

FINAL REPORT

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American Red Cross Wildfire Preparedness Program Evaluation

Presented by:

NORC at the University of
Chicago

Megan Heffernan, MPH
Katherine Gelfand, MPH
Carly O'Connor, MPH

Presented to:

American Red Cross

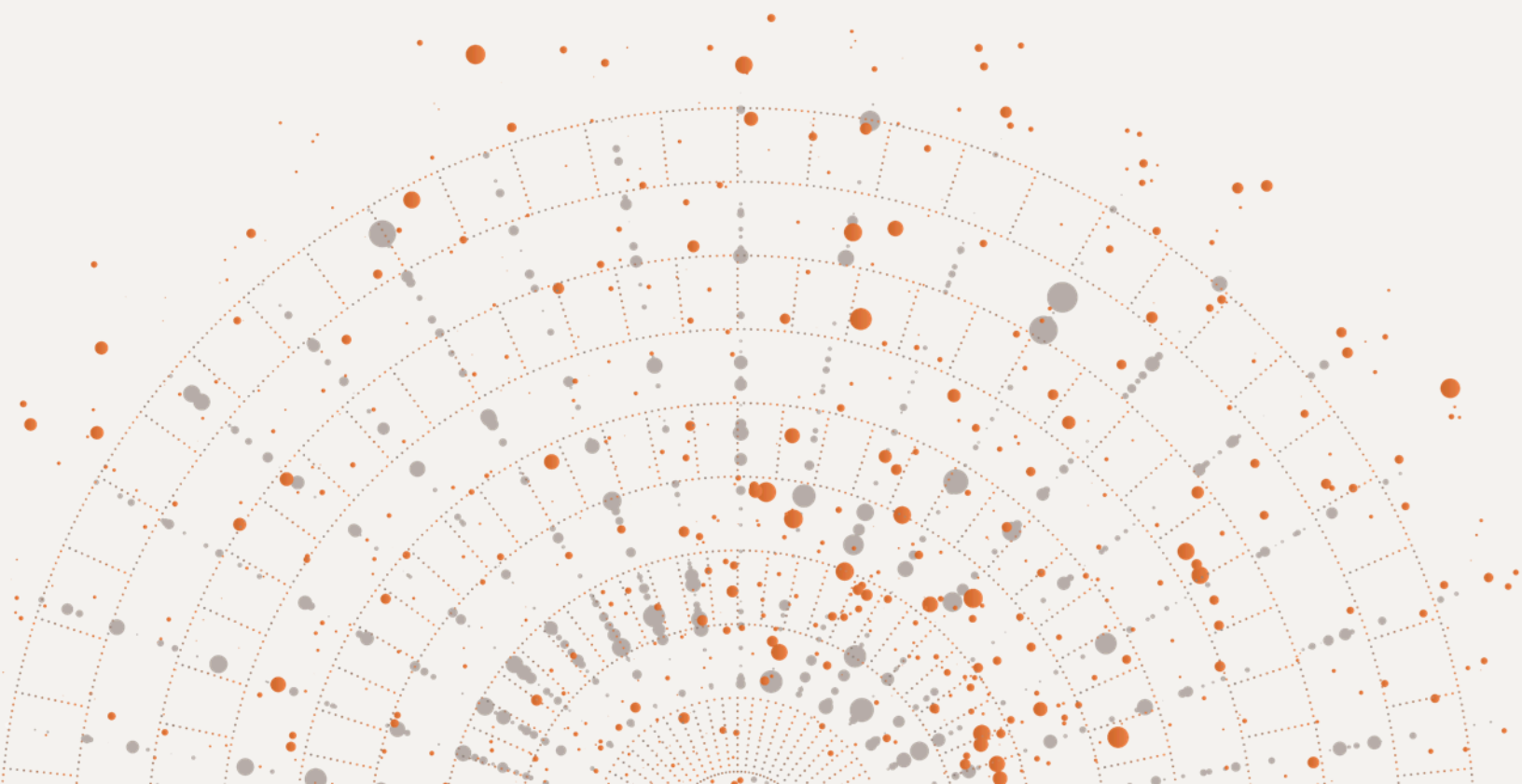


Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Methodology	4
Study Population.....	4
Data Collection	4
Survey Response Rate	5
Data Analysis.....	6
Key Findings from the American Red Cross Wildfire Preparedness Program Evaluation	7
Wildfire Preparedness Findings	10
How was the program implemented?	10
To what extent did the program reach communities at risk, both in terms of wildfire risk and other demographics?	15
What outcomes are associated with the Wildfire Preparedness Visits?	17
How satisfied were program participants with the experience?	24
Limitations	26
Conclusion	27

List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1. Response Rate Summary.....	5
Exhibit 2. Visit Types Among Respondents.....	6
Exhibit 3. Volume of Wildfire Preparedness Visits by County-Level Wildfire Risk.....	11
Exhibit 4. Number of Wildfire Preparedness Visits by Wildfire Risk.....	11
Exhibit 5. How Wildfire Preparedness Program Participants Learned About the Visits ..	12
Exhibit 6. Wildfire Risk and Experience Characteristics.....	15
Exhibit 7. Demographic Characteristics	16
Exhibit 8. Preparedness Behaviors.....	18
Exhibit 9. Engaging in Wildfire Mitigation Actions	19
Exhibit 10. Sharing Information with Others	21
Exhibit 11. Feeling Prepared to Respond to a Wildfire.....	22
Exhibit 12. Example Reasons Why Respondents Reported Their Level of Feeling Prepared	23
Exhibit 13. Usefulness of Visit Activities.....	24

Introduction

Wildfires are a rising threat in the United States. This year, as of September 2026, nearly 57,000 wildfires have burned approximately 8.5 million acres nationwide,¹ affecting communities across a wide range of geographic regions. As population growth continues in wildfire-prone areas and fire seasons become longer and more intense, millions of households face an increased risk of wildfire-related impacts, including evacuation, property damage, poor air quality, injury, and loss of life.

Preparing for a wildfire can help reduce risks to people, homes, and communities. The Red Cross recommends that households take steps such as creating an evacuation plan, signing up for local emergency alerts, maintaining a Go Bag with emergency supplies, and reducing wildfire hazards around the home. Actions such as clearing vegetation around the home, removing flammable plants and materials, and creating a safe buffer zone can help reduce risk of damage from wildfires and make it easier for households to evacuate safely during an emergency.

To help households better prepare for wildfires, the American Red Cross launched wildfire preparedness visits in 2023. During these visits, Red Cross volunteers and community partners work directly with residents to identify wildfire hazards around their property, provide personalized recommendations for risk reduction, assist with preparedness planning, and distribute educational materials and resources. The program targets households located in areas of elevated wildfire risk using wildfire risk mapping tools and local community expertise. Visits may be conducted independently or alongside home fire safety visits to provide households with multiple preparedness services during a single interaction. When residents need assistance in preparing their homes for wildfires, and where such services exist, the Home Teams refer residents to partners for support with funding and labor to support mitigation work.

Wildfire Preparedness Program Goals

- Conduct a property evaluation by walking around residents' properties and noting potential wildfire hazards
- Provide education regarding wildfire safety and escape route planning
- Share resources such as a wildfire preparedness checklist and a Go Bag packing list with residents



**American
Red Cross**

¹ National Interagency Coordination Center. (2026). <https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/statistics>. Last Updated September 23, 2026.

