Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta

COMMUNITY FIREGUARD PROGRAM (CFP)

REFERENCE: FRIAA-CFP NOVEMBER 2026 COMMUNITIES

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Issue Date:	November 3, 2026
Closing Date/Time:	January 11, 2027 – 1400 hrs Mountain Time (Alberta)
Information Session:	November 25, 2026
Submission Portal:	https://friaa.ab.ca/program-submissions/
Telephone:	780-429-5873
Inquiry Email:	admin@friaa.ab.ca
Website Information:	www.friaa.ab.ca
Mailing:	Box 11094 Main Post Office Edmonton, AB T5J 3K4

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta ("**FRIAA**") was established in 1997 to promote and initiate projects that enhance Alberta's Forest resources. In keeping with this primary purpose, FRIAA entered into a Grant Agreement with the Government of Alberta ("**GOA**") to deliver the Community Fireguard Program (the "**CFP**").

1.2 The purpose of the CFP is to support the Provincial FireSmart Program initiative by funding the construction of community fireguards that provide for enhanced public safety and improved protection of at-risk communities. Specified criteria of eligible construction projects include:

(a) Large fireguards (several hundred meters wide), unless it can be demonstrated that a smaller fireguard complements an established wildfire mitigation strategy. This may include:

(i) Integration with other fuel treatments (e.g. thinning, prescribed burning, FireSmart best practices);

(ii) Strategic fireguard placement to protect critical infrastructure, residential zones, or evacuation routes;

(iii) Alignment with community values and land-use priorities; and,

(iv) Support from fire behavior modeling and risk assessments demonstrating the fireguard's effectiveness.

(b) All flammable woody fuels and land-clearing debris must be cleared, with a long-term strategy in place to maintain the fireguard's fuel-free condition and ensure the absence of hazardous fuels in the zone between the fireguard and the built environment; and,

(c) Creative options to reduce treatment and maintenance costs should be identified, such as using merchantable timber revenues, supporting bioenergy (e.g., wood pellet facilities), and employing grazing to reduce both short-term and long-term costs.

1.3 FRIAA is inviting prospective applicants (communities) to submit an Expression of Interest ("**EOI"**) that is intended to lead to the development of an operational plan and ultimately, fireguard construction, under the CFP. The following information outlines the intent of this Request for Expressions of Interest ("**RFEOI**") process and provides instructions to prospective applicants who wish to submit an EOI under this RFEOI.

1.4 This EOI is open to any municipality; Alberta First Nation; Métis Settlement, Co-operative, Enterprise or Local.

1.5 While the development of an operational plan does not guarantee funding for construction, the purpose is to have communities develop an operational plan by August 2027 for the construction of a fireguard, such that construction (clearing) will occur during fall/winter 2027/2028.

1.6 In collaboration with FRIAA, communities short-listed by this EOI process will engage in a community fireguard planning committee (the "**Committee**") (approximately April through August 2027). Supported by a wildfire planning consultant, the Committee is expected to have

representation from your local Forestry and Parks – Alberta Wildfire office, community fire emergency response and elected leadership, as well as local forestry industry.

1.7 A separate Request for Proposals ("**RFP**") process will be conducted by FRIAA (January through February 2027) to solicit a qualified wildfire planning consultant for each short-listed community. The selected consultant will support the development an operational construction work plan by the Committee. The consultant's activities will include preparing mapping and a written document detailing the technical design, ground truthing, required permitting and authorizations (e.g. Vegetation Control Easement ("**VCE**") for provincial Crown Land applications), community and Indigenous consultation and operations budgeting. The Operational Plan will describe all the relevant information to complete the construction project. The Operational Plan will be reviewed and accepted by the community prior to finalization.

1.8 At the completion of the operational planning phase (August 2027), communities are expected be able to apply to FRIAA for grant funding for construction projects through a separate secondary RFP process, subject to available funding. This program expects new construction projects to be a minimum of 100m wide, if tied into existing grazing or other cleared rights-of-way (ROW). The target will be 300-500m in width. The community will be responsible for holding the VCE if one is required, and for maintaining future vegetation removal on the fireguard. Future maintenance plans will be explored through the Operational Plan development and clearing techniques will be selected to support future maintenance.

