



**Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority Agenda**

**Wednesday, February 26, 2025, 8:30 a.m.
437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes**

Members of the Board

City of Bishop Councilmember Stephen Muchovej - Vice Chair, Inyo County Supervisor Jeff Griffiths,
Inyo County Supervisor Trina Orrill, Mono County Supervisor Lynda Salcido,
Town of Mammoth Lakes Councilmember John Wentworth,
Town of Mammoth Lakes Mayor Chris Bubser, City of Bishop Councilmember Karen Schwartz,
Mono County Supervisor Paul McFarland

NOTE: Councilmember John Wentworth will attend this meeting remotely from the following location:
Aloft Reno-Tahoe Airport 2015 Terminal Way Room 321, Reno, NV 89502

NOTE: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Assistant Clerk at (760) 965-3615. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the Town to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 13.102-35.104 ADA Title II)

NOTE: Materials related to an item on this agenda submitted after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Town Offices located at 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite 230 during normal business hours. Such documents are also available on the ESCOG website at www.escog.ca.gov subject to staff's ability to post the documents before the meeting.

NOTE: You may watch this meeting on the Town of Mammoth Lakes' (TOML) website at <https://pub-townofmammothlakes.escribemeetings.com/?Year=2025>, via Zoom or on TOML's local government cable channel 18. Public comments may be submitted to the ESCOG Clerk at clerk@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov before and during the meeting or may be made via Zoom or in person.

ZOOM INFORMATION

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:

Please click this URL to join. <https://monocounty.zoom.us/j/92421427651>

Or join by phone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 646 876 9923 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799

***To raise your hand press *9, To Unmute/Mute press *6 Webinar ID: 924 2142 7651**

International numbers available: <https://monocounty.zoom.us/j/92421427651>

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Notice to the Public: This time is set aside to receive public comment on matters not calendared on the agenda. When recognized by the Chair, please state your name and address for the record and please limit your comments to three minutes. Under California law the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Board is prohibited from generally discussing or taking action on items not included in the agenda; however, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Board may briefly respond to comments or questions from members of the public. Therefore, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Board will listen to all public comment but will not generally discuss the matter or take action on it.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 13, 2024

4.2 Ratify Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium California Public Utilities Commission Resolution T-17778 Consent Form

4.3 Ratify Amendment No. 1 to Proposition 1 Watershed Restoration Grant Program Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator

4.4 Approve the Memorandum of Understanding Among the County of Inyo, the County of Mono, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the City of Bishop and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Authorizing the County of Inyo to Enter into and Administer a Contract for the Preparation of a Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan and Providing for Reimbursement to the County of Inyo for the Cost Thereof

4.5 Accept the Eastern Sierra Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2024 Progress Update and Direct Staff to Submit to the Economic Development Administration

4.6 Accept the 2023-2024 ESCOG Financial Statement

4.7 Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium Activities Report Provided by Eastern Sierra Regional Broadband Coordinator Scott Armstrong

4.8 Approve a Resolution of the Board of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Adopting Corrective Actions Pursuant to the California Department of Transportation's Division of Local Assistance Corrective Action Plan

4.9 Approve Moving Regular April ESCOG Meeting Date from April 9, 2025 to April 11, 2025

5. POLICY MATTERS

5.1 Call for the Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

5.2 Receive a Presentation on Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Strategic Plan

- 5.3 Approve Agreement Regarding Wildfire Coordinator Services to be Provided by Inyo County to the Eastern Sierra Council of Government Joint Powers Authority
- 5.4 Approve Submission of the U.S. Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant to the United State Department of Agriculture
- 5.5 Accept the State of California's "Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience"
- 5.6 Authorize the Chair to sign correspondence to The Honorable Representative Kevin Kiley RE: Federal Funding for Critical Wildfire Projects
- 5.7 Executive Director Update Report

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Informational reports from Member Agency representatives on committees, commissions, and organizations; general reports on Board Member activities

7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

8. ADJOURNMENT

The ESCOG will adjourn to the next regular meeting scheduled to be held on April 9, 2025.



Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) - Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

Minutes of Regular Meeting

December 13, 2024, 8:30 a.m.

Dual Locations: Bishop Council Chambers and Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers

Bishop Council Chambers 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA 93514

Mammoth Lakes Council Chambers 437 Old Mammoth Rd., Ste Z Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Members Present: Chair Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, Board Member Karen Schwartz

Members Absent: Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. in the Bishop Council Chamber, 377 West Line Street, Bishop, CA. Board Member Lynda Salcido attended the meeting from the Town of Mammoth Lakes Council Chamber, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Board Member Chris Bubser led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center (BRC) Director Meryl Picard introduced herself and reported that the Eastern Sierra BRC recently held a successful grand opening event. Ms. Picard said that one of the BRC's goals was to network throughout Inyo and Mono Counties to determine what the resource needs of small business were. She said that the BRC would also help the non-profit organizations and reported that they would partner the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) out of Kern. She spoke about staffing as well as the desire to bring on some volunteers to help out in the office.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Executive Director Elaine Kabala requested that Items 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Board Member Lynda Salcido joined the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth
Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Approve Items 4.1 and 4.2 on the Consent Agenda.

For (7): Chair Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, and Board Member Karen Schwartz

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

4.1 Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 23, 2024

4.2 Approve Revision #1 to Agreement No. 1283-RT: Sierra Nevada Conservancy Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Grant for the Eastern Sierra Towns to Trail Plan

4.3 Approve Amendment No. 2 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences for the Provision of National Environmental

Executive Director Elaine Kabala reported that this item had been pulled from consent due to the request of Legal Counsel to provide the original agreement with Whitebark Institute to the Board for the Board's review prior to approving the amendment to the contract.

Moved by Board Member Trina Orrill
Seconded by Board Member John Wentworth

Approve Amendment No. 2 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences for the Provision of National Environmental Policy Act Project Management and Project Implementation Services.

For (7): Chair Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, and Board Member Karen Schwartz

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

4.4 Approve Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences for the Provision of National Environmental

Executive Director Elaine Kabala reported that this item had been pulled from consent due to the request of Legal Counsel to provide the original agreement with Whitebark Institute to the Board for the Board's review prior to approving the amendment to the contract.

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth
Seconded by Board Member Chris Bubser

Approve Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement Between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and the Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences for the Provision of National Environmental Policy Act Services for the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator.

For (7): Chair Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, and Board Member Karen Schwartz

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

4.5 Ratify Subaward Agreement Number SBC-2024156: Agreement Between the Sierra Business Council and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments for Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Phase

Executive Director Elaine Kabala reported that the agreement for this item had not been included in the packet due to a clerical error. Ms. Kabala discussed the scope of the contract.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and members of the Board.

Moved by Board Member John Wentworth

Seconded by Board Member Karen Schwartz

Ratify Subaward Agreement Number SBC-2024156: Agreement Between the Sierra Business Council and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments for Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Phase.

For (7): Chair Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, and Board Member Karen Schwartz

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

5. **POLICY MATTERS**

5.1 **Receive presentation from IMBC Coordinator Scott Armstrong**

Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium (IMBC) Coordinator Scott Armstrong outlined the information in the 2024 Winter ESCOG Broadband Update.

There was discussion between Mr. Armstrong and members of the Board.

5.2 **Review and Approve Submission for Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Applications:**

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center (BRC) Director Meryl Picard provided additional information about the Start-up Programming Funding for the Regional Business Resource Center Small Business Catalyst Program.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala, Ms. Picard, and members of the Board.

Moved by Board Member Jeff Griffiths

Seconded by Board Member John Wentworth

Approve Submission for the following Sierra Jobs First Catalyst Applications: Eastern Sierra Regional Collaborative Capacity Incubator,

Chipmunk Canyon Existing Conditions Analysis, and Start-up Programming Funding for Regional Business Resource Center.

For (7): Chair Bob Gardner, Board Member Jeff Griffiths, Board Member Trina Orrill, Board Member Lynda Salcido, Board Member John Wentworth, Board Member Chris Bubser, and Board Member Karen Schwartz

Absent (1): Vice Chair Stephen Muchovej

Carried (7 to 0)

5.3 Discuss 2024 Inyo and Mono County Election Results

Members of the Board outlined the information in the staff report.

Board Member Trina Orrill announced that Board Member Jeff Griffiths had been appointed as the 2025 California State Association of Counties (CSAC) President.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and members of the Board.

5.4 Executive Director Report

Executive Director Elaine Kabala outlined the information in the staff report.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and members of the Board.

5.5 Recognize Chair Bob Gardner for Years of Service to the ESCOG

Executive Director Elaine Kabala congratulated Chair Bob Gardner on his many years and achievements as a public servant, and thanked him for his service on the ESCOG Board.

Board Member Chris Bubser read an email she had received from 33rd Congressional District of California U.S. Representative Pete Aguilar recognizing and thanking Bob Gardner for his many years of public service.

There was discussion between Ms. Kabala and members of the Board.

6. BOARD MEMBER/AGENCY REPORTS

Board Member Jeff Griffiths reported that Inyo County recently went through a comprehensive class and compensation study and came to an agreement with their bargaining units to set their pay scales in the median range and said that he hoped that would have a positive effect on recruitment and retention moving

forward. Mr. Griffiths said that Inyo County had created an assessment appeals board, reported on one recent wildfire and two recent mobile home park fires in Lone Pine, and said that Inyo County was subsidizing emergency medical care in the Bishop area and had a cost share agreement with the Bishop Paiute Tribe, the City of Bishop and the County. He announced that the Highway 395 bypass was open and said that Inyo County had a development plan for the old 395 corridor to make it a gateway to Death Valley National Park. He announced that they had hired a Behavioral Health Director, opened the Sierra Business Resource Center, held a Ribbon Cutting for the Dave McCoy Memorial Highway, and had a Retirement Celebration for Jim Ellis.

Board Member John Wentworth thanked all for the Dave McCoy Memorial Highway, discussed the Town of Mammoth Lakes' (TOML) Town Council priorities and objectives process, said that he had requested that the Town Council adopt California's Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Wildfire Resilience Strategy and to bring that back to the ESCOG. He provided an air service update, and said that the skiing in Mammoth was good.

Board Member Chris Bubser reported that the Town of Mammoth Lakes tree lighting event at the Community Recreation Center (CRC) was very successful. She provided an update on the CRC, and programs provided there, and offered to host tours for any members of the Board wishing to check it out.

Board Member Karen Schwartz announced that the City of Bishop had a new Councilmember, Dennis Freundt. Ms. Schwartz provided an update on the Field 6 Improvement Project, said that they were looking for funding for basketball courts, and discussed potential improvements to the Millpond Recreation Area. She said that the Bishop Rural Fire Department was going through growing pains and was considering hiring full-time firefighters and was seeking community support. She announced that her husband's band, Hay Blackbird, would be playing at the Rambler's 10th Anniversary Party tonight and said her business would host a 5k Winter Series Fundraiser tomorrow for free soccer skills training through Eastside Youth.

Chair Bob Gardner reported that a housing analysis was presented at Tuesday's Mono County Board of Supervisors meeting and provided an update on the new jail in Bridgeport.

Board Member Lynda Salcido encouraged the Town of Mammoth Lakes to look at the County's housing analysis, and reported that Mono County had finalized the purchase of four units in Bridgeport that would be used for workforce housing, two of which would be reserved for County employees, and said that a fifth unit would become available by the end of the year. Ms. Salcido said that

she attended the Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra (DSES) fundraiser at the Mountain Saturday.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

7. REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Board Member John Wentworth said that he would like the CalFire Wildfire Task Force Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Resilience Strategy to be considered as an informing document for the ESCOG and the regional efforts.

Board Member Jeff Griffiths reported that most County elected officials would be attending the National Association of Counties Legislative Conference in Washington, DC on the same day the February ESCOG meeting was scheduled to be held.

There was discussion among members of the Board.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 a.m. to the next regular meeting schedule to be held on February 26, 2025.

Angela Plaisted, Assistant Clerk

Consent Form

Name of Grantee: Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

The Grantee identified above hereby acknowledges receipt of the California Public Utilities Commission Resolution T-17778 and agrees to comply with all grant terms, conditions, and requirements set forth in the Resolution, as well as all CASF rules, including those in the Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Account Requirements, Guidelines and Application Materials. If applicable, Grantee must fulfill the monthly reporting requirements set forth in Public Utilities Code section 281(l)(1) if it is using a licensed contractor or subcontractor to undertake a contract or subcontract in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to perform work on a project funded or financed by CASF.

Undersigned representative of Eastern Sierra Council of Governments is duly authorized to execute this Consent Form on behalf of the Grantee and to bind the Grantee to the terms, conditions, and requirements set forth in California Public Utilities Commission Resolution T-17778.

Dated this 20th day of December, 2024.