Methodology

The American Red Cross commissioned NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) to conduct an independent evaluation of its Home Fire Campaign program, in conjunction with its wildfire preparedness visits, supported by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program (EMW-2023-FP-00275). While previous evaluations have mainly focused on home fire safety visits, this evaluation examines four key questions:

- How was the wildfire preparedness program implemented?
- To what extent did the program reach communities at risk, both in terms of wildfire risk and other demographics?
- What are the outcomes associated with the wildfire preparedness visits?
- How satisfied were program participants with the experience?

Findings from this evaluation are intended to inform ongoing program improvement and support future wildfire preparedness efforts in communities across the United States. The NORC Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed all study instruments and associated materials. The NORC IRB determined the study to be exempt from full review (Protocol No. 25-01-2108).

Study Population

Intervention Group. NORC sent surveys to all 778 households that received a wildfire preparedness visit between September 3, 2024 and September 24, 2025.

Comparison Group. To allow for comparisons between households that received a Red Cross wildfire preparedness visit and those that did not, NORC surveyed a comparison group, using the NORC AmeriSpeak panel. AmeriSpeak provides a nationally representative, probability-based sample of pre-recruited participants who have agreed to take part in regular online and telephone surveys. NORC surveyed 1,129 adults living in very high or relatively high wildfire risk census tracts based on the [FEMA National Risk Index](#).

Data Collection

Intervention Survey Instrument. Data collection consisted of both an online and paper-based survey, provided in English and Spanish. The survey included 38 closed- and open-ended questions. First, the survey asked questions on wildfire preparedness knowledge and behavior, satisfaction with services, and demographics. Next, the survey asked whether households had also received a home fire safety visit. Those who indicated they received home fire safety components (e.g., smoke alarm installation) were asked specific questions about this portion of the visit. The intervention group survey included 38 closed- and open-ended questions.

Comparison Survey Instrument. The comparison group survey consisted of 16 closed-ended questions about wildfire preparedness, home fire preparedness, and demographic and household information.

Survey Fielding. NORC used Qualtrics to field the intervention group survey. Data collection consisted of three mailings and one email follow-up: 1) an initial invitation letter to request participation online (with \$2 incentive); 2) a reminder/thank you postcard; 3) an email reminder; and 4) a second invitation letter with a paper copy of the survey (in both English and Spanish) and a return envelope. NORC's AmeriSpeak team fielded the comparison group survey, with respondents completing it either via the web-based portal or over the phone. AmeriSpeak sent email reminders three days after the initial invitation email, and then every five days thereafter. Respondents received the cash equivalent of \$2 for completing the survey. Data collection occurred from January to March 2026.

Survey Response Rate

Exhibit 1 shows the response rate for both the intervention group (25%) and comparison group (36%).

Intervention Group. Overall, 170 intervention group surveys were completed, including 128 online and 42 by mail. Mailings for 84 households were returned as undeliverable, accounting for 11% of the overall sample. These households were excluded from the response rate. A respondent's address was considered undeliverable if the final mailing was returned as undeliverable and no survey response was received.

Comparison Group. Overall, 401 comparison group surveys were completed, including 396 online and five over the phone.

Exhibit 1. Response Rate Summary

	Intervention	Comparison
Sample Size	778	1,129
Returned Undeliverable (% Undeliverable)	84 (11%)	N/A
Completed Survey	170	401
Online²	128	396
Paper	42	0
Phone	0	5
Response Rate³	25%	36%

² Nine surveys (7% of online responses) were completed via the follow-up email link

³ Denominator (N=694) excludes undeliverable intervention group households

Data Analysis

For the wildfire preparedness questions, the intervention group final analytic dataset included 140 responses (82% of the total 170 responses received). NORC excluded 30 respondents who reported not receiving a wildfire preparedness visit (**Exhibit 2**).

Exhibit 2. Visit Types Among Respondents

	Survey responses (n=170)
Wildfire preparedness visit	140 (82%)
No visit	30 (18%)

Quantitative Analysis. For quantitative data analysis using Statistical Analysis System (SAS), we calculated: descriptive statistics for each survey item; t-tests and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests to compare outcomes before and after the visit; and chi-square tests to assess whether responses differed significantly between the intervention and comparison groups.

Qualitative Analysis. For qualitative data, we conducted a rapid thematic analysis of open-ended survey items in Excel. This process included a high-level review of responses for a given question, identifying connections between themes and ways to categorize (i.e., code) the data, developing and refining code definitions, and calculating the frequencies of emergent themes. We used deductive coding for questions asked in prior evaluations and inductive coding for new questions.

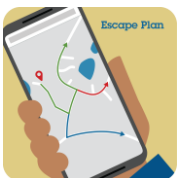
Key Findings from the American Red Cross Wildfire Preparedness Program Evaluation

Between September 2024 and September 2025, the Red Cross conducted 778 wildfire preparedness visits across eight states. During these visits, Red Cross volunteers and community partners work directly with residents to identify wildfire hazards around their properties, provide personalized risk-reduction recommendations, assist with preparedness planning, and distribute educational materials and resources. The program targets households located in areas of elevated wildfire risk using wildfire risk mapping tools and local community expertise. In early 2026, NORC at the University of Chicago fielded a survey to all households that received a Red Cross visit and a comparison group survey to households in very high or relatively high wildfire risk census tracts. The goal was to examine program implementation, the extent to which the program reached communities at risk, outcomes associated with the wildfire preparedness visits, and participant satisfaction with the experience.

Wildfire preparedness visits helped households adopt recommended preparedness behaviors, reduce the risk of wildfire damage around their homes, and feel more prepared to respond during an emergency.



Wildfire visit participants were **twice as likely** as similar households that did not receive a visit to **have a Go Bag**. (68% vs. 32%)



Wildfire visit participants were **more likely** than similar households that did not receive a visit to **have a planned evacuation route**. (88% vs. 58%)



Wildfire visit participants were more likely to **take 3 or more actions around their homes to mitigate wildfire damage** than similar households that did not receive a visit. (87% vs. 71%)



Wildfire visit participants were substantially more likely to **feel prepared to respond to a wildfire**. (99% vs. 58%)

Source: [U.S. Fire Administration Wildfire and Outdoor Fire Safety Pictographs](#)

The program successfully reached wildfire-prone communities and households with elevated vulnerability.

