



REALFire[®] Implementation Guide



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Overview

The Community Wildfire Planning Center's (CWPC) REALFire® program helps communities implement a comprehensive program that assesses wildfire risks in the home ignition zone and educates homeowners on addressing these risks. This guide provides a framework for implementing REALFire®.

Founded in 2017, CWPC is 501(c)3 non-profit organization that is dedicated to understanding and sharing the strategic connection between community planning, building, and wildfires. CWPC's expertise is in wildfire mitigation and land use planning offers unparalleled services and tools to empower communities to take action in preparing for, adapting to, and recovering from wildfires.

Through REALFire®, clients use trained Wildfire Mitigation Specialists to assess at-risk homes for wildfire susceptibilities. The REALFire® program provides training, assessment tools, customized reports, and other features to collect, track, and manage assessment data. Typical clients include local governments, fire authorities, and non-profit organizations. The program is currently being implemented in over ten counties across Colorado and Washington. The REALFire® program also aligns with the same science and technology used by a national home assessment program in Canada.

The REALFire® program offers residents many benefits, including:

- in-depth, on-site assessments conducted by experienced fire professionals;
- opportunities for property owners to learn about their property-specific wildfire risks and unique mitigation actions they can take;
- decreased fire risk;
- detailed follow-up reports with customized mitigation actions designed to measurably reduce the wildfire risk to their property; and
- opportunities to earn a REALFire® certificate acknowledging mitigation achievements, which can be used to enhance real estate transactions and shared with local insurance providers to show successful mitigation.

Additionally, REALFire® is an affordable program that benefits home assessment program administrators by:

- minimizing the administrative load involved in conducting home assessments,
- integrating the ability to seamlessly insert and mark up photos,
- providing an online access portal for residents to see their reports at any time, and
- integrating safe and easily accessible data storage.

Data Security

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) ensures the public has the right to request records from federal agencies. Many (ALL?) states have a version of FOIA that is applied at the state level. For example, the 1969 Colorado Open Records Act gives any person access to most state and local government documents. Since fire districts and authorities are typically considered to be local government entities, collected home assessment data may be subject to open records requests and made available to anyone who wants to see it. CWPC stores home assessment data in a safe, non-governmental agency location that protects the data from open records requests.

How REALFire® Works

The REALFire® program relies on **five key components**: public outreach, a Local Program Coordinator (LPC), Wildfire Mitigation Specialists (WMSs), a web portal, and a mobile application. CWPC works closely with clients to identify and implement these program features.

1. Public Outreach

Public outreach is designed to engage residents in the REALFire® program and educate other industry professionals that may be interested in promoting the program. Public outreach is typically conducted by a community with assistance available from CWPC in developing materials, such as:

- a public-facing program website,
- educational materials that provide information on the Home Ignition Zone and mitigation, and
- program outreach guides (guides for home buyers, home sellers, Realtors, etc.).

2. Local Program Coordinator (LPC)

Clients engaged in the program must have an LPC to coordinate and manage all aspects of the local REALFire® program. The LPC is responsible for:

- promoting the local REALFire® program,
- processing resident applications,
- managing Wildfire Mitigation Specialists,
- reviewing and approving Wildfire Mitigation Reports,
- maintaining program quality control and consistency, and
- coordinating with CWPC staff.

3. Wildfire Mitigation Specialists (WMSs)

Wildfire Mitigation Specialists are trained to conduct Home Ignition Zone assessments, engage with residents, and produce customized Wildfire Mitigation Reports. WMSs may also be responsible for additional tasks, such as:

- scheduling assessments,
- conducting post-assessment inspections to verify the completion of mitigation, and
- issuing certificates.

4. Web Portal

As part of the REALFire® program, CWPC provides clients with a web portal. Features of the web portal include:

- user-friendly interface for data and information access;
- two-way data transfer with the mobile application, the website, and other data sources;
- a secure “hub” for simplifying the assessment process and information sharing between residents, WMSs, and the LPC, with a variety of information sharing options available to suit local program needs; and
- a complete Wildfire Mitigation Report (as a PDF) with multiple sharing options.