Elaine Kabala
Elaine Kabala (Dec 23, 2024 10:06 PST)
Signature

Elaine Kabala
Printed Name

Title: Executive Director

Organization or Name of Company: Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

Business Address (include street address, suite/apt. number, city, state, and ZIP Code):

PO Box 1609, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Telephone Number (include area code): 323-652-0390

Email Address: ekabala@escog.ca.gov







Consortia Consent Form-ESCOG-ExecDir

Final Audit Report

2024-12-23

Created:	2024-12-20
By:	Scott Armstrong (sarmstrong@inyocounty.us)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAApdVAS_mVEwsYupKgfNcbpHhgPx2DVaSc

"Consortia Consent Form-ESCOG-ExecDir" History

-  Document created by Scott Armstrong (sarmstrong@inyocounty.us)
2024-12-20 - 5:11:00 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to ekabala@escog.ca.gov for signature
2024-12-20 - 5:14:36 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by ekabala@escog.ca.gov
2024-12-20 - 5:19:11 PM GMT
-  Signer ekabala@escog.ca.gov entered name at signing as Elaine Kabala
2024-12-23 - 6:06:07 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Elaine Kabala (ekabala@escog.ca.gov)
Signature Date: 2024-12-23 - 6:06:09 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2024-12-23 - 6:06:09 PM GMT



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CALIFORNIA

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STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Staff
Subject: Ratify Amendment No. 1 to Proposition 1 Watershed Restoration Grant Program Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator

Meeting date: February 26, 2024

Prepared on: February 15, 2025

Attachments: A) Contract Amendment No. 1 to CDFW Grant Q2196015 Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Agreement

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

At the October ESCOG meeting, the Board approved Amendment No. 1 to Proposition 1 Watershed Restoration Grant Program Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator to reallocated unspent funding under the current CDFW Proposition 1 grant award to fund additional environmental planning tasks, specifically expansion of the Eastern Sierra Communities and Climate Resiliency Project into the West Mono Basin.

Subsequent to the Board's approval, CDFW modified the agreement to include simplified provisions for furthers amendments, personnel, schedule and budget revisions as follows:

5.04 Amendments; Personnel, Schedule, and Budget Revisions: Grantee shall submit any request to amend any term of this Agreement in writing to the CDFW Grant Manager. Grantee must include an explanation of and justification for any such request. This Agreement may only be amended in accordance with Section 2 of Exhibit 1.a, except that the CDFW Grant Manager may approve via email:

1. Changes that do not alter the Project Description, Project Term, or Budget, including:
 - a) Substitution of personnel or subcontractors (Categories A and B, Line Item Budget, Section 9.01); and
 - b) Revision of estimated completion dates (Schedule of Due Dates and Deliverables, Section 6.03.6).
2. Proposed revisions to the Budget (Section 9.01) to shift funds between existing line items or categories when those proposed revisions meet all of the following requirements:
 - a) Are consistent with the Project as detailed in Section 6 - Project Statement;
 - b) Do not increase the total amount of Grant Funds;

c) Do not, in the aggregate, transfer more than 10% of the Grant Funds relative to the initial Budget in this Agreement or the Budget in an amendment to this Agreement executed in accordance with Section 2 of Exhibit 1.a. An amendment executed in accordance with Section 2 of Exhibit 1.a will reset the 10% threshold.

Due to the need to execute the amendment to continue work on the Pace and Scale Accelerator in a timely manner, and that the provision has no impact on terms, scope or budget approved by the Board, the Executive Director executed the agreement consistent with the Board's previous direction.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

The amendment extends the terms of the agreement, allowing ESCOG to more fully utilize awarded funds. No changes to budget, term or scope were made by the addition of the grant amendment provision provided by CDFW.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the ESCOG Board ratify Contract Amendment No. 1 to CDFW Grant Q2196015 Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Agreement.



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Director's Office
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



January 28, 2025

Elaine Kabala
Executive Director
Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
P.O. BOX 1609
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

RE: Q2196015-01, Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator

For your review and signature, please find the following electronic files for the above-referenced Grant Agreement Amendment:

Grant Agreement

Acknowledgement of Amendment Authorization Disclaimer

If you find changes must be made to the Grant Agreement prior to your signature, please contact your Grant Manager (listed below) for direction.

Once the Watershed Restoration Grants Branch receives notification that all documents have been signed, CDFW will execute the Grant Agreement Amendment. You will be notified and provided an electronic copy of the complete signed document for your files. Please note, the Grant Agreement Amendment will not be effective until fully executed by CDFW.

Questions regarding the services to be performed under this Grant Agreement should be directed to the CDFW Grant Manager Evangelina Chavez at Evangelina.Chavez@Wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Buttler
Watershed Restoration Grants Branch
Policy and Outreach Manager



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Director's Office
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



January 28, 2025

Elaine Kabala
Executive Director
Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
P.O. BOX 1609
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

RE Q2196015-01, Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AMENDMENT AUTHORIZATION DISCLAIMER

Where approval from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) applies, the attached payable grant shall be of no force or effect until it is signed by both parties (CDFW and grantee).

By signing this amendment your organization does not authorize work outside of the original agreement terms or any prior amended terms until all approvals have been obtained, the amendment has been fully executed, and the grantee has been notified of the execution. Should any work be performed outside of the original agreement or prior amended terms, services will be considered voluntary.

Please be advised that failure to sign and return this letter will delay approval of your payable grant.

Signed by:

0201711480A170...

Authorized Signature

2/4/2025

Date

Elaine Kabala

Executive Director
Printed Name and Title of Person Signing



State of California - Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



**PROPOSITION 1 WATERSHED RESTORATION GRANT PROGRAM
EASTERN SIERRA PACE & SCALE ACCELERATOR
GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER – Q2196015,01**

GRANTOR: State of California, acting by and through
The California Department of Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

GRANTEE: Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
P.O. Box 1609
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

GRANT AMENDMENT

This Grant **Q2195015**, by and between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Grantor) and Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (Grantee), originally made and entered into on October 13, 2021, is hereby amended upon Grantor approval, in the following particulars and no others:

1. *Section 2, Term, is amended by deleting reference to, “October 1, 2021, through March 15, 2025” there from and inserting, “October 13, 2021, through December 31, 2026” (an increase of eighteen months).*
2. *Section 5.04, Amendments; Budget Revisions, is replaced in its entirety with the below Section 5.04, Amendments; Personnel, Schedule and Budget Revisions. The updated section includes current amendment language.*

5.04 Amendments; Personnel, Schedule, and Budget Revisions: Grantee shall submit any request to amend any term of this Agreement in writing to the CDFW Grant Manager. Grantee must include an explanation of and justification for any such request. This Agreement may only be amended in accordance with Section 2 of Exhibit 1.a, except that the CDFW Grant Manager may approve via email:

1. Changes that do not alter the Project Description, Project Term, or Budget, including:
 - a) Substitution of personnel or subcontractors (Categories A and B, Line Item Budget, Section 9.01); and
 - b) Revision of estimated completion dates (Schedule of Due Dates and Deliverables, Section 6.03.6).

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EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

2. Proposed revisions to the Budget (Section 9.01) to shift funds between existing line items or categories when those proposed revisions meet all of the following requirements:
 - a) Are consistent with the Project as detailed in Section 6 - Project Statement;
 - b) Do not increase the total amount of Grant Funds;
 - c) Do not, in the aggregate, transfer more than 10% of the Grant Funds relative to the initial Budget in this Agreement or the Budget in an amendment to this Agreement executed in accordance with Section 2 of Exhibit 1.a. An amendment executed in accordance with Section 2 of Exhibit 1.a will reset the 10% threshold.
3. *Section 6.02, Objectives, is replaced in its entirety with the below Section 6.02, Objectives. The revised Objectives include the new updated project area of approximately 100,000 acres.*

6.02 Objectives: Specific objectives of this Project are to:

- Streamline environmental planning to ensure more efficient and effective vegetation management implementation in the Eastern Sierra Mountains.
- Environmental Assessment for 58,000 acres of the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resiliency Project (ESCCRP). Survey data and associated reports for 10,000 priority acres within the ESCCRP
- Facilitate and complete NEPA
- Create and improve Monitoring Plan for the ESCCRP
- Map priority areas for future implementation work
- Confirm CEQA Lead Agency and prepare total ESCCRP area for CEQA
- Plan for Long term financial security for the ESCCRP
- Expand the ESCCRP to complete preliminary environmental review and draft proposed actions as defined in Tasks 3.8 and 3.9 on additional acres to be determined in the Mono Basin estimated to include approximately 50,000 additional acres. Total acreage will be determined as a component of draft proposed actions and is subject to change based on the planning process.

4. *Section 6.03.1, Location, is replaced in its entirety with the below Section 6.03.1, Location. The revised Location includes an additional 58,000 acres, which is a total of 113,000 acres in both Mono and Madera Counties.*

6.03.1 Location: The Project is located on approximately 100,000 acres of privately-owned and publicly-owned land located at 37.639590, -118.966360 in Mono and Madera County, California (Project Site).

5. *Section 6.03.3, Project Implementation, is replaced in its entirety with the below Section 6.03.3, Project Implementation. The revised Project Implementation includes the addition of Subtask 3.8 NEPA Pre-development Tasks and Subtask 3.9 CalVTP*

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Supplemental Studies for CEQA Compliance which apply solely to the additional acres in the Mono Basin (ESCCRP Part 2) outside the original ESSCRP project area.

6.03.4 Project Implementation: Consistent with Grantee's proposal for the Project, Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management who will complete the following tasks in accordance with Section 6.03.6 – Schedule of Due Dates and Deliverables:

Task 1 – Project Management and Administration

Grantee will oversee Grantee Personnel staff, including the Grantee Executive Director, Administrative Assistant, and Legal Counsel, & Subcontractor Project Management who will work together to provide technical and administrative services associated with implementation of the Project, including managing this Agreement, assuring all permits are finalized, administering subcontracts, invoicing, and payments, drafting, and finalizing progress and final reports, and data management.

Subtask 1.1 – Data Management

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning who will coordinate data management activities. Grantee shall submit a Data Management Plan. The CDFW Grant Manager will provide Grantee the Data Management Plan form upon request.

Grantee is responsible for ensuring that Project data are collected using peer-approved methods, undergo a quality control and accuracy assessment process, include metadata that meet CDFW's minimum standards (<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/BIOS/Metadata>) and include documentation of the methods and quality assessments utilized, and are properly stored and protected until the Project has been completed and data have been delivered as required under this Agreement.

All scientific data collection efforts are required to include metadata files or records indicating at a minimum:

1. Who collected the data;
2. When the data was collected;
3. Where the data was collected;
4. How the data was collected (description of methods and protocols);
5. The purposes for which the data was collected;

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EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

6. Definitions of variables, fields, codes, and abbreviations used in the data, including units of measure;
7. The terms of any landowner access agreement(s), if applicable;
8. References to any related CDFW permits or regulatory actions;
9. Peer review or statistical consultation documentation; and
10. Data licensing and disclaimer language.

All data and associated metadata collected by or created under this Agreement are a required deliverable of this Agreement. All data deliverables should be budgeted for and included in the Project timeline as a part of this Agreement. A condition of final payment on this Agreement shall include the delivery of all related data assets. Geospatial data must be delivered in an industry-standard geospatial data format where applicable and documented with metadata in accordance with the CDFW Minimum Metadata Standards. Data related to observation, occurrence or distribution of state or federal special status species or California Native Plant Society listed species shall be reported to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) using the online field survey form or other digital method.

Task 2 - Interdisciplinary Team (IDT)

Grantee will oversee the Subcontractor Project Management who will oversee all other subcontractors. An interdisciplinary team (IDT) will be built by the Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning, in partnership with the Inyo National Forest Interdisciplinary Team (USFS). The USFS will mentor and work with IDT to ensure early alignment of Forest Service which will include policies, priorities, as well as resource and local area sensitivities within the project area in alignment with the new Land Management Plan. Federal staff support will include but not limited to the USFS providing content and review of position descriptions, help recruit, and make hiring recommendations for IDT members, and consult on any questions that arise from performance of NEPA work. USFS through in-kind funds will mentor, help train and support team building, to optimize the new IDT and USFS alignment. Grantee and USFS will ensure that continued collaboration with the USFS occurs.

Task 3 – NEPA & Supporting Documents

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning and the USFS to schedule and conduct surveys. The Subcontractor Environmental Planning will

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determine applicable Inyo National Forest land and resource management plan components and review for compliance and development of project design features for all assessments and surveys to be conducted. The Subcontractor Environmental Planning will use the data and research gathered to recommend project design features or proposed action modifications or alternatives. The USFS will provide a forester (in-kind) to cover the silvicultural survey and reporting requirements contained within this project scope. Assessments for each discipline will be completed as deliverables to CDFW. Assessments will contain but not limited to the following documents: survey reports, specialist reports, effects analyses, or any other reports required for regulatory agency compliance. Grantee will also submit copies of all necessary permits.

Subtask 3.1 - Botanical Assessment

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning who will complete the Botanical Assessment. The Grantee will submit the Botanical Assessment to CDFW Grant Manager which will include but not limited to:

- Review known information about at-risk species habitat;
- Conduct vegetation mapping, biological surveys, and habitat assessments in priority areas;
- Prepare a Summary Survey Report and GIS---based maps;
- Prepare an analysis of At-risk Plants including habitat evaluation; and
- Prepare a Weed Risk Assessment Report and determine weed spread mitigations.

Subtask 3.2 - Archaeological Assessment

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning who will obtain archaeological research permit from the USFS.

Grantee will:

- Survey priority areas that do not have existing up-to-date records. Record sites utilizing “Historic Property Recording Specifications”;
- Record all newly discovered prehistoric, ethnographic, and historical heritage resources encountered within and directly adjacent to the project area(s);
- Re-record or supplement existing site records as needed

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- based on discrepancies, alterations and impacts observed;
- Record all heritage resource sites using State Historic Preservation Office site forms; and
 - Use USFS Region 5 standards to record all site boundaries (resource-grade Global Positioning System (GPS)).