75%

of wildfire visit participants are **60 or older**

70%

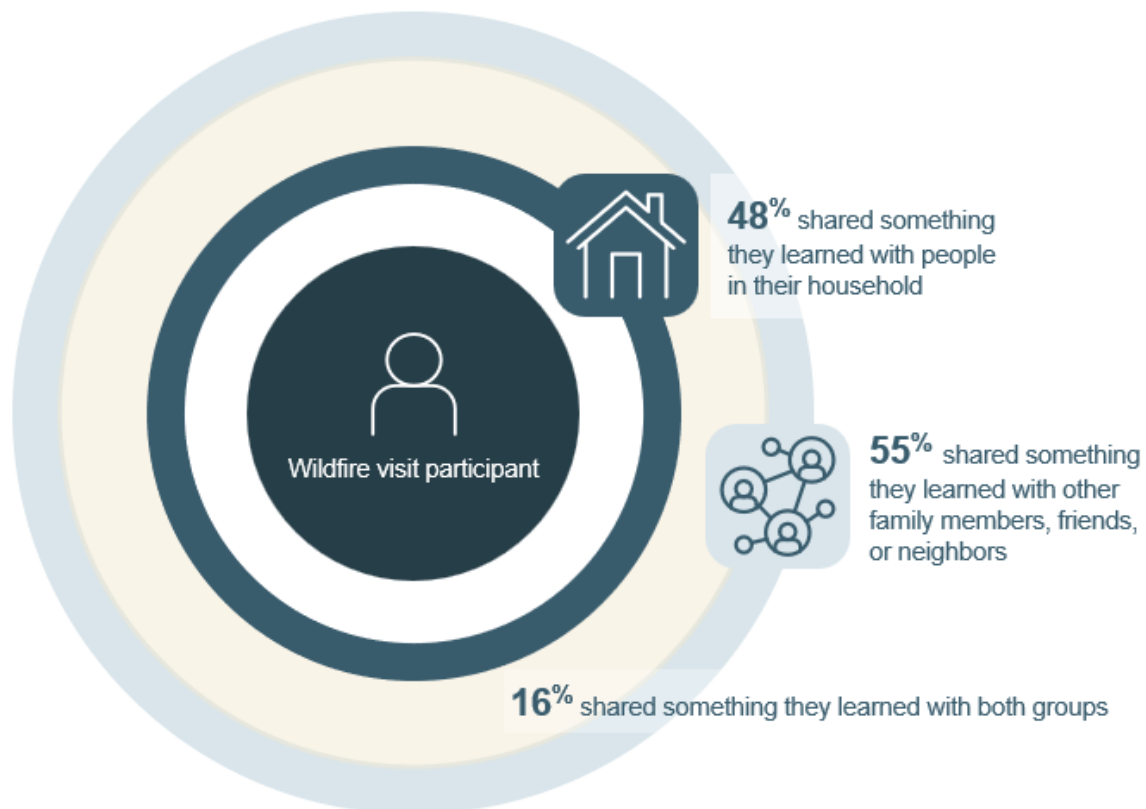
of wildfire visit participants **live in relatively moderate, relatively high, or very high wildfire risk areas**

36%

of wildfire visit participants have **never experienced a wildfire**

The impact of wildfire preparedness visits extended beyond the households that received them.

In total, **88%** of wildfire preparedness visit participants shared something they learned, helping spread wildfire preparedness throughout their communities.



Participants viewed the visits as useful, actionable, and worth recommending.

100%

found the **property walk-through**, where volunteers gave recommendations on how to make their homes more fire-resistant, **to be useful**

94%

agreed that the actions recommended during the visit will **make their homes safer from wildfires**

91%

would probably or definitely **recommend the visit** to a family member or friend

The Red Cross wildfire preparedness visits are helping households take meaningful steps to prepare for future wildfire events.

By increasing preparedness behaviors, encouraging wildfire mitigation actions, building confidence in emergency response, and extending preparedness messages throughout communities, the program is helping strengthen resilience in wildfire-prone areas.



Source: American Red Cross Northern California Coastal Region

Wildfire Preparedness Findings

This section presents findings related to the implementation, reach, outcomes, and participant satisfaction associated with the Red Cross wildfire preparedness visits.

How was the program implemented?

Through wildfire preparedness visits, the Red Cross aims to serve communities at risk of wildfires. An important first step in evaluating a program is examining how it was implemented. This involves examining where the visits are conducted, how participants engage in the program, and what activities occur. In other words, it is necessary to know whether the program was delivered as intended to determine whether it was effective.

Program Reach

Reaching households in communities at risk of wildfire is a central goal of the Red Cross wildfire preparedness program. Examining where visits occurred and the wildfire risk levels of participating households helps assess whether the program was successfully reaching its intended audience.

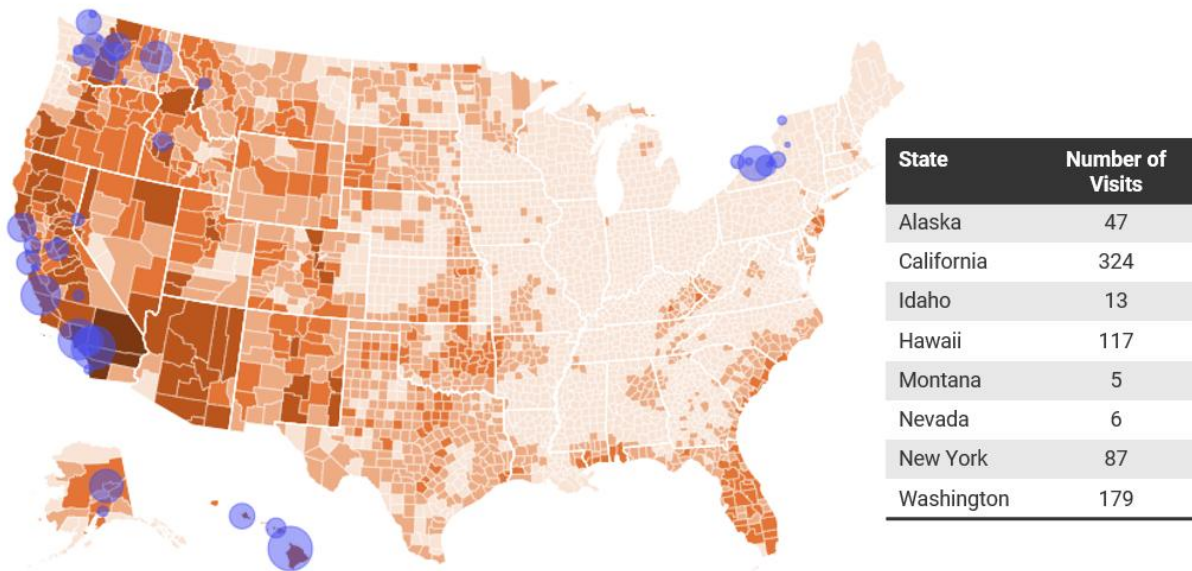
Between September 2024 and September 2025, the Red Cross and partners conducted 778 wildfire preparedness in-home visits in eight states: California, Washington, Hawaii, New York, Alaska, Idaho, Nevada, and Montana (**Exhibit 3**).



These findings suggest that the program successfully reached communities facing meaningful wildfire risk. By targeting households in communities at elevated wildfire risk, the program appears to reach residents who may be particularly likely to benefit from preparedness and risk mitigation education and resources.