5. Mobile Application

The REALFire® program includes a user-friendly field data collection tool for use by the WMS. This mobile application includes:

- compatibility with Android and/or iOS;
- two-way (Wi-Fi) data transfer capability with the database;

- photo insertion, with mark-up function; and
- georeferenced assessments.

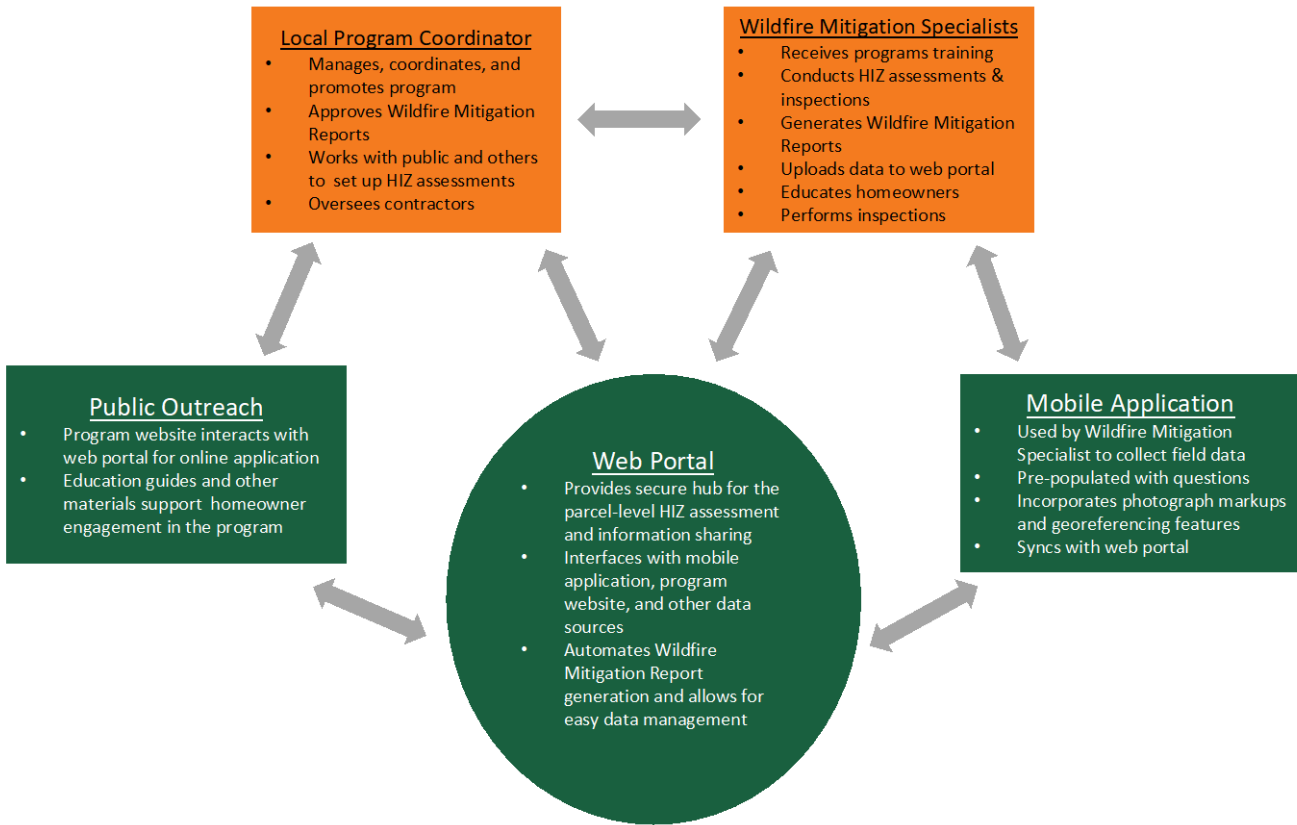
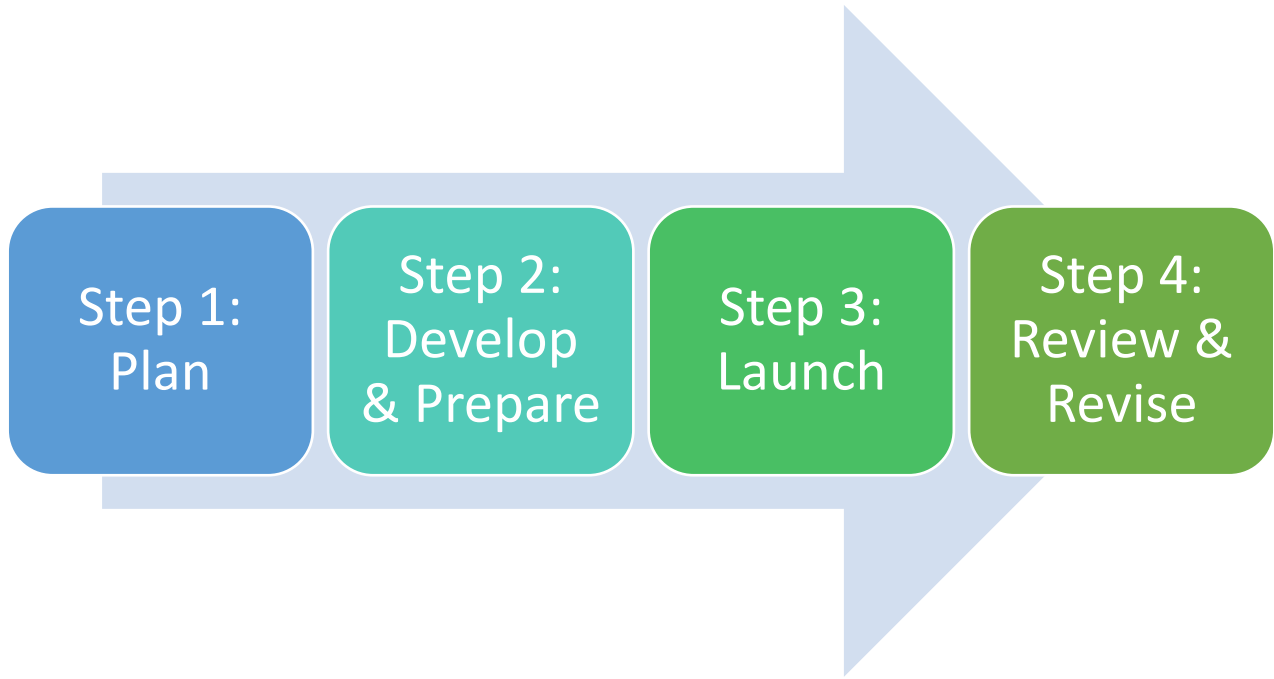