Grantee will assign CA State Trinomial numbers for all sites in project area for inclusion in the Final Report. Grantee will complete Archaeological Project Effects Analysis Report. In-Situ Artifact Recording procedures will be followed during both inventory and site recording activities. Grantee will oversee subcontractor USFS who will consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for concurrence on eligibility and effects findings. Grantee will submit proof of the completion of the Archaeological Assessment to the Grant Manager.

Subtask 3.3 - Silvicultural Assessment

Grantee will work with Whitebark Institute Staff who will complete timber stand examinations and summary report of findings. As well as completing fire behavior modeling using fire modeling tools and summarize findings. Develop Silvicultural Project Effects which will include the Silvicultural Prescription based on findings and included in the Silvicultural Assessment. Grantee will submit the Silvicultural Assessment to the CDFW Grant Manager.

Grantee will:

- Prepare unit-level stand structure and composition data with GIS location information for at least 10,000 priority acres
- Prepare NEPA-ready silviculture report with stand exam analyses and GIS-made maps
- Prepare silviculture prescriptions for units totaling at least 3,000 priority acres
- Prepare silviculture prescription templates for each forest type, to allow efficient prescription development in winter months and for rapidly changing forest conditions within the ESCCRP.
- Prepare stand exam data for Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA), and associated IRA report and stand exam analyses in response to public comment received through scoping.

Subtask 3.4 - Wildlife Habitat Assessment

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning who will review known information about at-risk species habitat in the project area. Grantee will conduct habitat mapping, wildlife surveys, and habitat assessments to the level necessary, to include State listed species

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as necessary preparation for CEQA. Grantee will oversee USFS who will consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to produce a Biological Opinion for species with Federal status.

The Grantee will submit to the CDFW Grant Manager Wildlife Habitat Assessment which will include but not limited to the following:

- Summary Survey Report and Geographic information System (GIS)---based maps.
- Analysis of Species of Conservation Concern, which will include habitat evaluation
- A Biological Assessment for species with Federal status, including threatened, endangered, or proposed threatened or endangered
- Biological Opinion

Subtask 3.5 - Recreation Assessment

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning who will use existing GIS and other information to identify recreational facilities and activities within the project area. The Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning will identify facilities and/or activities that have the potential for beneficial or adverse effects from wildfire as well as possible effects to the Project. Grantee will submit to CDFW Grant Manager the Recreation Assessment which will include but not limited to the Recreational Effects Analysis for the Project.

Subtask 3.6 – Hydrology & Soils Assessment

Grantee will identify and map waterways, wetlands, meadows, springs, and other water features using GIS, field verifications, air photos, or other methods as needed. This will include: Delineating waterbody buffer zones using Lahontan Water Board definitions; Planning design features and proposed action mitigations or alternatives based on analysis findings.

Grantee will submit to the CDFW Grant Manager the Hydrology & Soils Assessment which will include but not limited to:

- Delineate riparian conservation areas using GIS (using definitions in the Inyo National Forest land management plan)
- Review water bodies in analysis area to record any special designations (303d list, special status, designated Wild and Scenic Rivers)

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- Determine applicable Inyo National Forest land and resource management plan components and review for compliance and development of project design features
- Complete Cumulative Watershed Effects analysis using the Equivalent Roaded Area method
- Prepare a Watershed Report that analyzes project effects to water quality, water temperature, stream morphology, soil erosion and productivity, incorporating the results of the previous bullets
- Prepare a Timber Waiver application and consult with the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Subtask 3.7 – Environmental Assessment, Conduct NEPA Scoping & Facilitate Decision Process

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning who will complete all necessary actions to produce National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance documents for review and finalization by the United States Forest Service (USFS) Responsible Official. Grantee will oversee the Subcontractor Environmental Planning team whose work will include facilitation of stakeholder group public engagement, scoping, comment period, and tribal consultation. Public and tribal participation for NEPA compliance is the responsibility of USFS Responsible Official. The Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning will work with the USFS to complete a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) document for public comment. USFS Responsible Official will determine if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required. If a FONSI cannot be completed, and an EIS is required, any necessary additional funding needed will be obtained outside this grant and will be an in-kind match for this grant. Grantee will work with the USFS to finalize all NEPA compliance documents and facilitate the public participation and notification process for the final decision.

The Grantee will submit all draft and final copies of NEPA documents to the CDFW Grant Manager.

Subtask 3.8 - NEPA Pre-Development Tasks

Grantee will submit to the CDFW Grant Manager a *Resilient Mono Basin* (ESCCRP Part 2) pre-development documents, NEPA Scoping Document, and Draft Proposed Actions, which will include, but are not limited to:

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Pre-Development

- Review of Existing Environmental Documents
- Development of Environmental Planning Roadmap
- Compilation of Draft Partner List, Including Roles and Responsibilities
- Establishment of Project Goals and Objectives
- Draft Project Boundary
- Draft Prioritization Map
- Compilation of Meeting Summaries and Agendas

Scoping Documents

- The INF will complete Draft Proposed Actions, for one or more NEPA Projects in the Mono Basin.

Subtask 3.9 – California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) Supplemental Studies for CEQA Compliance

Grantee will submit to the CDFW Grant Manager the Mono Basin ESCCRP Part 2 Draft CEQA documents required by the CalVTP PEIR, which will include, but are not limited to:

- Draft CEQA Documents necessary pursuant to the CalVTP for fuels reduction and restoration projects around the communities of Mono City and Lee Vining.
- Draft NEPA Categorical Exclusion documents for Federal partner lands that fall within the State Responsibility Area (SRA) which require both NEPA/CEQA to be positioned for implementation to allow for more rapid response to growing vegetation management concerns.

Task 4 - Prepare Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP) for Implementation

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management who will work with Subcontractor Implementation Preparation, who will ensure the ESCCRP is ready for implementation through preparation of CEQA planning needs, monitoring, education and outreach, local workforce development, and develop finance and marketing plan for when NEPA planning is complete.

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Subtask 4.1 - Preparations for CEQA Planning Needs

Grantee will identify private lands for inclusion, as well as to prepare Federal lands to be eligible for future State grant funds, Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning will assess additional CEQA planning needs, review current legislation to identify CEQA planning needs for Federally owned property, prepare a draft budget for CEQA planning needs for ESCCRP, and identify funding opportunity to support CEQA compliance work. The Grantee will submit to CDFW Grant Manager CEQA Lead Agency documentation, maps of non-federal lands to be included in ESCCRP, and a Draft Scope and Budget for CEQA planning.

Subtask 4.2 - Monitoring Plan

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management who will work with the USFS and the Implementation Preparation, to establish additional baseline monitoring requirements, in addition to the already established monitoring in the USFS Land Management Plan. Grantee will work with partners to maximize the learning opportunity the ESCCRP provides. Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management who will work with USFS to determine how the standard monitoring required covers the project area and develop a Monitoring Plan that will include but is not limited to:

- Identify established protocols and monitoring efforts by partners, adjacent landowners, and collaborating agencies.
- Work with Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Project Implementation and USFS to implement Monitoring Guidance.
- Ensure the monitoring developed is within technical, financial, and staffing capability of the USFS and partners.
- Develop performance measures to be included with Monitoring Plan.

The Subcontractor Project Management will work with the USFS and Subcontractor Implementation Preparation to determine what additional monitoring specific to this project will be required under the terms of the USFS Land Management Plan. The Subcontractor Project Management will work with United States USFS (in-kind) and Subcontractor Implementation Preparation develop monitoring protocols.

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Subtask 4.3 - Education & Outreach

Grantee will ensure public outreach regarding recreational facilities and activities within the project area. Public outreach will include local communities and visitors to the project areas. Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Implementation Preparation who will work with the Education & Outreach Coordinators (paid through with in-kind) prepare and implement the Ad Hoc team workplan. This coordinator will also work with Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Planning (RFFC) Program (in-kind) and ESCCRP stakeholders to develop outreach and education strategy for the ESCCRP. Grantee will create printed materials and media content which will include but not limited to:

- Fliers and mailings
- Dedicated project social media and web content
- All content will be translated into Spanish
- The Education and Outreach staff including in the Implementation Team budget will prepare an Outreach and Education workplan during Phase 1 of the project that will be submitted to CDFW

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Environmental Planning who will hold real time group chats adapted for various target audiences and scientific lectures focused on forest restoration aimed at both residents and visitors. Grantee will submit to the CDFW Grant Manager all final copies of Education and Outreach documents.

Subtask 4.4 Local Workforce Development

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Implementation Planning who will meet with local contractors and community leaders to identify business opportunities to meet the pace and scale needs of the ESCCRP. Grantee will develop a Local Workforce Matrix that will but is not limited to:

- Identify State and local assistance programs to aid in business expansion.
- Develop, with Subcontractor USFS long term fuels contracts to incentivize investments by local businesses.
- Work with local tribes to develop workforce programs.
- Identify contractors for implementation work based on the ESCCRP

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Grantee will submit to the CDFW Grant Manager a copy of the finalized Local Workforce Matrix.

Subtask 4.5 - Finance & Marketing Plan

Grantee will oversee Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Implementation Preparation who, will develop a Long Term Financial and Marketing Plan for ESCCRP. Subcontractor Project Management and the Subcontractor Implementation will oversee Subcontractor USFS and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) (in-kind) to expand ecosystem services pilot project to include the Upper Owens River Watershed fuels work within the ESCCRP. The Subcontractor Project Management and Subcontractor Implementation Prep will work with local water district, fire district and Town Council to identify development of local measures or similar tools which will be used to support fuels management. Grantee will identify funding support ESCCRP long term by working with the Chamber of Commerce to create a program from which local businesses can support implementation of the ESCCRP. In addition, the Subcontractor Project Management, and the Subcontractor Project Implementation will work with Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (in-kind) and Southern California Edison) (in-kind) to identify appropriate investments from those entities based on benefits received. Grantee will submit Long Term financial and Marketing Plan for ESCCRP to CDFW Grant Manager.

6. *Section 6.03.4, Schedule of Due Dates and Deliverables, is replaced in its entirety with the below Section 6.03.4, Schedule of Due Dates and Deliverables. The revised Schedule of Due Dates and Deliverables includes new deliverables for subtask 3.8 and 3.9 and new estimated completion dates consistent with the term extension.*

6.03.4 Schedule of Due Dates and Deliverables:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Dates</u>
1	Project Management and Administration	Quarterly Progress Reports	Due within 30 days following each calendar quarter (March, June, September, December) following grant execution.
		Quarterly Invoices	Due within 30 days following each calendar quarter

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<u>Task</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Dates</u>
			(March, June, September, December) after grant execution.
		Copies of Executed Subcontracts	With following Quarterly Progress Report upon completion
		Submit Data Management Plan	2/15/2023
		Submit Project Description Data to EcoAtlas Project Tracker	12/15/2022
		Submit Project Data	12/31/2026
		Project Close-out Summary Report	12/31/2026
		Final Invoice	Due no later than 45 days after the Agreement Term end date. 2/14/2027
2	Interdisciplinary Team (IDT)	IDT Position Descriptions	3/1/2022
		IDT training material	12/30/2022
		IDT Staff CVs	6/15/2022
3	NEPA and Supporting Documents	Copies of Permits	12/30/2024
		Botanical Assessment	12/30/2024
		Archaeological Assessment	12/30/2024
		Silvicultural Assessment	12/30/2024

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<u>Task</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Dates</u>
		Hydrology & Soils Assessment	12/30/2024
		Wildlife Habitat Assessment	12/30/2024
		Recreation Assessment	12/30/2024
		GIS Based Maps	12/30/2024
		Draft and Final NEPA Documents	3/1/2025
		ESCCRP Part 2 Pre-Development Documents	11/1/2026
		ESCCRP Part 2 Mono Basin NEPA Scoping Draft Proposed Actions	11/1/2026
		ESCCRP Part 2 Mono Basin CalVTP CEQA Documents and supplemental federal Categorical Exclusions or equivalent.	6/1/2026
4	Prepare Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP) for Implementation	CEQA Lead Agency documentation	1/15/2024
		Maps of non-federal lands to be included in ESCCRP	1/15/2024
		Draft Scope and Budget for CEQA planning	1/15/2024

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<u>Task</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Estimated Completion Dates</u>
		Monitoring Plan	4/15/2023
		Outreach and Education Plan	11/15/2023
		Local Workforce Matrix	12/15/2025
		Long Term financial and Marketing Plan for ESCCRP	12/15/2025

7. Section 9.01, Budget Details and Funding Summary, is replaced in its entirety with the below Section 9.01, Budget Details and Funding Summary. The revised Budget Details and Funding Summary includes line-item shifts to move \$205,000 from Environmental Planning and \$5,000 from Indirect Costs to USFS and \$5,000 from Legal Counsel to Executive Director. In addition, the "Project Management" and "Implementation Planning" subcontractor line items are being combined into a single new "Project Management and Implementation Planning" line item.

SECTION 9 – BUDGET AND PAYMENT

9.01 Budget Details and Funding Summary: Grantor will provide an amount not to exceed \$3,384,269 as detailed in the Line-Item Budget Detail (Budget) below. Grantee will provide \$0 in funds or in-kind services as cost share to complete the tasks described in Section 6 – Project Statement. Other funders will provide up to \$2,222,230 in funds or in-kind services as cost share to complete tasks described in Section 6 - Project Statement. Grantee will provide Grantor accurate records of all cost share with the Final Invoice.

