

## **Provincial Community Wood Smoke Reduction Program: 2024/2025 Program Guidance**

The provincial Community Wood Smoke Reduction Program (CWSRP), previously known as the provincial Wood Stove Exchange Program (WSEP), will continue in 2024/2025 with a focus on achieving the program's three primary goals:

- Encourage the public to change out old, smoky wood stoves for cleaner heating options, including heat pumps, pellet stoves, and U.S. EPA or CSA emissions certified wood stoves.
- Raise awareness about good burning practices.
- Educate the public about wood smoke and its health effects.

In partnership with B.C. Lung, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy has made the following changes to the program in 2023:

- Updated the incentive structure to increase overall incentives per exchange, with the specific focuses on:
  - Further increased incentive in red-zone communities.
  - Provided greater incentives for cleanest options, such as heat pumps.
- Made changes to encourage and enable greater First Nations participation.
  - Further increased incentives for First Nations Communities.
  - Simplified application process for First Nations directly participating in the program.
  - Encouraged existing local programs to include First Nations communities within their program's geographic areas.
- Ended support for fossil fuel-fired replacement appliances since January 1, 2023 to align the CWSRP with the climate targets in the [Clean B.C. Roadmap to 2030](#).
- Introduced the option (with the local community to decide) of keeping an old wood stove following the installation of a heat pump if specific requirements are met.

- Introduced a “bounty” option that provides funding for applicants to remove and recycle any existing, operational non-EPA or non-CSA-certified wood appliance without committing to a replacement appliance.
- Added the possibility of exchanging outdoor wood boilers.
- Developed educational material, including a program brochure, infographic, and door hanger for local programs. Material is available from B.C. Lung, and from the ministry website. Please speak to the program coordinator if you want to modify the material for your region.
- Distributed a participant survey to communities; and the results of the survey are to be submitted in the annual report.
- Introduced an online clean burning course for local programs.
- Offered support for citizen science projects in communities.

The aforementioned changes will remain in effect for the 2024/2025 program. Detailed information regarding eligible appliances for exchange, community funding application, and other related resources can be found on the ministry [web pages](#). Further details on the recent changes are provided below.

Any questions associated with the CWSRP should be directed to the program email ([wsep@gov.bc.ca](mailto:wsep@gov.bc.ca)).

## **Incentive Structure (in the continuation of 2023-2024)**

An exchange from an uncertified wood stove to:	Incentive Amount <sup>a,b,c</sup> (\$)		
	First Nation Communities <sup>g</sup>	Red-Zone Communities	All Other B.C. Communities
EPA or CSA certified wood stove	1200	600	600
Pellet Stove	2000	1500	1000
Heat Pump <sup>d</sup>	3000	2000	1500
Bounty Option <sup>e</sup>	300	300	300

### **Notes:**

- a. The incentive for a new electric insert for all communities is \$400.
- b. The incentive can be combined with CleanBC and federal incentives where applicable.
- c. The maximum total rebate must be less than the cost of the appliance.
- d. For uncertified wood stove to heat pump exchanges, an additional \$300 incentive may be offered if the wood stove is removed and demolished.
- e. A \$300 incentive (Bounty option) is available for applicants to remove existing uncertified wood appliances without committing to a new heating appliance.
- f. OWB incentives for all communities:
  - OWB to new OWB that meets legislated setbacks and is CSA or EPA certified: \$600.
  - OWB to certified pellet boiler that meets legislated setbacks: \$1000.
  - OWB to indoor heating appliances: refer to the incentives in this table accordingly.
- g. Eligible First Nations communities include indigenous communities in British Columbia falling into one of the following categories:
  - A First Nation “band” as defined by the Indian Act (Canada);
  - A First Nation governing body, representing exclusively one or more First Nations.
  - Treaty First Nation governments and Nisga’a Government.

### **Definition of Red Zone Communities**

Red Zone communities are those that have exceeded the Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the current reporting period (2018-2020) or at least one of the reporting periods in the past 10 years. Details are available on the ministry [website](#).

Red Zone community incentive levels would be applicable for the following existing participants in 2025:

- District of Vanderhoof
- Bulkley Valley and Lakes District
- Comox Valley Regional District
- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- City of Port Alberni
- Village of Valemount

Existing participants and other communities or agencies interested in the program can contact the CWSRP for further information on the list of complete red-zone communities.

