar Pine Fire Protection District
26. Modoc Fire Safe Council
27. Napa Communities Firewise Foundation
28. Newman Fire Department
29. Northern California Resource Center
30. Oakland Firesafe Council
31. Orland Volunteer Fire Department
32. Paradise Alliance Church
33. Pioneer Fire Protection District
34. Placer County Resource Conservation District
35. Ponderosa Fire Brigade
36. Safer West County
37. Scott Valley Fire Protection District
38. Sierra City Volunteer Fire Department
39. Siskiyou County General Fire
40. Southern Trinity Volunteer Fire Department
41. Stones Bengard Community Service District
42. Strawberry Fire Protection District
43. Tehama County Fire Department
44. Timber Cove Fire Protection District
45. Tuolumne Fire District
46. Ukiah Valley Fire Authority
47. Valley of the Moon Fire Protection District DBA as Sonoma Valley Fire & Rescue Authority
48. Weed City Fire Department
49. Whale Gulch Volunteer Fire Company
50. Willows Rural Fire Protection District

PUBLIC AWARENESS PLAN

A robust communications plan was executed to reach residents in high fire threat areas with development of fire safety messaging, television public service announcements, radio ads, digital ads, and outdoor ads. Messaging focused on evacuating early, recognizing signs to evacuate and understanding the severity of a red flag warning as a first indicator to wildfire risk.

This fire safety outreach campaign consisted of in-language material coupled with a $450,000 media buy program that was executed and administered through CFF from June 2020 to December 2020.

IMPACTS AND RESULTS

The WSPP exhausted all forms of paid promotion to reach residents and community members through television, radio, digital, outdoor. These targeted ads aimed to reach traditionally hard-to-reach communities who lived in designated high fire risk areas.

The paid media program delivered in total 19.7 million impressions to high fire risk areas in California via, radio, digital and outdoor ads. Collateral and advertising assets were created in English, as well as in Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), and Hmong to reach monolingual communities in Northern and Central California.

RADIO

Over **30** local and regional radio stations were engaged and more than **1,505** radio spots were aired throughout North and Central California, equivalent to 2.87 million radio impressions.

The program partnered with 5 local radio stations in Chico/Redding, and Eureka markets with an extensive coverage of 304 spots reaching the rural residents.

Half of the spots were delivered through in-language radio stations to monolingual residents in Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), and Hmong.

DIGITAL

A total of **23** million impressions were generated through digital banner ads.

Digital banner ads were created in Spanish and Chinese that reached 7.8 million impressions

The digital ads were well received and garnered an impressive response of over 25,600 clicks to FFOYS program website for access to additional information.



OUTDOOR

Outdoor billboard and poster ads were placed in rural areas and monolingual communities, reaching over 9.1 million impressions over the course of the paid program.

152 posters were placed in convenience stores and laundromats in Chico/Redding, Eureka, Sacramento and Santa Barbara markets to reach residents where Internet access is limited.

14 English and Spanish outdoor units were placed in Central California in high traffic neighborhoods.



TELEVISION

Public service announcement TV spots in English and Spanish are scheduled to begin in early 2021. Airing these spots in the first quarter will better position the spots to raise awareness to residents at the onset of the 2021 wildfire season. The television spots are also projected to have better value in 2021 as they will not run during election or holiday messaging.

TV spots are scheduled to run on 23 stations statewide with a focus on fire prone regions in Chico/Redding and Eureka media market.

CBO DIRECT OUTREACH

CFF worked with PG&E in outreaching to 35 organizations and sharing wildfire safety messaging. These groups used the digital collateral material developed in English, and Spanish to share on their social media platforms, email newsletters, and websites.

The 35 organizations shared 162 posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in addition to regular email newsletters to their networks. These posts had an estimated reach of more than 252,000 from the August to November 2020 period. Additionally, two radio stations, KBBF and KWMR, also participated in the program by airing fire safety radio messaging for a combined projected outreach of more than 105,900 in reach.

CONCLUSION

In its third year with a $1,200,000 budget, the Wildfire Safety and Preparedness Program (WSPP) has continued to fulfill its core objective in saving lives through fire education and providing crucial grant funding to fire agencies and departments in California. For example, in 2018, 1.6 million acres burned in our state and set the state's historical record. In 2020, California has doubled the previous record with more than 4.1 million acres burned. With this increased risk, the WSPP has been expanded to help support vulnerable communities with additional resources.

In 2020, PG&E provided an additional $200,000 in funding to the California Fire Foundation to expand their programs in order to serve more communities. The greater spend in 2020 was designed to support more fire associations, increase the number of grants distributed, and increase the scale of the paid media campaign. As a result, the WSPP increased funding from $390,000 in 2019, to more than $500,000 in 2020. The number of grant recipients also increased from 28 fire agencies and organizations in 2019, to 50 agencies and organizations in 2020.

Additionally, the WSPP successfully launched a comprehensive media campaign focused on television, radio, digital and outdoor ads to ensure that fire safety messaging reached residents in high wildfire risk areas. There was a budget increase in the paid media campaign from $350,000 in 2019 to $450,000 in 2020. The increased spending for the 2020 paid media campaign went to widening the scope of our fire safety education campaign that produced new evacuation and fire safety materials in several languages including English, Spanish, Chinese, and Hmong. Although the television ads were not launched in 2020, they will be used to prepare high wildfire threat communities for the 2021 wildfire season and will launch in Q1 of next year. The adjusted schedule will allow for increased marketing opportunities in these communities and will include English and Spanish versions.

Through PG&E's CBO-Direct Program, the WSPP also disseminated fire safety messaging to 35 non-profit community-based organizations in high wildfire threat areas. These organizations successfully shared the WSPP safety content to their local community networks through their social media assets including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

As the California climate continues to trend drier and hotter, programs like the WSPP remain a key component of the strategy to prepare communities for the increased threat that wildfires pose to Californians.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