Line Item Budget Detail	
A. PERSONNEL SERVICES	
Administrative Assistant	\$48,000
Executive Director	\$74,750
Legal Counsel	\$1,040
Subtotal Personnel Services	\$123,790
Staff Benefits	\$0
Subtotal Personnel Services	\$123,790
B. OPERATING EXPENSES: GENERAL	
Field Supplies	\$0
Travel (Not to exceed State reimbursement rates)	\$0
Subtotal Operating Expenses: General	\$0

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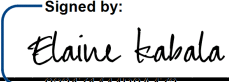
Line Item Budget Detail	
C. OPERATING EXPENSES: SUBCONTRACTORS	
Project Management and Implementation Planning	\$475,654
Environmental Planning	\$2,306,375
USFS	\$438,692
Implementation Preparation	\$0
Subtotal Operating Expenses: Subcontractors	\$3,220,721
D. OPERATING EXPENSES: EQUIPMENT	
Equipment item	\$0
Subtotal Operating Expenses: Equipment	\$0
E. INDIRECT COSTS	
Indirect Charge Rate 20% (Applies to Sections A + B, and the first \$25K of each subcontractor)	\$39,758
F. GRAND TOTAL (A+B+C+D+E)	\$3,384,269

All other terms and conditions shall remain the same.


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EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be duly executed as of Grantor date set forth below the signature.

AUTHORIZED AGENT FOR GRANTEE

By: _____
Signature:  _____
Printed Name: Elaine Kabala
Title: Executive Director
Date: 2/4/2025

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

By: _____
Signature:  _____
Printed Name: Matt Wells
Title: Chief, Watershed Restoration Grants Branch
Date: 2/4/2025

This agreement is exempt from DGS-OLS approval, per SCM 4.06.



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority

From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director

Subject: Regional Housing Needs Assessment MOU and Cost-Sharing Agreement with Inyo County

Meeting date: February 26, 2025

Prepared on: February 15, 2025

Attachments: A) Memorandum of Understanding Among the County of Inyo, the County of Mono, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the City of Bishop and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Authorizing the County of Inyo to Enter into and Administer a Contract for the Preparation of a Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan and Providing for Reimbursement to the County of Inyo for the Cost Thereof

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

The Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mono County, City of Bishop, and Inyo County have partnered together to complete a Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Action Plan (Report) with the goal of creating a clearer picture of the Eastern Sierra's current regional housing needs and to guide future housing decisions. The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) and SMR Development (under contract w/ Mono County) are providing technical assistance in the work effort.

An RFP was released in October 2024 seeking proposals from qualified firms to prepare the needs assessment and action plan, and two firms submitted proposals. Upon a review of the proposals by the group, BAE Urban Economics was selected.

In order to simply and streamline the contracting with BAE, it was determined that Inyo County would enter into, and administer, the contract with BAE, and the other three entities would then reimburse Inyo County for their proportional share of the costs. ESCOG is not making any financial contribution to the contract; ESCOG is a partner to the MOU to memorialize staff engagement for situational awareness of potential recommended regional actions and outcomes.

The timeline for completion is nine (9) months from the kickoff for the housing needs assessment and an additional four (4) months for the action plan.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the ESCOG Chair to execute the Memorandum of Understanding Among the County of Inyo, the County of Mono, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the City of Bishop and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Authorizing the County of Inyo to Enter into and Administer a Contract for the Preparation of a Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan and Providing for Reimbursement to the County of Inyo for the Cost Thereof and authorize staff to participate in the regional housing needs assessment planning process in a technical assistance capacity.

Attachment A

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE COUNTY OF INYO,
THE COUNTY OF MONO, THE TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES, THE
CITY OF BISHOP AND THE EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY OF
INYO TO ENTER INTO AND ADMINISTER A CONTRACT
FOR THE PREPARATION OF A REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN AND
PROVIDING FOR REIMBURSEMENT TO THE COUNTY OF INYO FOR THE COST THEREOF

WHEREAS, the County of Inyo (Inyo), the County of Mono (Mono), the Town of Mammoth Lakes (Mammoth) the City of Bishop (Bishop), and the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG), in order to address the need for adequate housing in the region, determined that it will be beneficial to prepare an assessment of the region's housing needs and resources and an action plan for addressing those needs; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to that determination, a staff committee from Inyo, Mono, Mammoth, Bishop, and ESCOG prepared, approved, and distributed a Request for Proposals in order to solicit and ultimately retain the services of a consultant to prepare such a regional housing needs assessment; and

WHEREAS, Mono has an existing contract with a firm known as SMR Development to provide expert guidance and extra capacity to support Housing initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the staff committee from Inyo, Mono, Mammoth, Bishop, and ESCOG utilized Mono's contract with SMR Development to support preparation, distribution, and evaluation of the Request for Proposals to prepare the regional housing needs assessment; and

WHEREAS, the staff committee from Inyo, Mono, Mammoth, Bishop, and ESCOG, working with SMR Development, subsequently selected, from among the respondents to the RFP, the firm of BAE Urban Economics, to prepare the regional housing needs assessment; and

WHEREAS, in the interest of simplification and time savings, Inyo offered to prepare, enter into, and administer the contract with BAE Urban Economics for the preparation of the Eastern Sierra Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan, contingent upon each of the other jurisdictions reimbursing Inyo for their respective shares of the cost of the Eastern Sierra Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan contract; and

WHEREAS, because Mono has contributed the support of SMR Development under its existing contract, its is agreed that Mono's share of the cost of the Eastern Sierra Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan contract will be reduced by a proportional amount; and

WHEREAS, the parties to this Memorandum of Understanding, wish to memorialize the above-described arrangement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED by the parties to this MOU that:

- 1) Inyo shall negotiate, prepare, and enter into a contract with BAE Urban Economics for the preparation of a Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan; said contract shall, to the degree practicable, require that the needs assessment be completed in accordance with, and include the terms of, the Request for Proposals; the contract will be for a not-to-exceed amount of \$193,175.

Attachment A

- 2) Inyo shall be responsible for administering all aspects of the contract with BAE Urban Economics, and shall have the authority to do so, both generally and in accordance with its terms, except that it shall not terminate the contract without first consulting with representatives from the other four jurisdictions; and
- 3) Upon Inyo's approval of an invoice submitted to it by BAE Urban Economics, Inyo shall pay BAE Urban Economics for services and work performed pursuant to the Inyo- BAE Urban Economics contract. Inyo will then submit invoices to Mono, Mammoth, and the City of Bishop, along with copies of the invoices and description of work performed. The invoices will request payment from Mono, Mammoth, and Bishop for the invoice in proportion to those entities funding commitments for the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan. Mono, Mammoth, and Bishop shall remit payment to Inyo for the invoiced amounts within 30 days of their receipt of the invoice.
- 4) Funding commitments from each jurisdiction are as follows:
 - a. Mono County: 16% of each invoice
 - b. Town of Mammoth Lakes: 28% of each invoice
 - c. City of Bishop: 28% of each invoice
 - d. County of Inyo: 28% of each invoice
- 5) The four jurisdictions shall, no less frequently than monthly during the term of the contract, meet to discuss the status of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan and review any interim deliverables produced by BAE Urban Economics.
- 6) Upon completion and delivery, all four jurisdictions and ESCOG shall receive a copy of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan.

WHEREFORE, by the signatures of their authorized representatives appearing below, Inyo, Mono, Mammoth, and Bishop agree to perform and be bound by the terms of this Memorandum of Understanding.

The County of Inyo

By: _____
Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

Dated: _____

Approved as to form and legality:

Attachment A

By: _____
County Counsel for County of Inyo

Dated: _____

Approved as to accounting form:

By: _____
County Auditor for County of Inyo

Dated: _____

The County of Mono

By: _____
Chairman of the Board of Supervisors

Dated: _____

Approved as to form and legality:

By: _____
County Counsel for County of Mono

Dated: _____

The Town of Mammoth Lakes

By: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____

Approved as to form and legality:

By: _____
Attorney for the Town of Mammoth Lakes

Dated: _____

The City of Bishop

By: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____

Approved as to form and legality:

By: _____
Attorney for the City of Bishop

Dated: _____

The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

Attachment A

By: _____
Chair

Dated: _____

Approved as to form and legality:

By: _____
Attorney for the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

Dated: _____

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs)

Eastern Sierra Region



Eastern Sierra Region CEDs 2025 Annual Update

Year 1 Progress Report

2024 – 2029 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

ANNUAL CEDS PROGRESS REPORT



WHAT IS A CEDS?

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a unified, regionally focused action plan that provides a framework for an area's economic growth and community development. The CEDS serves as an economic blueprint for the region and establishes a collaborative process that will help create jobs, foster more stable and diversified economies, and improve living conditions. It is a continuous planning process that addresses the economic challenges and opportunities of an area, providing objectives to strengthen economies through regional strategies which focus on economic and workforce development, quality of life, transportation, and other vital infrastructure. This five-year CEDS will guide the direction of the Eastern Sierra region from 2024-2029, encouraging new, collaborative efforts at the regional and local levels.

ABOUT THE REGION

The Eastern Sierra region in California includes Alpine, Inyo, and Mono Counties. The region boasts a rich history of mining, ranching, and agriculture, which has influenced the region's cultural heritage, and it is also known for its stunning natural beauty and abundance of outdoor recreational experiences. The region is home to the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, including Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the contiguous United States, as well as a few national forests, wilderness areas, and state and national parks. Residents and visitors can experience desert and mountain landscapes with access to lake settings as well. The Eastern Sierra region is largely rural, with many small towns and communities scattered throughout the region. These rural areas offer a unique blend of traditional and modern lifestyles, with a focus on outdoor recreation and a connection to the natural environment.

The Eastern Sierra CEDS was accepted by the EDA in January 2024.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report serves as the annual update on the region's progress toward the goals outlined in the 2024-2029 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The report contains the region's implementation plan, actions taken to date, and goals for 2025. In addition, the report contains a current list of regional projects that meet EDA investment priorities and pertain to various funding sources.

ESCOG & CEDS Committee

ABOUT THE EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) agency made up of the following member agencies: City of Bishop, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Alpine County, Inyo County, and Mono County. The ESCOG coordinates regional planning and economic development efforts throughout the Eastern Sierra, working cooperatively with local, state, and federal partners to support community development, economic diversification, sustainable recreation, ecosystem management and climate resiliency for a more prosperous, sustainable, and resilient region.

The ESCOG is empowered to work across jurisdictional boundaries by the Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program, the Community Economic Resiliency Fund Pilot Program and the Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium Program, which were adopted by the resolution of all four member agencies. The ESCOG is empowered to administer the CEDS program and convene regional economic development partners by resolution of the governing bodies of Alpine County, Inyo County, Mono County, the City of Bishop and the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

The ESCOG includes elected representation from each of its four member agencies: Inyo County, Mono County, the City of Bishop and the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

CEDS COMMITTEE

The CEDS Committee is comprised of Economic Development staff from each of the jurisdictions represented by the Eastern Sierra CEDS. The committee meets monthly to discuss regional economic development needs, projects and funding opportunities. Over the inaugural year of the CEDS committee's formation, the monthly meeting has expanded to include Tribal participation from the Bishop Paiute Tribe, the Sierra Business Council (a non-profit partner administering the California Jobs First initiative in the Eastern Sierra Region), Rural County Representatives of California, the UC Cooperative Extension Community and Economic Development Regional Advisor, and the newly established Small Business Resource Center located in Bishop, CA.



Strategy & Data Updates

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE STRATEGY

The CEDS sets forth six focus areas with identified goals and objectives. The CEDS strategies present a high-level planning approach through the Evaluation Framework section of the document in outlining Metrics for Success for each area. In response to Economic Development Administration direction on an application submitted by the Town of Mammoth Lakes, all member agencies provided a supplemental project list of priorities to be included as an Appendix to the CEDS to increase opportunities for project funding.

Alpine, Mono and Inyo Counties and their incorporated jurisdictions have provided appendices to included in the document. These lists provide identified projects and programs necessary to meet the strategic goals and objectives of the regional CEDS document. The lists are intended to be dynamic and be updated regularly. The lists have been approved by each respective Board. The project list are attached to these reports as Appendices A-D.

DATA UPDATES

There are no significant data updates to be incorporated into the Eastern Sierra CEDS at this time.

REGIONAL EDA INVESTMENTS

There have not been any investments from the EDA in the jurisdictions of Alpine, Mono or Inyo Counties since adoption of the CEDS in 2024.

The Bishop Paiute Tribe, which operates under an independent CEDS has received a \$2.1 million Economic Adjustment Assistance grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), Yuhubi Nobi is the second filling station and convenience store operated by the Bishop Paiute Tribe and managed by the Bishop Paiute Development Corporation.

The Fort Independence Tribe, which also operates under an independent CEDS, was awarded an \$8 million grant in 2022, to support Tribal enterprises on the Fort Independence Reservation. This grant is funded by the American Rescue Plan. This grant will support the construction of a new gas station and travel center on Tribal lands.

The City of Bishop and Inyo County met with the EDA during a field visit to discuss opportunities for EDA funding for critical wastewater capacity improvements, however it was determined that PWEAA funding was not adequate to meet the needs of the community due to the number of residential connections that would be supported by the project.

Economic Development Activity

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE

ESCOG

The ESCOG supports economic development in the Eastern Sierra region through a range of initiatives that promote sustainability, job growth, and regional collaboration. The ESCOG programs of work include:

Sustainable Recreation

ESCOG's collaborates with public land managers, community organizations, local partners and businesses to improve recreation infrastructure and encourage responsible tourism. Specific initiatives include the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative, which identified sustainable management and infrastructure needs for a prime recreation area and the Towns-to-Trails plan, which identified a multi-use trail alignment to connect communities to each other and to recreation destinations. Tourism is the primary economic driver of the region.