1.9 Under the CFP, the following activities ("**Eligible Activities**") may be considered by an applicant:

(a) Planning (e.g., design, technical review, mapping, ground truthing, permitting, consultation); and,

(b) Vegetation/Fuel management (e.g., complete vegetation removal in the construction of fireguards/fuel breaks including site preparation for maintenance activities such as agricultural grazing).

2. EOI REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Applicants are advised to pay careful attention to the information provided in this RFEOI. Failure to satisfy any term, condition or mandatory requirement of this RFEOI may result in rejection of the submission.

2.2 EOIs must be clear, well written and concisely describe the components of the proposed project including each of the requirements set out in subsections 2.3 and 2.4 below, using the application form and template as provided on the FRIAA website.

2.3 Application Form

(a) Provide a project title specific to your project location.

(b) Provide contact information for the Authorized Representative (name, title, phone number, email, and address) of the 1) applicant organization and the individual(s) authorized to represent the applicant and potentially commit the applicant to the execution of a Project Grant Agreement in due course, and 2) the individual who will manage the project / be the key point of contact.

(c) Indicate participation (highly encouraged) in the virtual Information Session to gain insight on program priorities, and facilitate questions and answers, the details of which are set out in Section 6 of this RFEOI. Check the box to indicate this has been completed.

(d) FRIAA Field Liaison representatives are available to discuss your project details to provide independent technical insights that may help facilitate the development of a strong EOI. Applicants are required to connect as soon as possible, prior to submission. Please contact the representative in the area of your proposed project, by approximate geographic area (subject to change). Check the box to indicate whether this has been completed.

(i) Rick Arthur
rick.arthur@friaa.ab.ca
403.489.2026
Edson, Rocky Mountain House, Calgary

(ii) Wes Nimco
wes.nimco@friaa.ab.ca
780.689.9073
High Level, Peace River, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Lac La Biche, Slave Lake, Whitecourt

(e) Indicate the appropriate attachment required below (by checking the appropriate box to indicate this has been completed) and have an Authorized Representative sign the applicant acknowledgement set out in the Application Form. Applications from:

(i) Municipalities must be accompanied by a properly executed Council Resolution ("**MCR**").
(ii) First Nations must be accompanied by a properly executed Band Council Resolution ("**BCR**").
(iii) Metis Settlements must be accompanied by a properly executed Settlement Council Resolution ("**SCR**") and applications from Co-operatives, Enterprises or Community Locals must be signed by the President.

2.4 **Template**

(a) Describe your community risk of wildfire and interest in developing a large-scale community fireguard. Include a brief description what other wildfire mitigation measures the community has undertaken (particularly for higher level planning, public education and fuel modification). The purpose is to establish the need for a fireguard, community acceptance of the project and how the fireguard effectiveness will be reinforced by other FireSmart activities. Consider how the next steps after developing an acceptable fireguard operational plan will lead to the construction of a large fireguard and removing high-hazard fuels near the community values at risk.

(b) If possible, describe the general area where the fireguard may be located. Note that FRIAA funded projects may not be located on private land. The operational plan will incorporate strategic location, tactical size and an effective design for use in firefighting operations. A suitable location must be available to your community. Indicated location(s) may not be

the final design or placement of the fireguard. Final design will be developed through the Committee planning process.

(c) Describe your community approach to engaging in this facilitated planning process. Describe the vision of how your community will engage in the planning and construction phases (e.g. actively participating in plan development meetings, hosting a venue for the Committee planning meetings, providing local knowledge of hazardous fuels and values at risk, supporting community communication). Additionally:

(i) Confirm your community's willingness to join and engage with the Committee;

(ii) Identify expected Committee members (names or roles) and key stakeholders. Specify your representation from the local fire emergency services and elected community leadership;

(iii) Commit to providing local input (data), project support (meeting venues), and assisting with communications (advertising on websites, social media, bulletin boards, radio, mailers etc.); and,

(iv) Identify other opportunities for your community leadership and engagement with this planning process.