Figure 1. The REALFire program has five key components that are interrelated to successfully complete parcel-level assessments. CWPC works closely with clients to determine local capacity, needs, and program components to ensure successful implementation. REALFire program tools support all five program components.

Implementation

The following four steps provide guidance to clients in preparing and implementing the REALFire® program.



Step 1: Plan

The first step is to plan for your REALFire® program by defining program goals, identifying the REALFire® modules that will help you achieve your goals, determining the resources needed to implement the program, and initiating discussions with CWPC.

Goals

Before going any further, take some time to pinpoint the challenges that your community is trying to solve with regards to wildfire mitigation and home assessments. Doing so will help drive the next steps of implementation, including which REALFire® program options are appropriate for you and who should be involved in your project. Write a list that answers the question, “What are our challenges?”

*Write a list that answers the question,
“What are our challenges?”*

Next, turn your challenges into goals. For example:

Challenge: We don’t have an easy way to access completed home assessment reports.
Goal: Implement a digital solution for accessing completed home assessments.

Challenge: Our residents say they do not know what to do with regards to wildfire mitigation.
Goal: Offer educational opportunities to show residents how to apply basic wildfire mitigation principles to their properties.

Another consideration is how the REALFire® program will fit within your community's regulatory framework. In some areas, REALFire® complements regulations by providing a voluntary mechanism for educating and incentivizing residents to harden their homes and mitigate their properties. Other communities offer the REALFire® program as an alternative option to adhering to regulatory requirements. At this point, you might not know the role that REALFire® will ultimately take in your community's overall wildfire mitigation strategy, but we suggest that you start considering the possibilities and how REALFire® can be most effective in driving toward your goals.

REALFire® Products

REALFire® is not simply an app or assessment report. *REALFire® is a comprehensive home assessment mitigation program that drives social change by educating homeowners and affecting long-term behavioral modifications.*

All new REALFire® users begin with REALFire® Basic and Training. Please refer to Appendix A for detailed information and prices.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| REALFire® Basic | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• REALFire® mobile application• Wildfire Assessment Reports• Web Portal and Dashboard• Technical Support (one year)• Client logo and color palette match |
| Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 hour in-person training course• Up to 15 participants• Focus on HIZ concepts and program tools |

New users may also select optional program modules:

- Integrated Online Homeowner Application Form
- Integrated Scheduling System
- Rapid Wildfire Risk Assessment Tool
- Mobile Map Visualization
- Homeowner Activities and Data Management Tracker
- Public Facing Map Portal
- Homeowner Recognition
- Integration of Local Authority Parcel Identification
- Custom Services

We suggest that for each optional program module you choose, link it back to your program goals to ensure you are selecting the right modules.

<i>REALFire® Module</i>	<i>How it will help us achieve our goals</i>

Resources

We’ve made our best efforts to estimate the people, time, and funding required for successful REALFire® implementation, but each community will vary.

People

The first two roles to consider are the Wildfire Mitigation Specialist (WMS) and the Local Program Coordinator (LPC). Keep in mind that the WMS and LPC are *roles*, not individual people (i.e., one person may take on two roles). For a small program, the WMS and the LPC might be the same person. If your program expands, you might need more than one WMS or multiple WMSs and a standalone LPC.

Wildfire Mitigation Specialist

The REALFire® home assessment is a qualitative assessment that relies heavily on the experience and knowledge of the WMS. The WMS performs home assessments, develops the reports, conducts inspections, and follows up with homeowners in coordination with the LPC. The CWPC provides a 30-hour training program that uses REALFire® tools to teach Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) concepts. The WMSs often have fire service, wildfire, and / or forestry backgrounds, but that isn’t necessarily required if they have the training, knowledge, experience, and personal traits listed below:

- Preferred Previous Training, Knowledge, and Experience:
 - Two years fire management experience in Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) fire response, HIZ assessment, or mitigation
 - HIZ training or equivalent knowledge.
 - Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior (S390) training or equivalent knowledge
 - Basic building construction knowledge
 - Basic forest dynamics, forest ecology, and forest health knowledge
 - Knowledge of the community
- Suggested Personal Traits
 - Good observational skills
 - Comfortable speaking with the public

- Keen, willing to learn, and take initiative
- Proficient at documentation
- Strong written and verbal skills
- Proficient in spelling and grammar
- Ability to apply past experiences and knowledge to new situations

Local Program Coordinator

The LPC manages all aspects of the REALFire® program at the local level. This generally includes:

- Promoting the local REALFire® program
- Processing resident applications
- Managing Wildfire Mitigation Specialists
- Reviewing and approving Wildfire Mitigation Reports
- Maintaining program quality control and consistency
- Coordinating with CWPC staff

We recommend the LPC has all the same training, knowledge, experience, and personal traits as the WMS, plus:

- Previous Training, Knowledge, and Experience
 - Knowledge of the community (e.g., wildfire history, stakeholders, local government officials)
 - HIZ assessment experience
- Personal Traits
 - Teaching / mentoring skills
 - Editing skills
 - Ability to give feedback
 - Organized
 - Can build alliances and connections with the right stakeholders

Who do you have available now to take on the LPC and / or WMS roles based on training, knowledge, experience, and personal traits?