Ecosystem Management

Recognizing the increasing threat of wildfires, ESCOG is actively working to strengthen wildfire preparedness and mitigation efforts. Through funding support, strategic planning, and partnerships with land managers and regional partners, ESCOG enhances regional capacity to protect communities, infrastructure, and natural resources from fire-related disasters. These efforts support workforce development partnerships with local community colleges to develop Forestry and Land Management career paths.

Broadband

The Inyo Mono Broadband Consortium (IMBC) facilitates expansion and adoption of broadband technology in the Eastern Sierra region. The IMBC will facilitates the deployment of broadband services in Inyo and Mono counties by assisting with project development, grant applications, and projects related to state broadband programs.

California Jobs First

This statewide initiative focuses on strengthening the local workforce by creating job opportunities that align with the region's industries, including outdoor recreation, natural and working land management, healthcare, agriculture, and renewable energy.

Regional Collaboration

ESCOG serves as a coordinating body for local governments, fostering partnerships that address shared economic and environmental challenges. By bringing together stakeholders from across the region, ESCOG helps align policies, secure funding, and implement projects that benefit the Eastern Sierra as a whole.

ALPINE COUNTY

Alpine County aims to establish a balanced economy that aligns with sustainable environmental preservation. Key objectives include diversifying the economy, revitalizing stagnant businesses, attracting new enterprises, and enhancing services to support economic growth.

Community Development Initiatives

- The Community Development Department has focused on various projects, including:
- Wildfire Risk Mitigation: Implementing strategies to reduce wildfire hazards and enhance community safety.
- Transportation Planning: Developing plans to improve transportation infrastructure and connectivity within the county.
- Hazard Mitigation Planning: Updating the Alpine County Hazard Mitigation Plan to address potential risks and ensure community resilience.

Housing Development

- In July 2022, the county submitted the Draft 6th Cycle Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development. This plan outlines strategies to meet housing needs through 2024, including actions to develop and preserve affordable housing.

Infrastructure Enhancements

- In 2022, Alpine County issued a Request for Proposals for the installation of Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations, aiming to promote sustainable transportation and support tourism by accommodating electric vehicles

INYO COUNTY

Inyo County undertook several economic and community development initiatives in 2024, including:

Strategic Planning

- In July 2024, the Board of Supervisors approved the county's first-ever Strategic Plan for 2024–2026. This plan outlines goals to support thriving communities through infrastructure investments, effective service delivery, and thoughtful planning. It also emphasizes economic enhancement by encouraging growth for existing industries and promoting business and workforce resilience.

Community Support

- The Community Project Sponsorship Program (CPSP) continued to provide financial contributions to local non-profit organizations for events and projects that enhance visitation and offer cultural or recreational enrichment. In October 2023, the county invited applications for the 2024 grant cycle, with up to \$40,000 available for competitive grants.

Infrastructure and Environmental Initiatives

- In March 2024, the Public Works Department proposed an Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Plan to expand and strengthen the public EV charging network, aiming to support economic development and accommodate long-distance travelers visiting Inyo County's destinations.

MONO COUNTY

Mono County's Economic Development Department promotes sustainable growth and community well-being. Key initiatives include supporting local businesses, tourism, and film industries, enhancing broadband access, and fostering workforce development. Programs also focus on grant opportunities for events, historical preservation, and arts initiatives. These efforts aim to build economic resilience while preserving the county's natural beauty and quality of life.

- Mono County allocates funding to support community events, local historical societies and museums, and performing and visual arts groups to increase year-round visitation, preserve local history, and promote cultural enrichment.
- The County adopted a five-year Capital Improvement Plan for significant infrastructure projects, including development of roads, sewers, water systems, bike lanes, sidewalks, multi-use paths, parking facilities, parks, airports, and public offices.
- Mono County appointed a Housing Coordinator to advance housing strategies throughout Mono County.

CITY OF BISHOP

The City of Bishop undertook several initiatives to bolster economic and community development in 2024, including:

Downtown Revitalization

- Began implementation of the Downtown Bishop Specific Plan and Mixed-Use Overlay to promote a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Implemented a new signage ordinance to enhance visual appeal.
- Initiated the design phase for the Whitney Alley Improvements Project, aiming to enhance public spaces.

Housing Development

- Collaborated with developers to plan housing projects on potential land acquisitions from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, including negotiations to acquire approximately 10 acres of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power land in the city's northeast for future housing developments.
- Supported the Silver Peaks housing project, in partnership with Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action, to provide 72 units for lower-income residents.

Community Engagement and Events

- Supported community events by facilitating road closures for Friday Night Markets, various parades, and the 4th of July fireworks show.
- Collaborated with the Bishop Area Bike Organization to develop a mountain bike park, promoting outdoor recreation.

TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES

Between 2022 and 2024, the Town of Mammoth Lakes undertook several initiatives to enhance community and economic development:

Commercial Development

- **Limelight Hotel:** Approved in July 2022, this project includes a six-story condominium hotel with 149 hotel rooms and 15 residential units. Amenities feature a lounge, meeting rooms, fitness center, childcare facilities, and an outdoor pool. Construction commenced in summer 2022.
- In December 2022, the town released a Notice of Preparation for an Environmental Impact Report concerning the redevelopment of the Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort Main Base. The proposed plan aims to combine diverse overnight accommodations, resort residences, retail, entertainment, food and beverage options, and facilities for skiers and visitors.

Housing Initiatives

- In summer 2021, the town acquired a 0.2-acre site at 60 Joaquin Rd. with plans to develop four for-sale units for households earning up to 150% of the area median income. The project is scheduled for review by the Planning and Economic Development Commission in 2023, with construction expected to begin the same year and occupancy targeted for 2024.

Strategic Action Plan Update

REGIONAL VISION

A cohesive regional vision is essential for ensuring the CEDS effectively addresses economic challenges, leverages regional strengths, and fosters long-term prosperity. The Eastern Sierra CEDS is intended to align goals for collective impact, strengthen the competitiveness of the region, leverage resources efficiently, enhance resilience and sustainability, facilitating Federal and State support, and encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.

“The Eastern Sierra region envisions a future which includes economic prosperity and environmental stewardship realized through collaborative efforts to preserve natural assets and historic culture, enhance regional connectivity and resiliency, and advance vibrant and inclusive communities”

FOCUS AREAS AND GOALS

The strategic action plan builds on this vision by building goals and objectives around the following focus areas:

ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY

From roadways to broadband to air travel, the importance of connectivity was a focus in stakeholder sessions and is supported by regional data and literature.

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

The Eastern Sierra region boasts a strong culture of community among the residents, workers, and other key stakeholders with vested interest in the success of the region and its economies.

ECONOMIC EXPANSION & DIVERSIFICATION

With the undisputed asset of a healthy tourism and outdoor recreation industry, regional leaders want to leverage the industry’s benefits for economic growth while pursuing opportunities for economic diversification in pursuit of increased community resiliency.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

The region has a robust inventory of natural assets to protect, frequent exposure to natural hazards, and a population accustomed to persevering and “bouncing back,” calling for efforts related to environmental resilience and sustainability.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & ADVOCACY

Regional collaboration and advocacy with state and federal entities is an important strategic implementation item and essential to pursue promising state and federal funding opportunities.

HOUSING AVAILABILITY & LAND USE

The extremely limited supply of privately owned land within the region colored the discussion around housing and land use, with stakeholders frustrated by rising housing costs and lack of opportunities for development.

Access & Connectivity

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Improve and enhance regional access and connectivity within the region and with surrounding geographies.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Local governments, Internet service providers, CAT, OES, Caltrans</p>				
<p>Increase access to digital resources through broadband infrastructure buildout across the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalog existing assets that may help to offset the cost of buildout for providers. Include capital resources as well as in-kind resources and donations, such as waived permitting fees, access to poles for aerial networks, or efficiencies with other utility maintenance or buildout projects • Encourage local governments to partner with internet service providers to apply for state and federal broadband funding with a focus on last mile connectivity • Develop, deploy, and monitor a broadband speed test tool that will allow communities to track achieved speeds vs. advertised speeds, potentially expanding the locations eligible for federal funding • Participate in statewide planning efforts tied to Senate Bill 156, the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, and other programs to ensure that the region’s challenges are accounted for in funding distribution 	<p>Medium-term (2-3 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of local asset & incentive catalog • Number of grant opportunities pursued • Creation of speed test tool • Meeting attendance, committee membership, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 FFA applications submitted (2023) • 2 FFA applications approved so far (2024). The remaining 3 applications are pending (expected to be approved soon) • 2024 had no other construction grant opportunities • Developed concise narratives to be included in future grant applications or to assist providers in selecting feasible projects. • Established public portal for localized speed test at https://connectedeasternsierra.net/get-connected/speed-tests/

Access & Connectivity

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Improve and enhance regional access and connectivity within the region and with surrounding geographies.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Local governments, Internet service providers, CAT, OES, Caltrans</p>				
<p>Enhance the regional transportation network to provide residents, visitors, and businesses with more accessible, reliable options for moving in, out, and within the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalog and prioritize existing roadway infrastructure deficiencies, including but not limited to depressions in asphalt, dangerously narrow roadways, and areas lacking critical safety infrastructure • Determine which populations lack transportation options most severely, and describe the transportation needs of these groups • Explore options to meet the transportation needs of populations identified above, potentially ranging from fixed route services to major metros or local anchors to responsive services provided at a subsidy • Ensure that local planning efforts include provisions for commercial corridors and surrounding neighborhoods in existing communities to enhance walkability and options for multi-modal transit 	<p>Long-term (3-5 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of roadway need prioritization document • Creation of transportation need summary • Report written, committee formed, # of interventions considered, etc. • # of local planning efforts incorporating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Inyo and Mono County maintain Regional Transportation Plans (RTP). • Each jurisdiction submitted Caltrans Active Transportation Grants to advance RTP projects. • ESCOG submitted a grant application in collaboration with all Eastern Sierra jurisdictions and tribes under the federal Reconnecting Communities program.
<p>Enhance emergency response services to ensure remote communities are equipped for periods of time with no access to services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communities at risk for isolation in winter months in efforts to reserve critical supplies to sustain residents through periods of isolation • Collaborate with Caltrans and county partners to accelerate response times for road clearance and maintenance in isolated communities • Explore emerging tools to anticipate response needs and accelerate response times 	<p>Short-term (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount and type of additional supplies reserved • Correspondence facilitated, improved average response times • # & summary of emerging tools evaluated 	

Community and Culture

Objectives	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Maintain and capitalize on strong community culture.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Community-based organizations, arts and culture partners, emergency services providers/responders, tribal communities</p>				
<p>Improve partnerships and interagency collaboration to benefit localities and facilitate regionally-focused efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a mapping exercise to identify all partnerships critical to CEDS execution with point of contact information • Devise an outreach strategy to bring these partners in as stakeholders • Create regular opportunities for these partnerships to engage in the implementation process • Establish regular communication channels and platforms to facilitate information sharing among the partners 	<p>Short (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEDS execution partners map • Creation of outreach strategy • Number of meetings with regional partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ESCOG and CEDS jurisdictions have formed a regional economic development collaborative that meets monthly to discuss local project and regional project and funding opportunities. The collaborative has expanded to include the Bishop Paiute Tribe and non-profit partners such as the Sierra Business Council. • Eastern Sierra partners worked together to develop the Sierra Jobs First Strategic Plan supporting the California Jobs First initiative, such as establishing a regional community foundation, economic analysis of tourism drivers, programming for the new Small Business Resource Center, and other projects.
<p>Garner support for new economic development-related initiatives, projects, etc. by developing and capitalizing on strong community engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively educate the public on continuous activities related to the implementation of the CEDS • Provide opportunities for community members to actively participate in the implementation of new initiatives and projects 	<p>Short (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of region residents participating in activities • Number of agencies and organizations engaged with CEDS implementation • Annual publication and promotion of CEDS progress 	

Community and Culture

Objectives	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Maintain and capitalize on strong community culture. Partners/Champions: Community-based organizations, arts and culture partners, emergency services providers/responders, tribal communities</p>				
<p>Enhance the region's existing quality of life with additional amenities to attract and retain talent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support individual communities in their development of achievable plans for talent attraction and retention based on each community's assets and needs • Engage employers about talent retention priorities and strategies • Incorporate natural and cultural assets in local and regional marketing efforts 	<p>Long-term (3-5 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Economic Expansion & Diversification section • Marketing plan updates that reflect incorporation of natural and cultural assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCOG has secured funding from the Inyo National Forest to assist with partnership mapping to support recreation and ecosystem management priority setting and implementation. • ESCOG continued to identify regional opportunities to invest in sustainable recreation amenities, including the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Initiative (BIRPI), which was a community-led conceptual recreation management plan for a key tourism destination located on federal lands, and the Towns-to-Trails plan, a feasibility analysis of a long-distance bike path connected communities throughout Inyo, Mono and Alpine Counties. • The City of Bishop partnered with Inyo County to develop a plan for athletic facility improvements at City Park. • The City of Bishop supported the Bishop Bike Organization in constructing a mountain bike facility within City Park. • The City of Bishop assisted in the design and construction of the Community Garden Enhancement Project, promoting community engagement and sustainability.