### **Guidance for Heat Pumps**

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy continues to encourage exchanges of uncertified wood stoves to electric heat pumps. Heat pumps must be an exchange option in every participating community.

Applicants installing a new heat pump will have the option to keep their existing wood stove if the following requirements are met:

1. The local community has chosen to adopt this option in some or all of their area (this must be in the application).
2. The existing wood stove is EPA or CSA emissions certified.
3. The applicant signs a clean burning pledge and commits to:
  - Apply clean burning practices.
  - Only use the wood stove under specific conditions (i.e., power outage and/or during cold weather when supplementary heat is required).
  - Provide the wood cord usage data to the local program for at least two years (before and after installation of the heat pump).
4. The applicant lives either in a First Nation community or an area designated by the local program that meets one or more of the following criteria:
  - A rural or remote area where power outages are frequent.
  - A cold climate area where a back up heating system is recommended in conjunction with a heat pump.
  - A priority area defined by the local program.

- A low-income community according to local social services or other vetted information sources such as the Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation (CIMD) Index where supplemental wood heating is viewed as economically essential (Here is an [example](#) for McBride/Valemount CHSA).

If the local program wants to have option for participants to keep the existing wood stove, the information including the specific areas identified by the local communities must be outlined in the application.

### **Bounty for Removing Old Wood Appliances with No Exchanges**

The CWSRP provides a \$300 incentive for applicants to remove existing uncertified wood appliances without committing to a new heating appliance. The incentive is per stove and limited to one stove per household. The removed wood appliance **must** be verified to be demolished or recycled to claim the bounty.

Communities must indicate in their application if they want to have the bounty option in the program.

### **First Nations Collaboration**

B.C. ENV and B.C. Lung maintain an ongoing collaboration with First Nations housing managers, the First Nation Health Authority, and the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to develop strategies promoting and implementing the program within First Nations communities.

To further support this initiative, a dedicated incentive category has been established specifically for First Nations communities, as indicated in the incentive table. First Nations may apply for funding directly from B.C. ENV and B.C. Lung throughout the year. Additionally, the program encourages the existing local CWSRP to include First Nations communities within their program's geographic area.

### **Outdoor Wood Boilers**

The program permits the exchange of outdoor wood boilers (OWBs), subject to compliance with the B.C. Solid Fuel Burning Domestic Appliance Regulation (SFB DAR) and local government bylaws. The local communities retain the flexibility to determine the eligibility of OWB exchange.

## **Program Continuous Improvement and Education**

### **Program Survey**

Every community participating in the CWSRP is required to conduct a short survey. The purpose of this survey is to better understand who is taking part in the program and their motivations and expectations. B.C. ENV and B.C. Lung will use the survey results to guide potential future changes to the program.

Participating communities are required to ensure:

- Each person who exchanges an appliance and applies for the rebate completes the survey.
- Survey results are compiled into the annual report.

### **Peer to Peer Learning**

To foster collaboration, peer-to-peer learning, and program enhancement, B.C. Lung and B.C. ENV will organize program coordinators' meetings or webinars at least twice a year. These events will serve as valuable platforms for program participants to engage with each other, exchange knowledge, and share best practices. It is mandatory for communities that receive funding from the program to actively participate in these events.

### **Educational Outreach Material**

B.C. Lung and B.C. ENV have developed outreach material including a brochure, infographic, and door hanger. These materials are accessible on the Ministry and B.C. Lung webpages and hard copies can be provided upon request.

### **Provincial Pilot Education Project**

In 2023/2024, participating communities still have the option to develop or use their own existing education program or to join the provincial pilot education project. Your proposal should indicate which option your community is choosing. The materials can currently be viewed here: [https://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/WoodSmokeCourse/story\\_html5.html](https://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/WoodSmokeCourse/story_html5.html)

B.C. ENV and B.C. Lung will use the local program feedback to improve the online education tool for all communities in B.C. after the pilot project is completed.

### Citizen Science Projects

The CWSRP will collaborate with interested communities to facilitate citizen science projects within those communities. The output of these projects could be published data or reports, and the objective of these projects is to achieve the following goals:

- Identify hotspots within local areas where wood smoke is a significant concern.
- Increase public awareness regarding the health effects associated with wood smoke.
- Other projects contributing to knowledge of wood smoke in the community.

Communities that express interest in conducting citizen science projects should engage in discussions with B.C. ENV and B.C. Lung. A short, standalone proposal is required for communities that want funding for citizen science initiatives.