



Fueling Communities into the Future: A Survey of Firewood Banks To Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats To Organizational Sustainability

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Firewood Bank Survey



Firewood banks have formed across North America in order to provide fuelwood to heat-insecure homes. Firewood banks are also referred to as wood banks, firewood ministries, wood ministries, firewood programs, supplemental wood programs, firewood relief funds, fuel or heat security programs, wood yard programs, woodshed programs and charity cuts. In this survey, they will be referred to as firewood banks.

This survey aims to better understand firewood bank operations (i.e., where they are and how they are established and structured). This survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. **This survey should be completed by only one representative of the firewood bank operation – preferably a key person or firewood bank manager/lead.** Unless otherwise specified, please answer the question based on what happens at the firewood bank in a typical year. If you are associated with more than one firewood bank, please answer for the firewood bank on the envelope.

You are being invited to participate in a research study titled 'Firewood Banks in the United States'. This study is being conducted by the University of Massachusetts Amherst. You were selected to participate because you manage or operate a firewood bank in the U.S. The purpose of this research study is to gain a better understanding of firewood banks' operations, processes, and needs. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete the following survey/questionnaire. This survey/questionnaire will inquire about how your firewood bank operates and your challenges and successes; it will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. You may not directly benefit from this research; however, we hope that your participation in the study will help policy makers and program developers create resources to support firewood banks, nation-wide. To the best of our ability, your answers in this study will remain confidential. A key code will be maintained separately from the data. We will minimize any risks to breach of confidentiality by anonymizing your responses. There is no compensation for participating.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. You are free to skip any question you choose.

*If you have questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact the researcher, **Sarah Butler at the University of Massachusetts** (sbutler@umass.edu) or 413-545-3924. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the University of Massachusetts Amherst Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) at (413) 545-3428 or humansubjects@ora.umass.edu. By proceeding to the survey/questionnaire on the next page you are indicating that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this research study. Please DO NOT write your name on the survey/questionnaire.*

DEFINITIONS

For the questions involving amounts of wood, please refer to the definitions below to best estimate wood amount.

- **Full Cord** – measures 4 feet high by 4 feet wide by 8 feet long
- **Face Cord** - measures 4 feet high by 16 inches wide by 8 feet long. A face cord equals 1/3 of a full cord of wood.
- **Compact pick-up truckload** – Four compact pickup (6-foot box) loads of wood equals 1 full cord of wood, regardless of if the wood is stacked level with the truck box sides or if the wood is into the truck box level with the top of the cab.
- **Full-sized pick-up truck load** – Two full sized pickup truck (8-foot box) loads equals 1 full cord of wood, regardless of if the wood is stacked level with the truck box sides or if the wood is into the truck box level with the top of the cab.

General Questions about your Firewood Bank

1. What is the name of your firewood bank?

2. What is the location of your firewood bank?

City/Town: _____ State/Province: _____

3. When was the firewood bank established?

_____ Year

4. Did you start this firewood bank?

Yes

No

5. How would you best describe your firewood bank?

Select yes or no for each item

Yes No

Nonprofit (501(c)3)

Local/community group

Faith organization

Tribal group

Municipality

For-profit company

Other (please specify): _____

6. Is this firewood bank associated with a Tribal government?

Yes

No

7. How does the firewood bank receive funding?

Select yes or no for each item

Yes No

Grant(s)

Financial donation(s)

Fundraising

Other (please specify): _____

8. If the firewood bank has received a grant in the past, what was the grant amount?

Select yes or no for each item

Yes No

Less than \$1,000

\$1,000 – \$4,999

\$5,000 - \$9,999

\$10,000 - \$14,999

\$15,000 - \$19,999

\$20,000 or more

The firewood bank has not received grant money

9. What has the firewood bank used its grant money for, if it has received any?

Select yes or no for each item.

Yes No

- To buy equipment
- To build wood storage
- To buy log length wood
- To buy already split firewood
- To buy fuel for equipment
- To fund a paid position
- Other (please specify): _____
- The firewood bank has not received grant money

10. Please identify all stakeholders that contribute **financial resources** to your firewood bank operation.

Select yes or no for each item.

Yes No

- Federal agency
- State agency
- Municipality
- Professional association
- Cooperative Extension
- Corporations(s)/Private business
- Civic organization(s)
- Private citizen(s)
- Private arborist(s)/Contractor(s)
- Other (please specify): _____

11. Which, if any, larger assistance group(s) is the firewood bank associated with?

Select yes or no for each item.