Community and Culture

Objectives	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Maintain and capitalize on strong community culture.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Community-based organizations, arts and culture partners, emergency services providers/responders, tribal communities</p>				
<p>Strengthen tribal relationships in the communities and counties and involve leadership in conversations and decisions to plan and implement strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate a point of contact for the region to provide ongoing, focused communication and ensure tribal leadership is engaged in conversations and decisions • Organize regular engagements with tribal leaders and representatives from tribal communities • Support each tribal community's ongoing and future economic development initiatives 	<p>Short-term (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings with tribal representatives and leaders • Partnerships with tribal communities to support economic development initiatives • Incorporate plan adjustments recommended by tribal leadership • # of executed opportunities to support each tribal community's economic development initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCOG is working to build collaboratives including Tribal communities to ensure efficient community and economic development coordination. • The City of Bishop has initiated the process to include the Bishop Paiute Tribe into the Bishop Area Wastewater Authority JPA , with future plans to secure funding for a consolidated regional sewer facility to serve the greater Bishop area.
<p>Build out a more robust, uniform regional communication strategy for sharing information, including emergency responses, with people who live, work, and recreate in the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the existing communication landscape throughout the region across government partners and key partners like chambers of commerce and business associations • Collaboratively develop a comprehensive communication plan that outlines the strategies, tactics, and responsibilities of each participating entity • Align resources for implementation which may involve securing funding for communication equipment, technology upgrades, and training for relevant staf 	<p>Long-term (3-5 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of needs assessment • Adoption of regionwide communication strategy • Communications and marketing reach • Funding secured for increased capacity related to communications strategy 	

Economic Expansion & Diversification

Objectives	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Grow and diversify the regional economy through support of existing and new businesses.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Regional economic development organizations, local chambers of commerce, entrepreneurial supportive services</p>				
<p>Build relationships with existing businesses and respond to their needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a formal business retention and expansion (BRE) program • Assemble and deploy a network of supportive services and providers to provide technical assistance • Seek funding opportunities to build capacity to grow the BRE program over time 	<p>Medium-term (2-3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of BRE visits conducted annually • Established network of service providers and supportive services • Number of firms referred/connected to service providers and supportive services • Tracked outcomes of companies that successfully navigate services/resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inyo County, in partnership with other Eastern Sierra jurisdictions, and the Sierra Business Council established the Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center in Bishop, CA. The Center opened December 10, 2024 and will provide free technical assistance and business consulting for small businesses throughout the region.
<p>Build upon and transform opportunities for businesses to convene by industry sector to better understand and address common issues related to supply chain, workforce, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing groups convened by partners like chambers or industry associations and adopt a sector partnership model • Assist industry-identified priorities with supportive services, advocacy, funding efforts, etc. 	<p>Short (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing groups convened by partners like chambers or industry associations and adopt a sector partnership model • Assist industry-identified priorities with supportive services, advocacy, funding efforts, etc. 	
<p>Enhance network of entrepreneurial and small business resources to encourage new business development within the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote opportunities for entrepreneurs to convene, network, and learn • Collaborate with service providers like SBDC, SCORE, and local service providers to bring workshops and trainings to the region • Create a regional asset map of entrepreneurial and small business resources • Develop a plan to address gaps in the regional asset map 	<p>Long-term (3-5 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of networking events • Number of workshops/trainings • Asset map • Plans to address one or more gaps in the asset map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Business Resource Center will partner with SBDC and other local service providers to provide workshops and trainings in the region. • The City of Bishop assisted with administration of philanthropically funded façade improvement program to support downtown areas.

Economic Expansion & Diversification

Objectives	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Grow and diversify the regional economy through support of existing and new businesses.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Regional economic development organizations, local chambers of commerce, entrepreneurial supportive services</p>				
<p>Initiate and support efforts related to real estate solutions that complement industry and residential needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create façade improvement programs for downtown areas • Leverage historic designations to secure funding for building improvements • Establish a revolving loan fund to support investment in real estate solutions that support the needs of businesses • Invest in business district upgrades that improve walkability and bikeability • Revisit and update potential industrial sites in the region and determine priority, viability, funding, etc. 	<p>Long-term (3-5 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of programs • Number of businesses or buildings receiving assistance • Improved walkability scores in main street/ downtown districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inyo County, Mono County, The City of Bishop, the Town of Mammoth Lakes and the ESCOG collaboratively to initiated a Regional Housing Needs Assessment.
<p>Thoroughly study and review the current status of the labor market and gaps in workforce services provision, for both employers and individuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a workforce and skills gap analysis with asset mapping of workforce and employment services • Provide new workforce development solutions that address gaps and improve outcomes for companies and individuals 	<p>Short-term (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce and skills gap analysis • Asset map of workforce and employment services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region participated in the California Jobs First initiative, which included the following labor and industry analysis: https://sierrajobsfirst.org/regional-summary/
<p>Identify additional data-informed opportunities that may exist for economic diversification and expansion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a regional targeted industry analysis 	<p>Medium-term (2-3 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of analysis • Adoption of recommendations in regional and local economic development efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region participated in the California Jobs First initiative, which included the following labor and industry analysis: https://sierrajobsfirst.org/regional-summary/

Environmental Resiliency & Sustainability

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Prioritize opportunities to preserve natural assets and support service provision needs of residents during weather and disaster events.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Local government, emergency services providers/responders, tribal communities, California Climate Adaptation Strategy</p>				
<p>Reduce the challenges experienced by residents and visitors during climate events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a regional working group that encourages collaboration across the three counties with their current plans, offices, and staff related to emergency response and disaster preparedness • Pursue climate action planning as a region, leveraging resources for greater impact 	<p>Short (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group established and meeting regularly • Climate action plan for the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local, State and Federal partners including ESCOG, the Inyo National Forest, Inyo County, Mono County, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the City of Bishop, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, community organizations such as the Whitebark Institute, and state partners including the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, CalFire and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife have collaborated to build capacity in climate resiliency planning and funding opportunities. Efforts include the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator, established to expand the scale and pace of wildfire mitigation projects.

Environmental Resiliency & Sustainability

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Prioritize opportunities to preserve natural assets and support service provision needs of residents during weather and disaster events.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Local government, emergency services providers/responders, tribal communities, California Climate Adaptation Strategy</p>				
<p>Enhance the network of industry and community stewards to develop, adopt, and promote guidelines for sustainable tourism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designate a group of sustainable tourism champions to plug into state-level initiatives to leverage plans and resources to advance outcomes in the region Develop regional guidelines to inform and encourage sustainable tourism initiatives and practices 	<p>Short (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable tourism champions identified and actively participating in state-level initiatives Adoption of state-level sustainable tourism initiatives at the regional level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP) is a collaborative of government and land management agencies that meets monthly to discuss regional sustainable recreation projects. This group helped establish the Sustainable Recreation and Tourism Initiative (SRTI), a regional community-led recreation planning project that identified priorities for existing and new recreation infrastructure and assets. Implementation priorities from the SRTI currently include Towns-to-Trails, BIRPI, the Visitor Connection Package (a visitor education platform), campground improvements, dispersed camping mitigation, the Eastern Sierra Scenic Byway analysis, and building additional capacity in the ESCOG to support regional recreation capacity.
<p>Consider sustainable tourism as a budding industry with workforce needs, entrepreneurial opportunities, and infrastructure requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed sustainable tourism into other plan elements to address workforce, entrepreneurial, and infrastructure needs Gain support for any needed infrastructure developments like visitor centers, trail systems, amenities upgrades, and more Sustainable tourism champions identified and actively participating in state-level initiatives 	<p>Short (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable tourism represented in industry-led groups, BRE outreach, entrepreneurial supports and services Sustainable tourism represented in workforce analysis and mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The region participated in the California Jobs First initiative, which included the following labor and industry analysis: https://sierrajobsfirst.org/regional-summary/ The region applied for California Jobs First Catalyst funding to support interjurisdictional sustainable tourism projects including economic impact analysis, branding and marketing, recreation planning, and others.

Government Affairs & Advocacy

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Promote stronger government affairs & advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Local elected officials, local government entities, state government agencies, federal agency representatives and regional offices, philanthropic and private funders</p>				
<p>Build capacity within ESCOG as well as Alpine, Inyo, and Mono Counties and other key partners for improved government affairs, prioritizing relationship-building with the key state and federal entities who directly impact the implementation of CEDS strategy recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map all local, state, and federal government agencies who can directly impact the implementation of CEDS strategy recommendations Conduct strategic outreach to these government agencies to pinpoint an effective point of contact for conversations and activities related to the CEDS 	<p>Short (1-2 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of map of target government agencies for collaboration Number of agencies with base relationship and point of contact established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastern Sierra communities maintain relationships with State agencies to advance regional goals. In particular, Inyo County has established a Project Management Office that focuses on identifying State and Federal funding opportunities and fostering State-level relationships. The Eastern Sierra Sustainable Recreation Partnership (ESSRP) is a public/public partnership between tribal, local, state, and federal government agencies and a regional voice for sustainable outdoor recreation in California that meets monthly to provide regional updates related to recreation projects. ESCOG has partnered with the ESSRP to administer inter-jurisdictional recreation project including the Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Initiative and the Towns-to-Trails project.

Government Affairs & Advocacy

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Promote stronger government affairs & advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Partners/Champions: Local elected officials, local government entities, state government agencies, federal agency representatives and regional offices, philanthropic and private funders</p>				
<p>Study the broader economic impact of regional strategy recommendations to garner more support from state and federal government agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather the necessary data to assess the economic impact of the CEDS strategy recommendations and relevant future projects or initiatives Use impact results to communicate the importance of government agency partnership and support to the implementation of the CEDS to stakeholders, policymakers, and the public 	<p>Long-term (3-5 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of economic impact assessments completed Number of presentations, meetings, and communication pieces related to communicating economic impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ESCOG is in partnership with the Inyo National Forest to expand capacity for forestry and sustainable recreation projects regionwide. ESCOG is coordinating with member agencies through the California Jobs First Planning and Catalyst Phases in key sector industries, specifically forestry, sustainable recreation and tourism, agriculture, clean energy and healthcare. This collaboration aims to enhance regional economic development opportunities and build capacity among local governments. ESCOG plans to expand regional collaboratives in 2025 to strengthen relationships with non-profits and community organizations to support joint funding opportunities, projects and workforce development needs.
<p>Equip local government partners with knowledge and capacity for identifying and securing federal funding to ensure relevant opportunities can be pursued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and maintain database of relevant programs and funding opportunities Designate individuals or create a cross-agency team specifically responsible for researching, identifying, and pursuing funding opportunities Establish relationships with other nonprofits, community organizations, and regional entities and collaborate on grant applications with shared expertise and resources Leverage support and resources available at the state and federal levels to help regions collaborate and access funding 	<p>Medium-term (2-3 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of funding opportunities database Number of funding applications submitted Number of funding awards Number of partnerships with MOUs and/or letters of intent to collaborate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCOG plans to expand regional collaboratives in 2025 to strengthen relationships with non-profits and community organizations to support joint funding opportunities, projects and workforce development needs. ESCOG plans to expand regional collaboratives in 2025 to strengthen relationships with non-profits and community organizations to support joint funding opportunities, projects and workforce development needs.

Housing Availability and Land Use

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Increase stock and availability of housing units with a focus on affordability for regional workforce Partners/Champions: County planning and zoning departments, City of Los Angeles, Federal and State government entities</p>				
<p>Increase amount of available land for private development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to purchase, trade, or lease land from public entities who own or manage land in the region Identify any parcels in unincorporated areas that are eligible for private purchase and explore opportunities to incentivize private purchase and development of these lands 	<p>Long-term (3-5 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploration of processes for land trades, purchase, or lease of public lands Assessment of status of past negotiations and strategic direction for utilization or sale of any procured land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 90% of land in Eastern Sierra communities is managed by federal agencies or the City of Los Angeles. Increasing the amount of land available for private development is key for housing and economic development. Each jurisdiction has regular conversations with external landowners to identify parcels that can be developed to address local community develop interests.
<p>Work to improve and expand housing stock on available land.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas with opportunities for infill redevelopment, in both residential or nonresidential zones, to take advantage of existing infrastructure and create additional housing where available land is limited Consider the creation of overlay districts to promote higher density or mixed-use development in nonresidential zones Pursue federal and state funding programs designed to redevelop, improve, or maintain conditions of existing housing stock 	<p>Short-term (1-2 years)</p>	<p>Complete housing needs assessment and strategic plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCOG, Inyo County, Mono County, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and the City of Bishop have initiated a Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan that will establish housing needs by income and unit size to inform development partners, identify appropriate sites to focus housing development efforts, and provide strategic direction for housing policies and incentives.

Housing Availability and Land Use

Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	Metrics for Success	2024 Implementation Summary
<p>Goal: Increase stock and availability of housing units with a focus on affordability for regional workforce Partners/Champions: County planning and zoning departments, City of Los Angeles, Federal and State government entities</p>				
<p>Expand additional housing options within affordable range for regional workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and potentially incentivize opportunities for workforce (low- and moderate- income) housing near employment centers Explore opportunities for employers to contribute to or develop housing for year-round and seasonal employees 	<p>Medium-term (2-3 years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete funding scan Convene business resources group and establish workforce housing working group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Bishop initiated a Parking Management and Land Use Study to identify potential land for future housing developments. The City of Bishop has leveraged the 2022 Mixed-Use Overlay Zone to approve two multi-family housing projects (8 units and 5 units). A 5-unit mixed-use project is currently under construction. The City of Bishop rezoned an additional parcel to be included under new zoning reforms to increase housing density, accommodating 35 new dwelling units. The Town of Mammoth Lakes initiated the Parcel Development: A 25-acre site acquired by the town in 2018, designated for up to 280 affordable housing units.