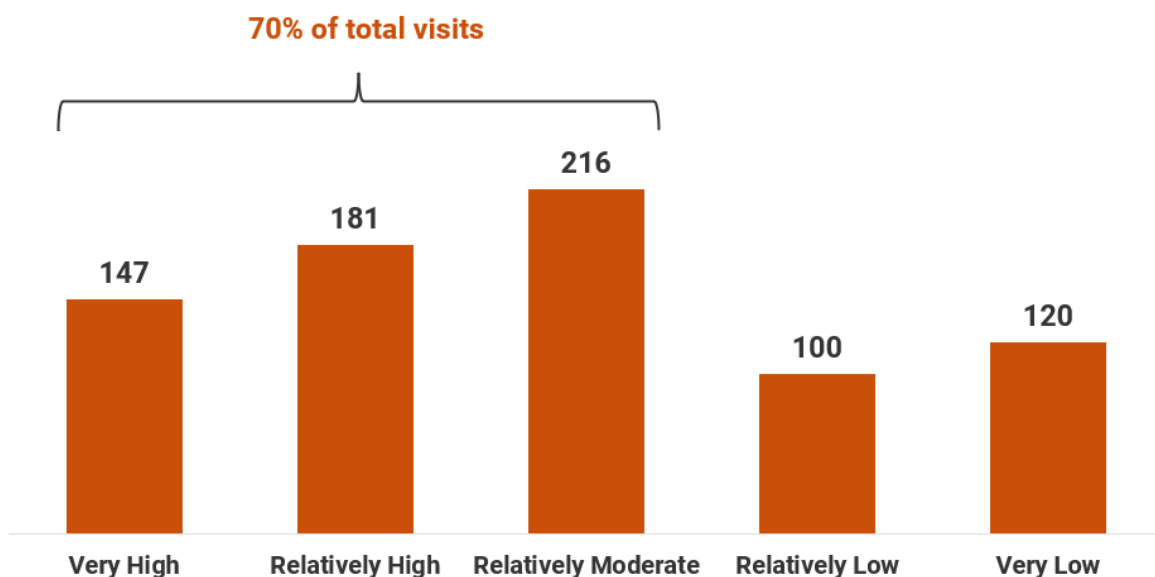
Exhibit 3. Volume of Wildfire Preparedness Visits by County-Level Wildfire Risk

Wildfire Risk ■ Very High ■ Relatively High ■ Relatively Moderate ■ Relatively Low
■ Very Low ■ No Rating
Concentration of Visits 5 ● 10



Sources: FEMA National Risk Index (2025), Red Cross visit data

Based on the FEMA National Risk Index for wildfires, the majority of households served were in very high- to relatively moderate-risk census tracts (**Exhibit 4**).

Exhibit 4. Number of Wildfire Preparedness Visits by Wildfire Risk

Learning About the Visits

Understanding how participants learned about the wildfire preparedness visits provides insight into the outreach strategies that helped connect households with the program. Respondents reported learning about the visits through a variety of sources, including direct outreach from the Red Cross, trusted community organizations, local events, neighbors, friends, and personal connections (**Exhibit 5**).

- **43%** reported that the **Red Cross** played a role in their discovery of the program. This includes having a knock on their door, receiving a flyer about the program, or connecting with the Red Cross through a local event.
- **34%** reported learning about the program through **trusted organizations in the community**, such as their local fire department, school, church, senior center, or local government.
- **24%** reported that **neighbor-to-neighbor networks** and personal relationships with others touched by the program played a role. Some respondents also indicated that they had a personal relationship or connection to someone involved in Red Cross programming.

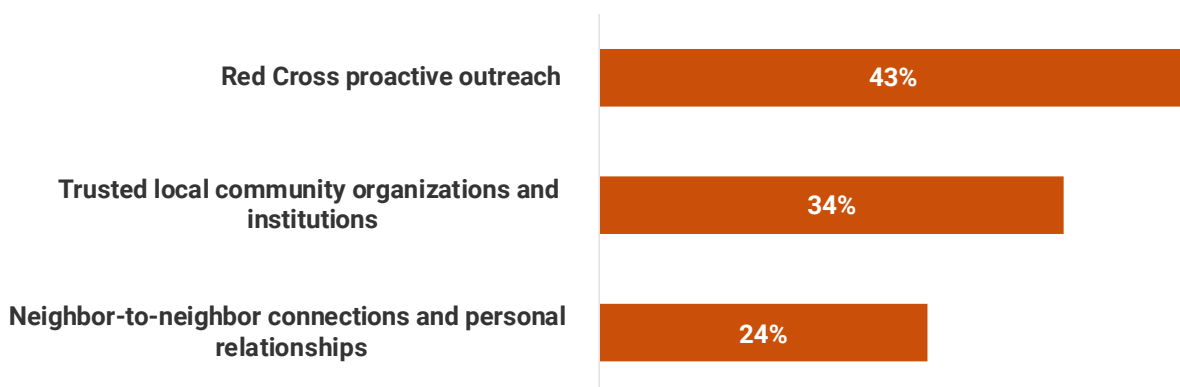
“The visit was in conjunction with an evacuation drill in our neighborhood. After the drill, the Red Cross representatives came to my door.”

– Wildfire Preparedness Visit Participant



The diversity of referral sources suggests that community partnerships and word-of-mouth communication were effective complements to Red Cross outreach efforts, helping the program reach residents through familiar and trusted channels.

Exhibit 5. How Wildfire Preparedness Program Participants Learned About the Visits



The Role of Community Events

10% of respondents reported learning about the visit through an event in their community, and eight respondents across states talked about disaster-specific convenings. Residents from Washington shared that their community put on a neighborhood evacuation drill. Other respondents from California, Hawaii, and Nevada similarly reported neighborhood meetings and disaster preparedness fairs.



Source: [The Spokesman-Review](#)

Wildfire Preparedness Visit Key Activities

Once connected with households, Red Cross staff and volunteers talk with residents about how to increase wildfire preparedness and mitigate risk at their homes.

Participants reported receiving the core components of the program, including written educational materials, assistance signing up for local emergency alerts, a backpack with emergency supplies, and a property walk-through to identify opportunities to make their home more fire-resistant.

95%

reported receiving **written wildfire preparedness educational information**.



94%

reported that the visitors **walked around their property** to discuss how to make their home more fire-resistant.



86%

reported that the visitors showed them how to **sign up for local emergency alerts**.



66%

reported receiving **a backpack with emergency supplies**.⁴



Source: [U.S. Fire Administration Wildfire and Outdoor Fire Safety Pictographs](#)



These findings suggest that the wildfire preparedness visits consistently delivered the program's core components, providing households with a combination of education, preparedness resources, and personalized guidance designed to help them better prepare for and reduce the risks associated with wildfires.

⁴ Backpacks were provided as resources allowed. Supply was limited.

To what extent did the program reach communities at risk, both in terms of wildfire risk and other demographics?

The wildfire preparedness program was designed to serve households in communities at elevated wildfire risk while also reaching populations that may be particularly vulnerable during disasters. Survey findings indicate that the program successfully reached residents living in higher-wildfire-risk areas, individuals with and without prior wildfire experience, and households that included older adults and others who may face additional challenges during an evacuation. The comparison group survey was fielded only to households in very high or relatively high wildfire-risk areas, but it included a group similar in wildfire experience and key demographics.