Yes No

- Heating fuel assistance group
- Food bank
- Clothing bank
- Other (please specify): _____

12. Who else is involved with the firewood bank?

Select yes or no for each item.

Yes No

- Volunteers from the community
- Volunteers from the church
- Volunteers from local high schools
- Volunteers from local colleges
- Youth from other groups
- Inmates
- Other (please specify): _____

13. a. Does your firewood bank typically have paid staff?

- Yes —► **If yes, please answer 13b and 13 c.**
- No —► **If no, please go to question 14.**

13 b. If yes, how many paid staff members do you have in a typical year?

13 c. In a typical year, how many total hours does your paid staff work each week, on average?

_____ hours/week

14. a. Does your firewood bank typically utilize volunteers?

- Yes —▶ ***If yes, please answer 14b and 14c.***
- No —▶ ***If no, please go to question 15.***

14 b. How many total volunteers do you have in a typical year?

14 c. In a typical year, how many hours do volunteers contribute each week, on average?

_____ hours/week

15. What was the annual budget of the firewood bank in 2022?

- \$0
- \$1- \$999
- \$1000 - \$1999
- \$2,000 - \$4,999
- \$5,000 or more
- I don't know

16. Does anyone in your group consult with any other firewood banks to develop and improve your firewood bank?

- Yes
- No

17. What geographical area does the firewood bank serve?

Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our town |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neighboring towns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our county |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neighboring counties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our reservation |

Firewood Bank Recipient Selection Process

18. How is it determined who gets wood? Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | People who apply and are approved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | People are referred by a local partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | People that we know of in the community who need assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | People who ask for wood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): _____ |

19. Which of the following conditions or qualifications, if any, must the firewood bank recipients meet in order to receive wood?

Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Income of recipient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Age of recipient (for example, children or aging adults) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Health of recipient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood used for home heating only (as opposed to saunas or other uses) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Year-round resident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Veteran |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no criteria or qualifications a recipient needs to meet to get wood |

20. How, if at all, do you promote the firewood bank and its services to potential recipients?

Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Word of mouth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Social media (ex. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Newspaper articles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Television station |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): _____ |

Wood Sources

21. Where does the wood originate?

Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Purchased log lengths of wood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Purchased split firewood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Roadside trees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood donations from tree cutting companies, forestry/logging companies, or sawmills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood donations from community members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood donations from contractors who are clearing land for development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood donations from town, county or state land |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood donations from Federal land |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood donations from Tribal lands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood donations from a conservation committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood donations from power/light companies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): _____ |

22. What geographical area does the firewood come from? Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Town where the firewood bank is located |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neighboring towns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our county |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neighboring counties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our state |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Neighboring states |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Our reservation |

23. Does the firewood bank regularly use any of the following wood parts?

Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tree stumps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tree stems (trunk) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tree limbs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bark |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sawdust |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood chips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood scraps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood slabs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Millings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood shavings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wood residue |

24. Does the firewood bank regularly use wood from insect-damaged standing dead or fallen trees?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

25. What are the procedures the firewood bank uses regarding the transporting of wood across county or state lines?

Select one item

- We work with regulators
- We do not transport wood beyond our immediate locale
- We do not monitor the destination of the firewood

26. Where does the **wood processing** occur?

Select yes or no for each item.

Yes No

- Church's property
- Nonprofit's property
- Volunteer's property
- Municipal land
- Transfer station
- State property
- Commercial property
- Tribal land
- Firewood not processed by the firewood bank (Not applicable)
- Other (please specify): _____

27. Where does the **wood storage** occur?

Select yes or no for each item.

Yes No

- Church's property
- Nonprofit's property
- Volunteer's property
- Municipal land
- Transfer station
- State property
- Commercial property
- Tribal land
- Other (please specify): _____

28. a. Does the firewood bank have access to a woodshed or other dry storage?

- Yes → *If yes, please answer 28b*
- No → *If no, please skip to question 29*

b. Approximately how many cords of wood can you provide dry storage for?

_____ cords (write in other units if you don't measure by the cord)

29. Which of the following activities does the firewood bank (or parent organization) regularly perform?

Select yes or no for each item.

Yes No

- Cut down trees
- Cutting logs to length (bucking firewood)
- Splitting wood
- Stacking wood at the firewood bank
- Drying wood (also known as seasoning or curing)
- Delivering wood
- Stacking wood at recipients' homes

30. What time of year does the firewood bank process wood?

Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Summer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Winter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sporadically, whenever wood becomes available |

31. Approximately how much wood do you **process** in a typical year?

_____ cords (write in other units if you don't measure by the cord)

32. Approximately how many cords of wood do you **aim to keep on hand** in a typical year?

_____ cords (write in other units if you don't measure by the cord)

33. Does the firewood bank process and distribute all wood available?

- Yes
 No, we reject certain species/types of wood —► *If no, please answer part b.*

b. Why does the firewood bank reject certain species of wood?