(d) Describe and quantify in dollars the value of "in-kind" resources that will directly contribute to the Committee, expected to occur from approximately April through August. Note that FRIAA funds must not be used for existing staff or resources of the applicant. In-kind contributions can include administration, supervision, project management and quality control time, equipment such as trucks, tools, fuel, uniforms, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), training materials and resources, advertising costs and materials, hall rentals, financial contributions and any other project support that is offered by the applicant to subsidize the cost of the project. In-kind contributions are highly regarded.

(e) Provide any additional information to support your EOI.

3. EOI ADJUDICATION CRITERIA

3.1 EOIs shall be reviewed and evaluated by an expert panel ("**Expert Panel**") for short-listing to advance to the planning phase based on the following criteria:

(a) EOI must use the Application Form and follow the template provided for this RFEOI.

(b) Priority will be given to EOI that support:

(i) enhanced public safety and improved protection of at-risk communities in the Forest Protection Area;

(ii) fireguard boundaries (eligible lands are available) that can be located directly adjacent to community values at risk for optimal benefits;

(iii) projects with community support and acceptance, based on community ownership of past FireSmart activities; and,

(iv) projects that leverage FRIAA funding with other sources of funding, including significant in-kind support.

(c) The applicant must be able to participate in the project economically and efficiently, therefore consideration will be given to the amount of leverage by way of in-kind contributions of labour, equipment or other resources the applicant is able to provide to the proposed project.

(d) Operational plans inclusive of the construction budget developed through this planning process will be expected to demonstrate "value for money", which will be evaluated based on cost effectiveness as an overall cost per hectare ($/ha) for the construction techniques prescribed in the plan. In general, the "least cost option" for clearing, debris disposal and site preparation will be the preferred outcome.

(e) COR, SECOR or equivalent safety certification and a minimum of $2 million of general liability insurance will be required.

(f) The proposed project must not be located on private land or lands under federal jurisdiction, except that the proposed project may be located on a Reserve or on Métis Settlement, Cooperative, Enterprise or Community Local lands.

(g) The proposed project must not include any prospective, in-progress or completed work under the Provincial FireSmart Program or the FRIAA FireSmart Program.

(h) The proposed project must not involve work that will have a significant adverse impact on other forest resources or the environment as a whole and the applicant must agree to carry out the proposed project in an environmentally responsible manner.

(i) The proposed project must not be contrary to the provisions of relevant regulations or legislation or the objects of FRIAA, or FRIAA's bylaws.

(j) The proposed project must not include any work that is, in the opinion of FRIAA, a responsibility of a timber disposition holder or constitutes a subsidy to the forest industry.

4. COMMUNITY FIREGUARD PROGRAM OUTLINE

4.1 The full text of the Program Outline for the CFP is available on FRIAA's website (www.friaa.ab.ca).

5. LEGAL NOTICE

5.1 By submitting an EOI, you confirm that you have read, understand, and accept the information contained in this RFEOI and, that each of you, the applicant and all individuals and entities that collaborate or are otherwise involved in the preparation of the EOI or the delivery of the proposed project ("**Project Partners**") agree as follows:

(a) FRIAA may at any time withdraw, suspend, cancel, terminate, amend, or alter all or any portion of this RFEOI, including but not limited to the EOI requirements, the EOI selection and review process and the EOI adjudication criteria.

(b) FRIAA reserves the unqualified right to accept or reject any or all EOIs for any reason. FRIAA is not required to accept the highest ranked EOI nor is it required to accept any EOI for advancement to the full project proposal stage.

(c) The final decision with respect to the EOI and any subsequent proposals rests solely with the Board. The Expert Panel's evaluation of the EOIs may be based on, but is not in any way limited to, the criteria set out in this RFEOI. The Board may consider any criteria determined by FRIAA to be relevant to FRIAA's mandate, regardless of whether such additional criteria have been disclosed to the applicant.