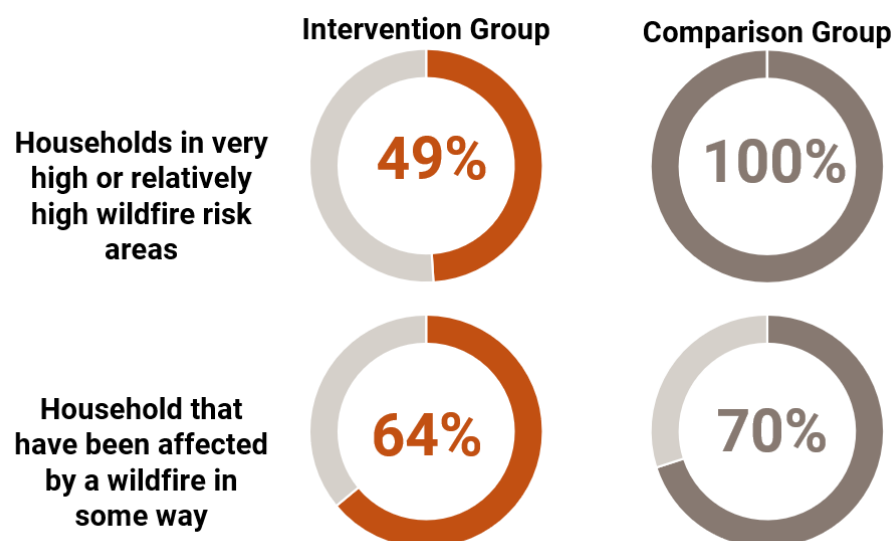
Wildfire Risk and Experience

Survey respondents represented a range of wildfire risk levels and previous wildfire experiences (**Exhibit 6**). Examining these characteristics helps assess whether the program reached households that may benefit most from wildfire preparedness education and resources. Reaching residents without prior wildfire experience is particularly important because these individuals may be less likely to have already taken preparedness actions or developed evacuation plans.



The finding that more than one-third of participants had never been personally affected by a wildfire suggests the program was serving not only those already familiar with wildfire risk but also educating residents with limited prior exposure to wildfire preparedness information.

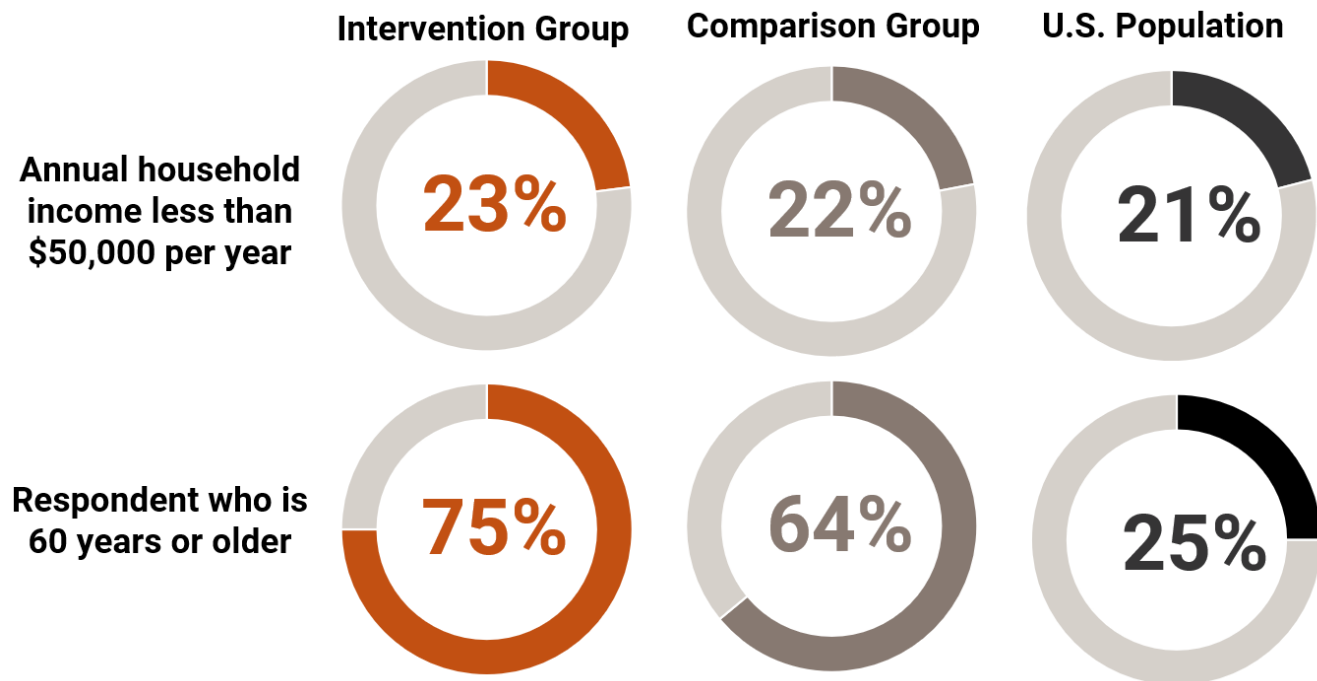
Exhibit 6. Wildfire Risk and Experience Characteristics



Demographics

Respondents represented a variety of demographic and household characteristics (**Exhibit 7**). Examining these characteristics provides insight into the populations reached by the wildfire preparedness program.

Exhibit 7. Demographic Characteristics⁵



⁵ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 1-Year American Community Survey Estimates.

What outcomes are associated with the Wildfire Preparedness Visits?

The wildfire preparedness visits are designed to help residents understand wildfire risk, take actions to prepare their homes and families, and feel ready to respond in the event of a wildfire. Intervention group respondents who received a wildfire preparedness visit reported greater engagement in recommended preparedness behaviors and home mitigation activities than comparison group respondents, suggesting that the program supports both preparedness and resilience in wildfire-prone communities.

Preparedness Behaviors

Preparedness behaviors are a critical component of wildfire readiness. The Red Cross recommends maintaining an emergency supply kit, planning evacuation routes, and signing up for emergency alerts because these actions can help households receive timely warnings and evacuate safely during a wildfire.

Wildfire preparedness visit participants were asked whether they had these preparedness measures in place before the visit or implemented them during or after the visit. Comparison group respondents were asked whether they currently had each preparedness measure in place. Overall, wildfire visit participants reported a higher likelihood of having a “Go Bag,” having a planned evacuation route, and being signed up for emergency alerts (**Exhibit 8**), specifically:



Source: [U.S. Fire Administration Wildfire and Outdoor Fire Safety Pictographs](#)