Time

REALFire® assessments encompass more than evaluating the HIZ. The assessment is an opportunity to change behavior and cultivate social change through homeowner education. This is at the heart of what separates REALFire® from typical form-based home assessments. The WMS spends one-on-one time with the homeowner, applying scientifically based wildfire mitigation principles to the homeowner's individualized circumstances and explaining *why*. The end result is that the homeowner not only has personalized recommendations on how to mitigate their home and land, they also have an in-depth understanding of wildfire risk, fire behavior, and fire mitigation principles. Ideally, each homeowner becomes an advocate for

wildfire mitigation in their community, sharing information and encouraging their neighbors to take action.

Therefore, conducting assessments consistent with the REALFire® vision requires concentrated effort. The WMS can expect to spend:

- 15 minutes of preparation,
- 1 - 3 hours on-site at each home assessment,
- approximately 30 minutes finalizing each report, and
- time to drive to each appointment (this will vary depending on your community).

CWPC recommends avoiding emergency call response while conducting assessments. Doing so may result in extra administrative time in rescheduling appointments and unhappy residents who planned their day around the cancelled assessment.

The LPC's time may include:

- report review and feedback, which may take 15 minutes – one hour, depending on the WMS's experience level;
- education of and work with contractors;
- program promotion;
- correspondence with stakeholders; and
- correspondence with CWPC.

Funding

The REALFire® program is modular, with add-on program options and customized services, providing flexibility to scale up or down as needed. CWPC will meet with you on an annual basis to determine if your program design is still the right one for you and whether an adjustment should be made.

The initial and ongoing program costs are listed in the Appendix. Please consider that Initial training costs may also include room and AV equipment rental and salaries for training participants.

Additional optional funding considerations may include:

- Do you want to create an optional public outreach website?
- Do you want to create and register your own custom domain?
- What tools are necessary for your WMS to perform their task?
 - Do you need to purchase additional tablets with GPS capabilities that can be dedicated to the program?
 - Does your WMS require computer access?
 - How are you paying them?
 - Are there additional uniform costs?
 - How will the WMS travel to and from the assessment sites? Does this require additional vehicle costs or expenses?

Dedicated Tablets

The WMS should use a dedicated tablet for collecting home assessment information on site. The use of a private phone or tablet is strongly discouraged for several reasons:

- The bigger size of a tablet versus a phone provides an easier user experience, especially if the WMS want to show example photos or videos to the homeowner during the assessment.
- Private devices can be subjected to subpoenas, which means the owner may have to give up their personal property for an underdetermined amount of time.
- Having ownership of the device means the administering agency will retain any photos or information should the WMS choose to depart the organization.

- Will you need tree marking paint, flagging, or other supplies?
- Will you want to create, print, and distribute outreach brochures and guides?
- Will you want yard signs to promote properties that have received certificates?

Some clients offer the REALFire® program for free to their residents; others collect a fee per assessment. It is up to each community to decide if and how they want to charge for assessments. CWPC is happy to discuss the pros and cons.

Who will take on the roles of Local Program Coordinator and Wildfire Mitigation Specialist(s)? Outside of the basic training provided by CWPC, what additional training will they need?

Using the cost structures outlined in the Appendix and the considerations listed above, what do you expect your REALFire® costs to be?

What are your funding sources, and what amount can you rely on having from each of them?

Initial discussions with CWPC

Once you've clarified your REALFire® goals, selected REALFire® products, and determined personnel and funding, contact CWPC to discuss:

- The challenges that you hope to address by implementing REALFire® and your program goals;
- The program options that you've selected, including any customized services;
- Your options for the WMS and LPC roles;
- Implementation timeline; and
- Pricing.