34. Does the firewood bank dry the wood before distributing it (drying the wood is also known as seasoning or curing)?

- Yes
 No
 Sometimes

35. Which of the following activities, if any, does the firewood bank help with?

Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chimney cleaning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chimney repair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Woodstove repair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Woodstove installation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Providing wood pellets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stove changeouts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Distribute smoke alarms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Distribute smoke alarm batteries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): _____ |

Wood Distribution

36. How is the wood distributed to firewood bank recipients? Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Picked up from a central location by the recipient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Delivered to the recipient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): _____ |

37. Approximately how much **total wood do you give away** in a typical year?

_____ cords (write in other units if you don't measure by the cord)

38. Approximately how much wood do you **give out to each recipient** in a typical year?

_____ cords (write in other units if you don't measure by the cord)

39. Do you allow recipients to receive more than one delivery/pick up?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes/in special circumstances

40. Approximately how many households do you provide wood to in an average year?

_____ Households

Equipment and Safety

41. Please review the list of equipment below and let us know if the firewood bank owns that piece of equipment, if it borrows the equipment, if the firewood bank does not have it but needs it, and if the bank does not have it and does not need it. Check all that apply for each piece of equipment.

	Yes, we own this equipment	Yes, we borrow this equipment	No - we don't own or borrow this - but we need this equipment	No - we don't own or borrow this -and we don't need this equipment
Splitter(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gas powered chain saw(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electric chain saw(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dump truck(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pickup truck(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Front end loader(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skid steer(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tractor(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 wheeler(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trailer(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back hoe(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conveyer belt(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Processor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify): _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

42. What does the firewood bank do for equipment repair or maintenance? Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Applies grant money for equipment repair/maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Volunteers pay for equipment repair/maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Volunteers fix equipment/maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The church pays for equipment repair/maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The town pays for equipment repair/maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The tribe pays for equipment repair/maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): _____ |

43. What, if any, safety equipment is available for the volunteers from the firewood bank? Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eye protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hard hat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ear protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chainsaw chaps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): _____ |

44. Do volunteers sign a waiver before they work at the firewood bank?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

45. Does the firewood bank, or your parent organization, have casualty/liability insurance?

- Yes
- No

46. Have any firewood bank volunteers ever been injured while working with the firewood bank?

- Yes —→ *If yes, please answer 46 b*
- No —→ *If no, please skip to 47*
- I don't know

b. What were the injuries?

Community and Future

47. Is there additional need in the community beyond the capacity of the firewood bank?

- Yes
- No
- It depends on the year

48. How, if at all, has demand for firewood changed in the last five years?

- Demand has increased
- Demand has decreased
- Demand has stayed the same
- Demand varies greatly by year

49. Does the firewood bank have plans to stay in the community over the next 10 years?

- Yes
- No

50. Would your firewood bank like to expand if you had the resources?

- Yes
- No

51. How interested, if at all, is your firewood bank in being a part of a network of firewood banks? Things a network could provide include liability insurance, purchasing power for larger volumes of equipment, using regional donors of wood, grant information, technical assistance, how-to information, and other resources.

- Very Interested
- Interested
- Moderately Interested
- Somewhat Interested
- Not at all interested

52. Please indicate your level of concern about the following barriers to your firewood bank's long-term sustainability in the community. Select one box per line.

	Great concern	Concern	Moderate concern	Of little concern	No concern	Not Applicable
Lack of money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of leadership in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of volunteers for administrative work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of volunteers for wood processing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of volunteers for wood delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low wood supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of a place to process wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of a place to store wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

53. What types of information, if any, would be useful to your firewood bank? Select yes or no for each item.

- | Yes | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information about becoming a non-profit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information about how other firewood banks operate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information about seasoning firewood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information about liability insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information about liability waivers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information about safety equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information about available grants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information about regional wood donors |

54. What are some of the unintended benefits of your firewood bank?

55. What are some of the greatest challenges for your firewood bank?

56. Are you aware of any other wood banks in your area that you think should participate in this research? If so, please list their name and any contact information, if available.

57. Is there anything else you would like to add about your wood bank not covered by this survey?

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