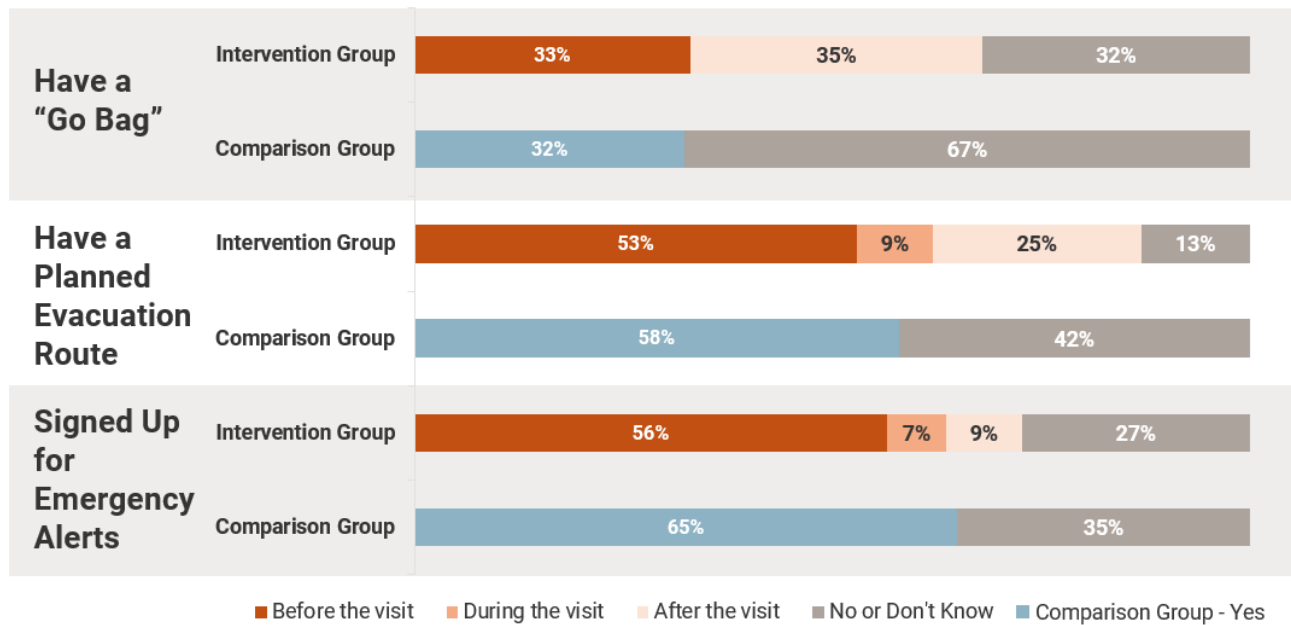
- **68%** reported having a “Go Bag,” compared to 32% of the comparison group.*
- **88%** reported having a planned evacuation route in case of a wildfire, compared to 58% of the comparison group.*
- **73%** reported being signed up for text, phone, or email emergency alerts for their local area, compared to 65% of the comparison group.



These findings suggest that the visits can motivate residents to adopt widely recommended wildfire safety practices. Establishing these preparedness measures before an emergency may reduce barriers to protective action when time-sensitive decisions are required.

* $p < 0.01$; chi-square test

Exhibit 8. Preparedness Behaviors



Wildfire preparedness visits appear particularly valuable for residents without prior wildfire experience.

Intervention group respondents who reported no prior wildfire experience were more than twice as likely to report having a Go Bag (54% vs. 20%) and an evacuation plan (86% vs. 40%) as respondents without prior wildfire experience in the comparison group.*

Taking Action

Creating defensible space and reducing flammable materials around a home are widely recognized strategies for reducing risk of wildfire damage and improving a home's ability to withstand a wildfire. Because wildfire preparedness visits include a property walk-around and individualized recommendations, they provide residents with specific actions they can take to reduce risks around their homes. The survey asked respondents which wildfire mitigation activities they had completed around their property.



Source: [American Red Cross Wildfire Preparedness](#)

* $p < 0.01$; chi-square test

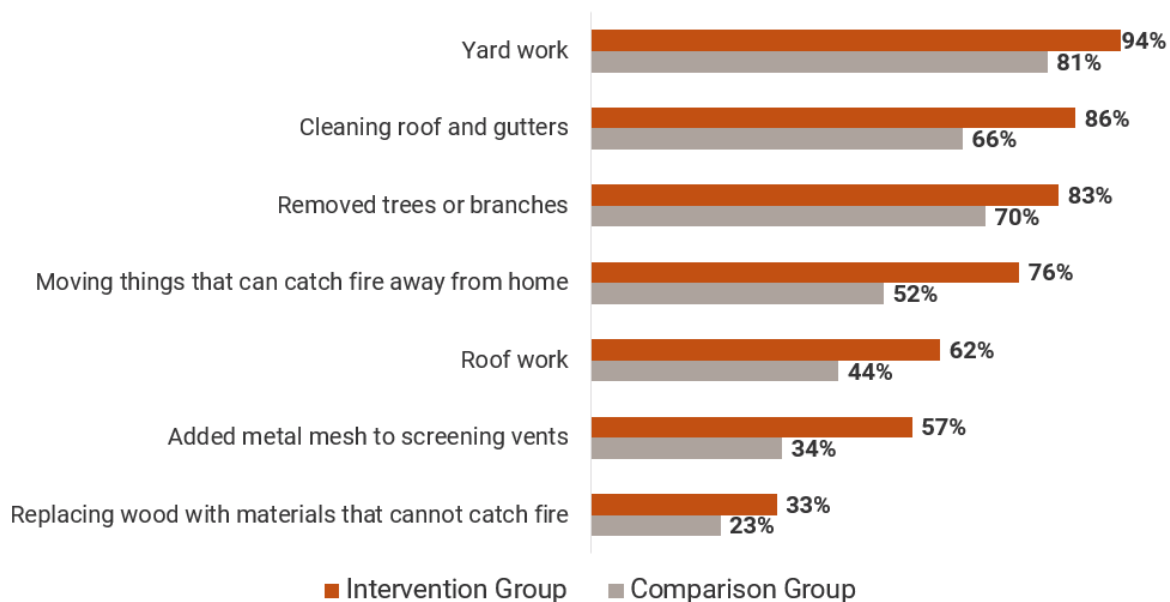
Most wildfire preparedness visit participants reported taking multiple actions to prepare their homes for wildfire. Wildfire preparedness visit participants were more likely than comparison respondents to report completing each wildfire mitigation activity examined, including clearing their roof and gutters, moving things that can catch fire away from their home, and adding metal mesh to screening vents (**Exhibit 9**).

- Nearly all intervention group respondents (**97%**) reported completing at least one wildfire preparedness activity around their home following the visit, compared to 89% of the comparison group.*
- **87%** of the intervention group respondents reported completing three or more activities, compared to 71% of the comparison group.*



These findings suggest that participants are not only learning about wildfire risk reduction strategies but also implementing multiple recommended preparedness actions around their homes.

Exhibit 9. Engaging in Wildfire Mitigation Actions



* $p < 0.01$; chi-square test

Sharing Information with Others

Sharing preparedness information with family members, neighbors, and friends can help strengthen wildfire readiness across entire communities. In addition to encouraging participants to take action themselves, wildfire preparedness visits may increase awareness of wildfire risks and preparedness strategies among others through conversations and information sharing. Respondents were asked whether they had shared anything they learned during their wildfire preparedness visit with other people.

Most wildfire preparedness visit participants reported sharing information from their visit with others.

- Overall, **88%** of respondents reported sharing something they learned during the visit, including 55% who shared information with extended family members, friends, or neighbors and 48% who shared information with members of their household (**Exhibit 10**). In contrast, only 21% of comparison group respondents reported discussing wildfire preparedness with family or friends in the previous six months.*

“[I] told my daughter about maintaining distances from her own home to trees, to have an emergency backpack, smoke detectors, and in general, how great the visit was.”

– Wildfire Preparedness Visit Participant

“I keep all the flyers I get. I have new roommates. I plan to have a 1-2-hour session where we look at the flyers individually, then share what we learned with the rest of the house.”