Step 2 Develop and Prepare

During the Develop and Prepare step, both you and CWPC will develop the REALFire® tools and get ready for your upcoming launch.

REALFire® Tools

For CWPC to develop your REALFire® tools, we will need some basic information, such as:

- department, agency, or community logos and color schemes;
- any maps that support the program;
- your custom domain name chosen for the program website and web portal (optional);
- local IT contact (if available);
- names and email addresses for people filling the WMS and LPC roles; and
- any additional information needed to support any add-on program options and customized services.

REALFire® Training

CWPC will also work with you to schedule your REALFire® training. All people in the WMS and LPC roles will require REALFire® training, which covers current scientifically based wildfire mitigation best practices, working with homeowners, and how to use the REALFire® app and technology.

Once dates are determined, training preparation will include:

- scheduling CWPC training resources;
- securing room and necessary equipment;
- finding at least three local properties that students can use to practice, and coordinate with; property owners to have students on-site for one-to-two hours;
- sending invitations to participants;
- purchasing tablets and installing the app, ensuring usernames and passwords are correct; and
- printing handouts.

CWPC will develop your REALFire® mobile application and web portal before the training, so that the WMS and LPC participants can practice on the tools they will use in the field.

During the training, each WMS trainee must complete and submit a minimum of six REALFire® assessment training reports. Following initial REALFire® training, the trainer and LPC may identify the need for additional mentoring dependent upon the progress and ability of each WMS trainee to conduct a REALFire® assessment confidently, effectively, and independently. At a minimum, the CWPC recommends that an experienced WMS shadow each WMS trainee for at least one actual assessment. During the mentoring, the mentor observes the trainee conducting a home assessment, reviews the written report, and provides feedback and guidance. As part of the ongoing program, the LPC will continue to review REALFire® assessment reports and provide feedback where improvements are necessary.

Step 3 Launch

Once your WMS and LPC are trained, you will be ready to launch the REALFire® program in your community. As part of the ongoing program support, the CWPC will address any functional technical issues that you submit through the technical support ticketing system. As you continue

Domain Name

Take care when selecting a domain name as you may be using it for a long time. The URL becomes part of your program “branding” which can be difficult to shift once it is already established. Also, anticipate that your first choice may not be available and give yourself extra time to find a domain name for your program. Finally, we strongly recommend trademarking your program name so that it remains dedicated to *your* program.

to implement the REALFire® tools, we also encourage you to monitor and record feedback on the mobile app and web portal component functionality with regards to your program needs.

Step 4 Review and Revise

At the end of the season following the initial REALFire® launch, CWPC will meet with you to review your progress toward your program goals and discuss any revision requests of the REALFire® program components as needed. For this meeting, you'll want to have your list of desired improvements. We'll work with you to offer costing and prioritization of your requested changes to determine what, if any, modules, or customization changes should be made.

Contact Information

Interested clients are encouraged to reach out with questions. We are happy to help! For more information, please contact:

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www.communitywildfire.org

Appendix A: REALFire® Products

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
REALFIRE® Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REALFire® Mobile Application • Wildfire Assessment Reports • Web Portal and Dashboard • Technical Support (one year) • Client logo, preferred branding, and color palette match 	\$8,000
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 hour in-person training course • Up to 15 participants • Focus on HIZ concepts and program tools 	\$7,000