2026 Economic Development Goals

1. Establish the Eastern Sierra Economic Development District
 - Establish the Eastern Sierra Economic Development District to be administered by the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments in partnership with member agencies, non-profits partners, Chambers of Commerce and others.
2. Sustainable Tourism
 - Work with land management agencies, local partners, Tribes, businesses and non-profits to develop tourism and sustainable recreation attractions to promote off-peak tourism.
 - Ensure tourism development aligns with environmental conservation efforts.
3. Economic Diversification
 - Support industry growth and workforce development in sectors such as ecosystem management / forestry, sustainable recreation, renewable energy, and agriculture.
 - Partner with the Eastern Sierra Business Resource Center to provide resources and support to foster entrepreneurship and the expansion of local businesses.
4. Infrastructure Enhancement
 - Improve high-speed internet access across Alpine, Inyo, and Mono Counties to support businesses, education, and healthcare.
 - Upgrade transportation networks to facilitate commerce and tourism.
 - Develop municipal service reviews to identify infrastructure needs in Inyo, Mono and Alpine Counties.
 - Identify funding opportunities to support necessary water and wastewater modernization.
5. Workforce Development
 - Collaborate with Cerro Coso Community College and other educational institutions, workforce development organizations, and area employers to offer training aligned with industry needs.
 - Implement initiatives to retain skilled workers within the region.
6. Housing Solutions
 - Complete the Eastern Sierra Regional Housing Needs Assessment to develop community specific data for housing demand, site inventory, type of units needed, and recommended actions to increase housing availability.
 - Identify opportunities to partners across jurisdictions for funding and housing opportunities.
7. Regional Collaboration
 - Foster collaboration among Alpine, Inyo, and Mono Counties for shared economic initiatives.
 - Establish collaboratives in key sector industries to increase coordination between land management agencies, local agencies, workforce development organizations and local businesses.



Appendix E
Alpine County CEDS Projects List

Bear Valley Town Lift Connection Project

Overview: Embarking on a transformative initiative, Bear Valley is proud to introduce the Bear Valley Town Lift Connection Project—a visionary endeavor designed to connect the community of Bear Valley to the renowned Bear Valley Ski Resort. This innovative project, established as a private-public partnership between Bear Valley Ski Resort and Alpine County, is poised to bring about substantial economic benefits, community connectivity, and recreational opportunities.

Project Objectives:

1. *Master Planning & Site Assessment:* Undertake a comprehensive master planning and site assessment process to strategically outline the construction and integration of the Bear Valley Town Lift. This phase will consider factors such as topography, environmental impact, and community connectivity.
2. *Community Engagement:* Foster active participation from the local community throughout the project. Engage in open dialogue to understand community needs, address concerns, and incorporate valuable insights into the planning and execution phases.
3. *Cost Analysis:* Conduct a detailed cost analysis to determine the financial requirements for the project. This includes estimating costs for lift installation, infrastructure development, safety measures, and ongoing maintenance. Develop a sustainable financial plan to ensure the project's success.
4. *Permitting:* Navigate through regulatory processes to obtain the necessary permits for lift construction. Collaborate with local authorities and regulatory bodies to ensure compliance with environmental, safety, and construction standards.
5. *Construction:* Execute the construction plan for the Bear Valley Town Lift, connecting the community to the Bear Valley Ski Resort. Implement safety measures, ensure structural integrity, and create a seamless and efficient transportation link.

Projected Economic Benefits: The Bear Valley Town Lift Connection Project is anticipated to deliver a multitude of economic benefits to the region, including:

1. *Job Creation:* Generate employment opportunities during the construction phase and subsequently through the operation of the lift, contributing to local economic growth.
2. *Business Vitality:* Stimulate business activity in Bear Valley by enhancing accessibility to the ski resort, attracting visitors, and fostering a thriving local economy.
3. *New Business Creation:* Encourage the establishment of new businesses catering to the increased influx of visitors and residents, further diversifying the local economy.
4. *Sustainable Transportation:* Introduce a sustainable transportation solution that reduces reliance on traditional vehicles, contributing to environmental conservation efforts.
5. *Safety Improvements:* Enhance safety for residents and visitors by providing a reliable and efficient transportation link between the community and the ski resort.
6. *Recreational Access:* Expand recreational opportunities by providing access to new terrain, attracting outdoor enthusiasts and bolstering the region's appeal.
7. *Increased Skier Demand:* Drive increased demand for skiing and recreational activities, benefiting the Bear Valley Ski Resort and the local tourism industry.

8. *Tax Generation:* Contribute to the region's economic strength through the generation of transient occupancy tax and sales tax, supporting community services and infrastructure development.

Community Connectivity: The Bear Valley Town Lift Connection Project represents a new chapter in the region, fostering stronger connections between the Bear Valley community and the Bear Valley Ski Resort. This initiative reflects a commitment to sustainable growth, economic prosperity, and a vibrant community, establishing Bear Valley as a premier destination in the region. Through collaboration between the private and public sectors, this project is set to leave a lasting legacy, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Turtle Rock Park Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project

Overview: Alpine County is embarking on a crucial endeavor—the Turtle Rock Park Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project. This comprehensive initiative aims to restore and enhance the largest County-owned facility, Turtle Rock Park (TRP), which was tragically devastated by the Tamarack Fire. The project encompasses various phases, including master planning & site assessment, community engagement, cost analysis, permitting, and construction.

Project Objectives:

1. *Master Planning & Site Assessment:* Conduct a thorough assessment of the 125-acre property along Hwy 89 that encompasses Turtle Rock Park. Develop a comprehensive master plan that outlines the rehabilitation and reconstruction strategies, taking into consideration the unique topography and environmental aspects.
2. *Community Engagement:* Foster active involvement and input from the local community throughout the project. Encourage dialogue to understand the community's needs, desires, and concerns, ensuring that the rehabilitation aligns with their aspirations and enhances their overall well-being.
3. *Cost Analysis:* Perform a detailed cost analysis to determine the financial requirements for the project. This includes estimating costs for tree removal, facility reconstruction, landscaping, and any other necessary elements. Develop a sustainable financial plan to ensure the project's successful execution.
4. *Permitting:* Navigate through regulatory processes and secure all necessary permits for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Turtle Rock Park. This involves liaising with relevant authorities and ensuring compliance with environmental, zoning, and construction regulations.
5. *Construction:* Execute the rehabilitation and reconstruction plan, focusing on revitalizing the campground amenities and world-renowned disc golf course. Rebuild multiple public restroom buildings, campground facilities, campground pavement, and sports courts to restore Turtle Rock Park to its former glory.

Projected Impact: The successful implementation of the Turtle Rock Park Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project is poised to bring about transformative changes in Alpine County. The project anticipates the following positive outcomes:

1. *Economic Growth:* Stimulate economic development by creating new job opportunities during the construction phase and subsequently through the operation of revitalized facilities.

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2. *Facility Enhancement*: Provide upgraded and modernized facilities that cater to the diverse recreational needs of the community, attracting visitors and fostering a sense of pride among residents.
3. *Visitor Services*: Enhance the overall experience for visitors with improved amenities, creating a destination that draws tourists and contributes to the local economy.
4. *Transit Hubs*: Explore opportunities to develop transit hubs, facilitating easy access to Turtle Rock Park and boosting connectivity within the county.

Long-Term Economic Success: Recognizing the pivotal role Turtle Rock Park plays in the long-term economic success of Alpine County, this project signifies a commitment to resilience and growth. By restoring this recreational gem, the county aims to not only recover from the impacts of the Tamarack Fire but also emerge stronger, more vibrant, and economically prosperous. The Turtle Rock Park Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project is a testament to Alpine County's dedication to its community's well-being and the sustainable development of its assets.

Lake Tahoe Community College Forestry Education and Job Placement Program

Alpine County has coordinated with Lake Tahoe Community College for the past several years to develop a new Forestry Education and Job Placement Program, which is finally available to students. A former Alpine County fire chief was instrumental in the development of the program, and much of the program uses forest land in Alpine County as the “classroom” for its students. Alpine County will continue to partner with Lake Tahoe Community College to develop the program, enhance its offerings to students, and expand enrollment in coming years. Graduates from the program are eligible for placement opportunities in Alpine County, thus retaining talent locally. There may be ways to scale or replicate this program in other parts of the region, contributing to continued collaboration efforts between CSEDD counties.

Alpine County EV Electrification Project

Alpine County is embarking on a 5-year strategy to leverage make-ready programs with PG&E, Liberty Utilities, and CALeVIP to fund and install Level 3 Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations in Alpine County. Rural destinations are often less accessible to EV travelers due to a general lack of charging stations, making rural travel risky (in the event of travel disruptions) or impossible. Adding charging stations to Alpine County will make EV visitorship to the region more reliable, expanding opportunities for residents in typically urban areas to make Alpine County a travel destination. This will be a phased project prioritizing the installment of charging stations in Bear Valley, Kirkwood, and Markleeville.

Sierra Towns to Trails Plan & Alpine County Trails Development

The Sierra Towns to Trails Plan will identify opportunities to connect Sierra communities to each other and to federal public lands throughout the region, from northern Alpine County to southern Inyo County. The planning process will engage the recreation capacities of Alpine, Inyo, and Mono counties, as well as land management partners in the Eastern Sierra Sustainable

Attachment A

Recreation Partnership, residents, and recreation stakeholders. Modeled on the successful “Trails Master Plan for the Lost Sierra Region,” developed by Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship, the Towns to Trails Plan will inventory existing trail and trail support infrastructure, identify connectivity challenges, and produce a trails plan with recommended projects for environmental analysis and implementation along with plans for sustainability and maintenance. Sierra communities will benefit from additional recreation and alternative transportation opportunities. Alpine County will continue the trails development strategy to connect regions of Kirkwood and Bear Valley to Eastern and Western Counties and Communities.

Alpine County Economic Development and Community Development are currently working with local stakeholders and subject matter experts to develop trails priorities in Alpine County. Trails developments are focused on creating connectivity within the community and access for all types of trail users. This group is meeting bi-weekly to determine route selection, stakeholder engagement, strategic planning and partnership development.

Hot Springs Road Reconstruction Project

Alpine County is coordinating with Caltrans to propose a reconstruction project for Hot Springs Road from Laramie Street to the entrance of Grover Hot Springs Park. The project aims to improve pavement conditions and provide paved shoulders for Class 2 and 3 bicycle lanes where possible. The purpose of the project is to increase safety for drivers and bicyclists by providing bicyclists with wider paved shoulders, and drivers with a consistent roadway section and a wider area for recovery should they veer out of the travel lane. The project will also expand road width to improve evacuation efforts for residents and visitors, and to allow passage for emergency responders during emergencies (e.g., wildfires).

Tamarack Fire Restoration Project

The federal government, acting through the U.S. Forest Service, awarded a \$1.815 million dollar restoration grant to Alpine County for the purpose of wildfire restoration activities on State, County, and Private lands impacted by the Tamarack Fire (2021). The Tamarack fire impacted approximately 8,000 acres of private lands in Alpine County, some of which have already begun restoration activities. It is possible that restoration support can be provided to land already under restoration, however the first effort of Alpine County is to identify those landowners that are not otherwise enrolled in a state or federal program. Over the next several months the Tamarack Emergency Forest Restoration Team (Tamarack EFRT) will identify interested landowners and discuss appropriate restoration support for those properties, in the context of the landowners’ objectives and the overall landscape restoration process on surrounding public and private lands. Restoration activities may include: biomass removal, mulching/mastication, reseeding trees and replanting other flora (grasses, forbs, shrubs), erosion control and repair, and watercourse repair. The Alpine County Board of Supervisors has selected a team of consultants to assist with the implementation of the program and has allocated funding to conduct program work through June 2025.

Alpine County Economic Analysis

Alpine County, located amidst the stunning Alpine landscapes, boasts a rich diversity of aquatic ecosystems, making it a prime destination for anglers seeking pristine fishing experiences. To harness the economic potential of angling while preserving the county's natural heritage, we propose an in-depth Economic Analysis of Angling in Alpine County with a focus on the East and West Carson River Watersheds. This project aims to comprehensively assess the economic impact of angling and formulate strategies for sustainable fisheries enhancement, with a specific focus on improving access, optimizing fish planting practices, identifying priority focus areas, and implementing habitat improvement measures.

1. Assessing Economic Significance:

- Objective: Quantify the economic contributions of angling to Alpine County's economy, encompassing both direct and indirect economic impacts.
- Methodology: Conduct surveys, collect data on angler expenditures, and analyze the ripple effects on local businesses, tourism, and job creation.
- Outcome: A clear understanding of the economic significance of angling, serving as a baseline for further analysis.

2. Access Enhancement:

- Objective: Improve access to fishing spots, ensuring that anglers can easily and safely reach their desired locations.
- Methodology: Identify existing access points, evaluate their conditions, and prioritize areas for enhancement.
- Outcome: A strategic plan for enhancing access, including recommendations for infrastructure development and maintenance.

3. Fish Planting Optimization:

- Objective: Optimize fish stocking practices to maintain healthy fish populations and align them with angler preferences.
- Methodology: Analyze historical fish stocking data, angler preferences, and species diversity to determine the most effective stocking strategies.
- Outcome: A comprehensive plan for fish planting, addressing species selection, stocking frequencies, and locations.