– Wildfire Preparedness Visit Participant



These findings suggest that the benefits of wildfire preparedness visits may extend *beyond participating households* by increasing preparedness awareness and encouraging conversations about wildfire safety within the broader community.

* $p < 0.01$; chi-square test

Exhibit 10. Sharing Information with Others



What information are participants sharing?

Among the **88%** of respondents who reported sharing information with their family, friends, or neighbors:

- **48%** said they shared information they learned about the various ways to prepare one's property for a wildfire, including removing trees and brush, landscaping, and roof maintenance.
- **15%** reported telling others about the Red Cross visit, sharing the written materials or handouts, or recommending the visit.

Feeling Prepared to Respond to a Wildfire

Feeling prepared to respond to a wildfire is an important outcome because confidence in one's preparedness may influence the ability to act quickly and effectively during an emergency. In addition to encouraging specific preparedness behaviors, wildfire preparedness visits aim to increase residents' understanding of wildfire risk and the steps they can take to protect themselves, their families, and their homes.

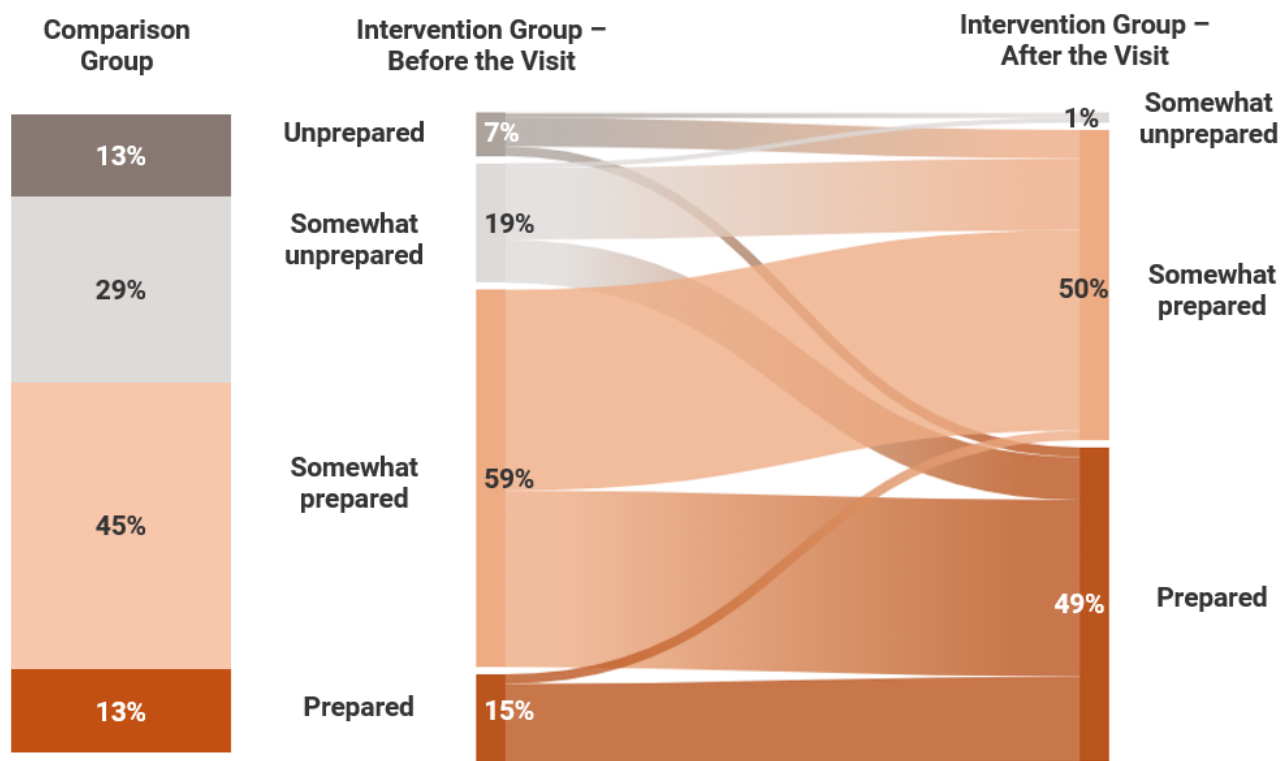
Intervention group respondents overwhelmingly reported feeling prepared to respond to a wildfire (**Exhibit 11**).

- After the visit, **99%** of intervention group respondents reported feeling prepared or somewhat prepared to respond to a wildfire, compared to 58% of the comparison group.*
- **61%** of intervention group participants who were not already prepared before the visit reported increased preparedness after the visit.



These findings suggest that wildfire preparedness visits may increase residents' confidence in their ability to respond during a wildfire emergency. Feeling prepared is an important component of resilience, as individuals who understand potential risks and response actions may be better positioned to make informed decisions during an emergency.

Exhibit 11. Feeling Prepared to Respond to a Wildfire



* $p < 0.01$; chi-square test

When asked to explain why they feel prepared or unprepared, intervention group participants reported a variety of reasons for their answer (**Exhibit 12**). Common reasons for feeling prepared included having a plan in place, increased knowledge through the visit, and previous personal experiences with wildfires.

Exhibit 12. Example Reasons Why Respondents Reported Their Level of Feeling Prepared

Before	After	Example Response
Unprepared	Somewhat unprepared	"I know what needs to be done within my environment, but I haven't begun."
Somewhat unprepared	Somewhat prepared	"I appreciate the knowledge of what to do around the base of the house. I also feel good about the alerts given and being ready with a grab-and-go bag and a planned route out"
Somewhat prepared	Somewhat prepared	"One never knows where, when, or how it'll happen, how severe it'll be, how much more warning we will get, etc."
Somewhat prepared	Prepared	"The yard is fully cleaned up, and we're prepped for evacuation "
Prepared	Prepared	"Being evacuated several times"