CWPC offers additional program options that can be added to the REALFire® basic package. These features are designed to further automate tasks or enhance a client's overall approach to obtaining parcel-level information in an efficient manner. Clients can select from the menu below to determine which item(s) are most appropriate for their needs.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Integrated Online Homeowner Application Form	This option provides a link to an online homeowner application form that can be posted directly on a community's owned and managed website. The link allows the information that is collected in the application to be automatically transferred to the REALFire® web portal, where it can be reviewed, edited and approved by the Local Program Coordinator.	\$1,500
Integrated Scheduling System	This option links the online application with the ability to schedule onsite assessments, assign the scheduled assessment to a Wildfire Mitigation Specialist, notify the homeowner, and automatically populate the homeowner and property basic information in the assigned Mitigation Specialists mobile application.	\$250
Rapid Wildfire Risk Assessment Tool	This tool uses a set of questions that are accessed using the mobile data collection app for collecting rapid risk assessment (curbside assessments) which is iOS, and/or Android compatible and linked to a primary database with web portal access for the administrator, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist and homeowner. This is fully integrated into the mobile application and web portal system and allows for rapid risk assessment data to be seamlessly integrated into the primary database and web portal with no requirement for manual data manipulation. This database will integrate the rapid risk (curbside) data to populate fields within the same database that support the comprehensive hazard assessment data collection.	\$3,000

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Mobile Map Visualization	When a mobile device is connected to the internet (cellular, or Wi-Fi), this feature will provide spatial map visualization of the device and allow for the selection of the appropriate property using visual cues on the map screen. Clients find this useful for the Rapid Risk Assessment Tool, when homes are difficult to identify.	\$1,000
Homeowner Activities and Data Management Tracker	This option provides a web accessible application that will track homeowner activities using both a homeowner self-reporting feature and a Wildfire Mitigation Specialist inspection follow-up feature. Option includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking progress made on mitigation work as well as status of recognition efforts. • Homeowner self-reporting feature, whereby homeowners can access their information and self-report accomplishments and the client can either accept or deny these change requests. 	\$2,500
Public Facing Map Portal	This option provides a private, or public facing web-based map (ESRI map viewer) that can visually identify rapid risk or comprehensive assessment locations. The public facing version can also provide homeowners with secure access links to their assessments.	\$2,500
Homeowner Recognition	This option provides a process and certificate of recognition for the homeowner to work towards as part of being recognized through their mitigation efforts. Homeowners will be recognized with the issuance of a certificate after successfully completing all mitigation recommendations as determined through a site inspection performed by qualified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist.	\$1000
Integration of Local Authority Parcel Identification	This option allows for the manual uploading of the local authority's parcel identification assigned alphanumeric information (supplied by the client) via a parcel number (primary) and physical address (secondary).	\$2,500

CWPC also offers custom services for clients seeking additional capabilities. Through a series of guiding questions, CWPC will help clients determine any additional products best suited for their local needs and provide a detailed cost estimate. Examples of custom services include:

- **Custom Mobile App and Web Portal Set-Up:** CWPC can help clients determine any specific custom mobile app and web portal needs that are outside of the functionality provided in the REALFire® basic package. For example, some clients are interested in customizing the question-and-answer formatting and layout.
- **Custom Outreach and Engagement Program:** CWPC can assist clients in developing program materials targeted for specific audiences, including development of local contractor lists, homeowner education materials on the Home Ignition Zone, promotional

brochures to help advertise the program, webinars and trainings for local industry professionals, and more.

- **Custom Local Coordination:** CWPC can provide additional program capacity to assist clients with Local Coordinator duties, such as receiving online applications, scheduling, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist coordination, and applicant follow up.
- **Additional Technical Support:** Some clients request additional assistance related to the technical implementation of the program. CWPC is happy to assist with these needs to ensure that clients are confident in the tools they are using.

Following the first year of initial support which is included in the REALFire® basic package, clients must renew their service agreement on an annual basis to continue receiving access and technical support to REALFire® program tools. Annual service agreements provide clients with online technical request ticketing system, support for software issues or questions related to mobile device compatibility. Additional requests outside the scope of the service agreement, such as additional trainings or customized updates, are billed separately.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Annual Service Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online technical request ticketing system • Support for software problems, mobile device problems, web portal problems • Regular updates to address, bugs or fixes and align with iOS / Android operating system changes • Supports up to 15 users • Agreement starts after year one 	\$2,500 (per 15 users)