(d) No conduct, act, or omission of FRIAA, or its directors, officers, consultants, project advisors, agents, servants and their respective successors and assigns (collectively the "**FRIAA Parties**") other than a written notice to the applicant in writing signed by an authorized person for FRIAA, will constitute an acceptance of an EOI.

(e) EOI that do not comply with the requirements described in this RFEOI may be rejected in whole or in part or not considered. FRIAA reserves the unqualified right to accept or reject a non-compliant EOI.

(f) This RFEOI is an invitation for EOI only. It is not an offer, and the submission of an EOI does not create a contract or agreement of any kind between FRIAA and the applicant.

(g) Acceptance of a EOI does not create a binding contract between FRIAA and the applicant. FRIAA shall not be obligated in any manner whatsoever to any applicant until a written agreement between FRIAA and the applicant ("**Project Grant Agreement**") has been duly executed relating to an approved full project proposal.

(h) As between the parties, the EOI and all documents and materials you submit to FRIAA in connection with the EOI and this RFEOI and all intellectual property in and to the foregoing are the exclusive property of FRIAA immediately upon delivery to FRIAA. For clarity, this refers to the materials themselves, not to any technology or innovations disclosed or discussed in them. Intellectual property developed during the course of the project will be addressed through the Project Grant Agreement and will normally be owned by the applicant.

(i) You, the applicant, and any Project Partners will keep this RFEOI confidential and will not use, reproduce, or distribute it, any portion of it, or any data, information, drawings, or specifications included in or provided with it except as necessary to prepare a full project proposal to FRIAA in response to it or to apply for additional third-party funding for the project.

(j) You, the applicant, and any Project Partners will not make a claim against FRIAA or the FRIAA Parties for any reason whatsoever relating to this RFEOI. You are undertaking the expenditures required to prepare and submit an EOI entirely at your own risk, and you waive any right and release FRIAA and the FRIAA Parties from any demands, liability, claim or recovery for costs, expenses, or damages incurred in connection with this RFEOI or any EOI prepared in response to it, whether such right or claim arises in contract, negligence or otherwise.

(k) FRIAA takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information supplied during this RFEOI process by FRIAA or the FRIAA Parties.

(l) Neither FRIAA nor any of the FRIAA Parties will have any liability whatsoever to you, the applicant, or any Project Partners, or any of them, in connection with this RFEOI or any submission prepared in response to it.

6. INFORMATION SESSION

6.1 FRIAA will hold an Information Session by **virtual conference** to address questions that may arise with respect to this RFEOI on **November 25, 2026**. Applicants are highly encouraged to phone in. Call-in information and the agenda for the session is posted on the FRIAA website.

7. EOI SUBMISSION

7.1 EOIs must be identified as follows: **FRIAA-CFP NOVEMBER 2026 COMMUNITIES**

7.2 EOIs may be submitted on FRIAA's website portal at: https://friaa.ab.ca/program-submissions/. Ensure your organization is created and contact information is linked at least 48-hours prior to the submission deadline to avoid missing the deadline.

7.3 Only EOIs formatted in PDF or Microsoft Word will be accepted.

7.4 Deadline for EOIs: Only those EOIs received by 2:00 p.m., local Edmonton time, on January 11, 2027, will be accepted for evaluation at this time. EOIs received any time thereafter will not be accepted for evaluation.

7.5 FRIAA is not responsible for EOIs that are not received as the result of any delivery failure of any kind by any delivery service whatsoever. FRIAA is also not responsible for EOIs that are not received as the result of technological issues, including attachment size, internet, email or file transfer technology failure or any other logistical barrier which may impede electronic submission.

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 An Expert Panel will review submitted EOIs and short-list communities to advance to the operational planning phase.

8.2 Applicants will be notified of the acceptance or rejection of their respective expressions of interest. This notification is expected to occur by late January 2027.