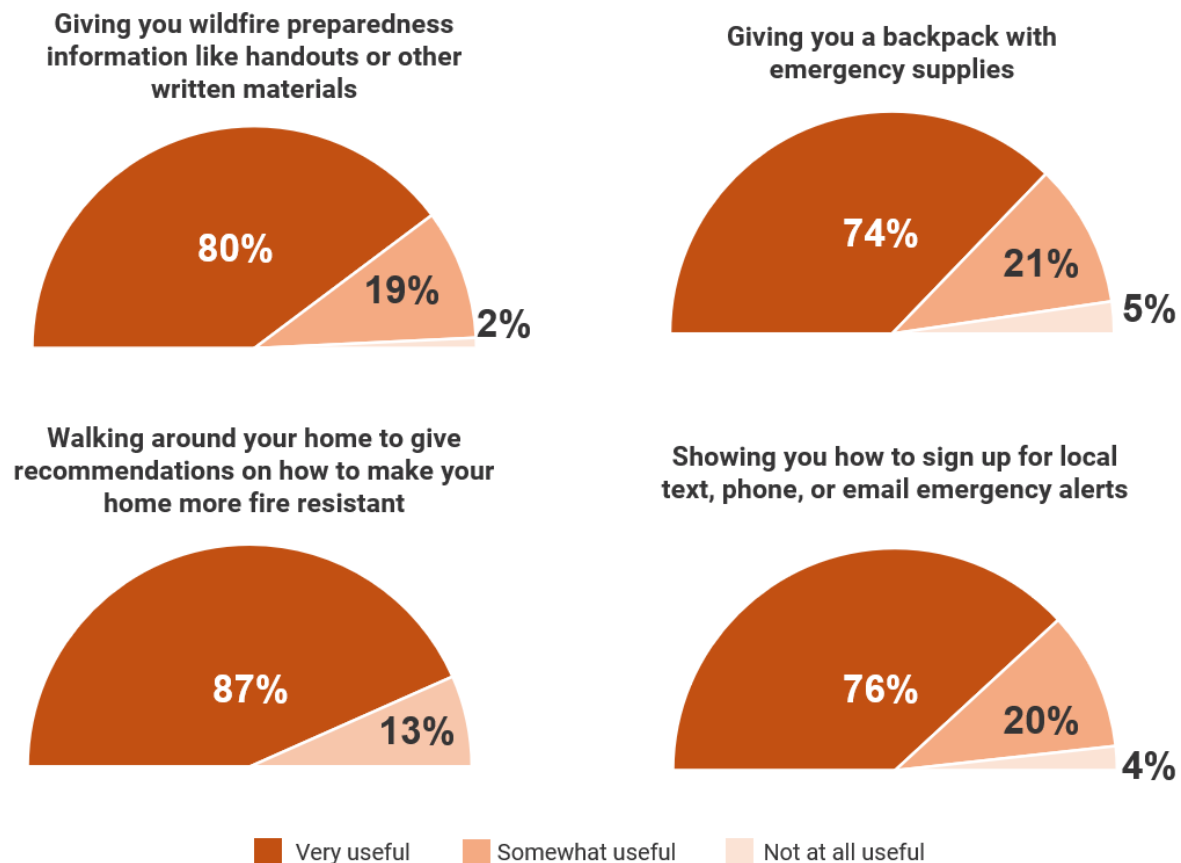
How satisfied were program participants with the experience?

Participant satisfaction is an important measure of program success because it provides insight into how residents perceived the value, relevance, and usefulness of the wildfire preparedness visits. Wildfire preparedness visit participants were asked if they would recommend the visit to others and to describe why. Respondents' insights can help identify which program components are perceived positively and which components can be refined to bolster receptiveness within communities.

Respondents were asked whether they felt the visit would make their homes safer from wildfires, found each program component to be useful, and would recommend the visit.

- **94%** of respondents affirmed that the activities conducted during the visit would make their home safer from wildfires.
- **95%** reported that all activities delivered to them were somewhat or very useful. A breakdown of usefulness by activity is shown in **Exhibit 13**.
- **91%** reported that they would probably or definitely recommend the wildfire preparedness visit.

Exhibit 13. Usefulness of Visit Activities



Wildfire preparedness program participants were highly satisfied with the program, gained valuable knowledge, and took action to prepare themselves and their homes for wildfires. Among the 92 respondents who shared reasons for recommending the program, responses typically fell within three main themes:

- **Satisfaction with Red Cross volunteers and visit implementation (49%).** Participants were highly satisfied with the wildfire preparedness program, describing the visits as helpful, informative, and professional. The volunteers were friendly, approachable, and committed to helping community members increase their preparedness. The combination of warm, welcoming professionals and thorough, tangible advice created an excellent experience.
- **Knowledge growth and the value of education (13%).** Participants viewed the program as a valuable educational opportunity that increased their knowledge and awareness of wildfire risk. Both those who learned something new and those who refreshed their knowledge of preparedness found the educational component of the visit useful.
- **Enhanced wildfire prevention and preparedness (13%).** Participants thought the program increased wildfire prevention and preparedness by prompting them to take action to mitigate wildfire risk. Even for those who are aware of key steps, the visit was an important reminder to not delay action. Participants also highlighted the program's potential life-saving impact, expressed increased confidence in navigating wildfire risk, and indicated an intention to share information they learned with family, friends, and neighbors.

“There are plenty of people around who are completely unprepared or may not be able to react quickly. The next best thing to keep myself and my property safe is to help neighbors keep themselves and their property safe. Any help doing that is an automatic positive. Plus, the Red Cross members were knowledgeable, willing to find information if they didn't have it, and extremely pleasant to talk to. They seemed genuinely kind, like they wanted to be helping.”

– Wildfire Preparedness Visit Participant



These findings suggest that the program was well-received and that participants viewed the visits as an effective way to increase wildfire preparedness and reduce risk around their homes.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting findings from this evaluation:

- **Participant characteristics.** Households that chose to respond may differ from those that did not respond in ways that are not captured by the survey data. For example, respondents may have been more engaged with the wildfire preparedness visit or more interested in preparedness topics than nonrespondents. As a result, findings may not be representative of all households that received a wildfire preparedness visit.
- **Self-reported data.** The evaluation relied on self-reported data. Respondents were asked to recall activities that occurred during the visit and actions they had taken since the visit. Self-reported measures are subject to recall error and social desirability bias, which may result in over- or under-reporting of preparedness behaviors and other outcomes.
- **Unable to measure pre/post-intervention.** All outcomes were measured at a single point in time after the visit occurred. While respondents were asked to report whether certain preparedness activities were in place before, during, or after the visit, the evaluation cannot determine whether improvements will be sustained over time or whether participants will maintain preparedness behaviors in future years.
- **Uncontrolled and unmeasured confounding.** Although respondent demographic and household characteristics were collected and assessed across the intervention and comparison groups, the analysis did not adjust for potential differences. For example, factors like home ownership, household size, and having household members that are a part of a vulnerable group could influence willingness or ability to engage in preparedness activities. Thus, the attainment of outcomes may not be attributed solely to the intervention. Additionally, the survey could not capture all potential confounding household characteristics, such as property size, access to internet and other resources, living in a rural or urban area, and strength of local infrastructure.
- **Mailing address errors.** Some surveys that were sent to intervention group respondents were returned as undeliverable by the United States Postal Service. This could be because only the service delivery address was recorded, rather than the participant's mailing address. As a result, some residents in communities where P.O. boxes are prevalent were unable to complete the survey.

Despite these limitations, the evaluation incorporated a comparison group, assessed multiple preparedness outcomes, and included both quantitative and qualitative data. Together, the findings provide valuable evidence that the wildfire preparedness visits are reaching at-risk households and are associated with increased preparedness behaviors, wildfire mitigation activities, and perceived preparedness to respond to a wildfire.

Conclusion

Wildfires continue to pose a growing threat to communities across the United States, highlighting the importance of helping households prepare before an emergency occurs. Findings from this evaluation suggest that the Red Cross wildfire preparedness visits are helping residents take meaningful steps to prepare for future wildfire events. Compared to the comparison group, wildfire visit participants were more likely to report engaging in key preparedness behaviors, taking actions to reduce the risk of damage from wildfires around their homes, feeling more prepared to respond during an emergency, and sharing preparedness information with others in their communities. These findings indicate that the Red Cross home visits are a promising strategy for strengthening household and community resilience. By combining personalized education, practical preparedness resources, and property-specific recommendations, the Red Cross is helping communities prepare for potential emergencies and take proactive steps to reduce their vulnerability to future wildfire or home fire events.