4. Focus Area Identification:

- Objective: Identify and designate specific areas for various types of angling experiences, catering to diverse angler interests.
- Methodology: Analyze angling trends, preferences, and ecological suitability to categorize regions for focused angling activities.
- Outcome: A map of designated focus areas with recommendations for the type of angling experience to promote in each area.

5. Habitat Improvement Strategies:

- Objective: Implement habitat improvement measures including the East and West Carson Watersheds to ensure the long-term health of aquatic ecosystems and enhance angler experiences.
- Methodology: Conduct habitat assessments, prioritize areas for restoration, and develop habitat improvement strategies.

- Outcome: A habitat improvement plan, detailing recommended restoration projects, erosion control measures, and invasive species management.
6. Balancing Conservation and Economic Development:
- Objective: Develop strategies that strike a balance between economic development and conservation efforts.
 - Methodology: Assess existing fishing regulations, consult with local stakeholders, and identify opportunities to promote sustainable angling practices.
 - Outcome: Recommendations for regulatory adjustments and conservation initiatives that support both economic growth and ecological preservation.

By undertaking this Economic Analysis of Angling in Alpine County, we aim to empower the county's decision-makers with data-driven insights and actionable strategies. This project not only seeks to boost the local economy but also underscores the importance of responsible environmental stewardship. Alpine County can set an example for sustainable, nature-based economic development, ensuring that future generations can enjoy the natural beauty and recreational opportunities it offers.

Market at Markleeville

Alpine County is excited to announce the return of *Market at Markleeville* in downtown Markleeville on Montgomery Street. The *Market at Markleeville* is an immersive experience that brings together talented local artists, crafters, producers, growers, and non-profit organizations in one dynamic marketplace. The market offers an incredible opportunity for attendees to engage with a diverse array of artistic expressions, discover unique handcrafted treasures, and support the thriving arts community.

Highlights of the *Market at Markleeville* include:

1. **Live Music:** Enjoy the soulful melodies and captivating performances of talented local musicians, who will create an enchanting ambiance throughout the day. From acoustic melodies to foot-tapping beats, the live music will enhance the overall experience and delight all attendees.
2. **Local Artists and Crafters:** Immerse yourself in the world of creativity as you peruse the works of talented local artists and crafters. Explore handmade jewelry, paintings, ceramics, sculptures, textiles, and much more. Witness the passion and dedication that goes into every piece, and discover that perfect artwork to adorn your living space.
3. **Producers and Growers:** Delight your taste buds with an assortment of delectable treats and fresh, locally grown produce. From artisanal cheeses and baked goods to organic fruits and vegetables, the market showcases the finest offerings from local producers and growers. Savor the flavors and support sustainable agriculture in the community.
4. **Non-Profit Organizations:** Engage with non-profit organizations dedicated to making a positive impact in the community. Learn about their missions, initiatives, and how you can contribute to their valuable work. Discover opportunities for volunteerism, advocacy, and spreading awareness about the causes closest to your heart.

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The *Market at Markleeville* is a must-attend event for anyone seeking a delightful day out, immersed in the rich tapestry of local artistry, craftsmanship, and community spirit. Whether you're a seasoned art enthusiast or simply looking for a fun-filled experience, this market promises something for everyone.

Attachment B
Mono County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project List

Project	Project Description	Project Source
Lee Vining Road Repairs	Rebuild more resilient roads in the Lee Vining area.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Escape Roads and Evacuation Routes	General resiliency repairs and maintenance to improve roadways in the County.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Regional Dispatch and Emergency Operations Center	Funds to establish a regional dispatch and emergency operations center. Use facility and technology to coordinate emergency response with neighboring communities.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Bridgeport Paramedic Station	Funds to provide repairs and maintenance to the Bridgeport paramedic station living quarters.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
General Paramedic Station Upgrade Earmark	Funds to repair and maintain paramedic station living quarters across the County.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Public space/facility earmark	Funds to enhance public facilities like parks and tennis courts.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Multipurpose visitor center/community center/economic center	Funds that would allow the County to purchase or repair existing facilities for the purpose of economic development.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Fire Truck Acquisition	Replace fire trucks used by volunteer firefighters in the County.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Bridgeport Airport Hangar Construction	Funds to build additional aircraft hangars at the Bridgeport Airport, and also for the purposes of improving emergency response operations.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Rural Healthcare Facility Construction	Funds to reopen an emergency healthcare clinic in Bridgeport.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
USFS Water Line Extension	Funds to build a water line from the Bridgeport PUD hookup in Bridgeport to the USFS facility north of town to create infrastructure for USFS housing.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Walker EMS Station garage	Funds to add and maintain modifications to an existing paramedic crew station/quarters at the cost of approximately \$250,000. The existing station is a double-wide manufactured home around 60-70 years old that is in need of updated HVAC, flooring, repairs, and a climate-controlled garage to house one ambulance and medical supplies.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Two new Stryker gurneys & load systems	Funds to obtain two Stryker gurneys & load systems at a cost of approximately \$200,000. One to replace an older gurney and retrofit a backup ambulance with a load system. The other gurney and load system to be installed in a new ambulance to be ordered in the near future.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Two new Stryker stair chairs	Funds to obtain two Stryker Stair Chairs. One to replace in an ambulance that uses the stair chair frequently and is in need of replacement. The other to have in a back-up ambulance that currently does not have one.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Bryant Field Airport - Emergency Services Helicopter Landing area		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Lee Vining Airport - Emergency Services Helicopter Landing Improvements		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Topaz Bridge Safety Rehabilitation		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Larson Lane Bridge Safety Rehabilitation		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Cunningham Lane Bridge Safety Rehabilitation		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Walker Community Center EV Charging Station		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Benton Community Center EV Charging Station		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
June Lake Community Center EV Charging Station		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Crowley Lake Community Center EV Charging Station		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Lee Vining Avalanche Bypass		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
June Lake - North Shore Drive road upgrade to Avalanche Bypass		Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Pumice Landfill - Fuel Reduction Wood Chipper	Wood chipper to help process materials brought in from forest fuel reduction projects.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
911 Regional Dispatch Center	Regional police dispatch center to consolidate the individual dispatch centers in several municipalities in the larger area. Could potentially double as a emergency operations center (EOC).	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Main Street Beautification	Facade improvements, building upgrades, murals, paint and sign upgrades, etc. in all Mono County communities.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
June Lake Parking Lot	Purchase and refurbish a parking lot for better access to businesses. Parking lot would also contain facility for storage of disaster relief vehicles such as snow plows.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
EV Infrastructure	Place EV chargers in locations accessible to the public throughout Mono County.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
CERF Program Planning	STATE ISSUE: Advocate against legislation that would remove California Jobs First (CJF) funding allocations. CJF could be targeted to help relieve the state deficit. (Formerly CERF)	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Records Management	Funding to digitize and enhance records management. Especially important for mitigating the threat posed by emergencies (in particular, fires that could destroy analogue records).	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Election Equipment	Elections equipment (in particular, backup equipment and ballot-on-demand equipment to allow ballots to be printed on site).	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Wireless connectivity equipment for connectivity in the field	Purchase and install wireless routers and connectivity equipment in all EMS and emergency response vehicles. This equipment will ensure that first responders are able to communicate by voice and video in the most remote areas of Mono County. These issues have arisen when behavioral health specialists are unable to communicate with others while on response calls in remote areas.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group

Attachment B
Mono County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project List

Project	Project Description	Project Source
WIC Women Infants Children	As Congress negotiates government funding for Fiscal Year (FY 2024), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is warning of a critical \$1 billion budget shortfall within the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Urge Congress to take action to fully fund WIC to ensure California does not have to reduce benefits or create waitlists, and so that no participants lose access to the program.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Child Care Funding	1) Increase pay for child care providers-provide income parity with Kindergarten teachers. Providers earn approximately 25% of what K teachers make. 2) Decrease family cost of child care by supplementing the Alternative Payment Program for Child Care.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Federal Child Tax Credit	Advocate to make the Child Tax Credit permanent. The House voted on 1/31/24 to temporarily expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC). The Wyden-Smith proposal would raise the CTC through 2025, but the credit is still scheduled to decrease in 2026.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Mass Care and Sheltering	Advocate for States to receive dedicated funding to allocate to county Health and Human Services to perform mass care and sheltering. Counties that are tasked with Mass Care and Sheltering do not receive dedicated funding to implement these requirements.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Land Purchase for Mixed-Use Development, including affordable/workforce housing and main street commercial	\$2,000,000 for the purchase of land on a community "main street" which will improve the health and wellbeing of community residents by allow for greater walkability, lower or beyond net-zero carbon impact, increased healthy by increasing daily steps for residents, increased access to jobs and economic opportunities on the "main street" and increase access to workforce for existing and new businesses in the community. Commercial space opportunities include childcare, medical care, pharmacy, library or other public facilities. Housing space opportunities include affordable workforce and traditional affordable housing to meet county and community needs. Overall building to be built to ultra-efficient, healthy, and comfortable Passive House standard, reducing energy usage by up to 90% for heating and cooling, while improving health, comfort, and reducing infection rates through ventilation and control of humidity. Potential purchase includes around 2 acres of prime developable land on one of the county's community's "main streets". Community qualifies as rural. Purchase would qualify under CDBG rules.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program improvements in Tax Bill before Senate	Advocate for the passage of the bill recently passed by the house and the Senate Ways and Means committee, which includes improvements in the Child Tax Credit, and improvements to the LIHTC program (increased 9% credit allocations, and reduced private activity bond minimum for 4% projects)	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
California Radio Interoperability System (CRIS) Radio site at new Jail in Bridgeport	The town of Bridgeport does not have a CRIS radio site. When the new jail and dispatch center go live, communication and connectivity to CRIS will have to rely on a County funded and maintained microwave connection.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Dispatch Radio Console equipment for the new Jail and Dispatch Center	Mono County is building a new jail and 911 Dispatch Center that will be tied into the California Radio Interoperability System (CRIS). The existing console system is not capable of console level connectivity with CRIS and will limit functionality of the system.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Broadband Funding	Funding to provide Broadband connectivity in remote areas Mono County. Many rural areas do not have good connectivity and in some areas no connectivity at all. This has impacts on public safety, business operations and day to day life.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Cybersecurity Funding	Cybersecurity is one of the highest priorities for IT. Safeguarding our systems, data, and information is crucial. As an organization, we must continually work to provide higher levels of security. IT has a number of initiatives that could help us and strengthen the security posture of the organization. This includes Penetration Testing, Vulnerability Management, and developing a Security Profile Roadmap are at the top of the list. Dedicated cybersecurity staff is a large hole in our current environment. a Chief Information Security Office (CISO) and Cybersecurity Analyst are key positions that should be developed and considered for funding.	Mono County / The Ferguson Group
Annex I/II Library Paint	Bridgeport Campus paint to include Annex I/II Library Paint	Mono County Public Works CIP
Prop 68	Prop 68 grant for Mono Lake Park, Lee Vining Streetscape connecting 395 to Guss Hess Park, Bridgeport Park, and Walker Park. Upgrades and ADA improvements to park facilities.	Mono County Public Works CIP
Annex I/II Carpet	New carpeting for Annex I and Annex II	Mono County Public Works CIP
Annex I/II Library Roof	New roofs for Annex I/Annex II/Library	Mono County Public Works CIP
Lee Vining Community Center Ridge Cap	Planning and material phase.	Mono County Public Works CIP
June Lake Substation Stairs	Planning phase for new stairs/concrete for entrance to June Lake Substation	Mono County Public Works CIP
Civic Center Mechanical Yard	Mechanical Yard Enclosure Civic Center to protect equipment including HVAC from the elements.	Mono County Public Works CIP
Tennis Court Renovation - Chalfant	Chalfant tennis court resurfacing	Mono County Public Works CIP
Shutters - Mono County Civic Center	Civic Center - east side shutters	Mono County Public Works CIP
New trash cans at Bridgeport Campus	Purchase and install bear-proof trash cans and dumpsters around Bridgeport campus.	Mono County Public Works CIP
Civic Center Carport	Carport/3-sided cover for generator and two parking spaces at Civic Center	Mono County Public Works CIP
Whitmore Shelter Improvements	Whitmore Animal Shelter siding replacement	Mono County Public Works CIP
New Courthouse Generator	Generator for Courthouse replacement	Mono County Public Works CIP
New ADA Water Fountains	Drinking Fountains with bottle fillers for all parks that are ADA and frost proof	Mono County Public Works CIP
Storage - Bridgeport Shop	Storage building for shop for landscape equipment	Mono County Public Works CIP
June Lake Guardrail	Fence at June Lake/ Parking guardrail rebuild	Mono County Public Works CIP

Attachment B
Mono County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project List

Project	Project Description	Project Source
Windows at June Lake Community Center	Replace the windows at the June Lake Community Center	Mono County Public Works CIP
Generator Cover at Memorial Hall, Bridgeport	Shed roof needed for Memorial Hall Backup Battery/Generator Cover	Mono County Public Works CIP
Community Housing	Funding for community housing, specifically a mix of subsidized and market rate rentals with a set percentage of units set aside for townhome-style ownership	DeChambeau Creek Foundation/Lee Vining Chamber
Special district infrastructure	Upgrades to aging and exorbitantly expensive water distribution systems, wastewater collection and treatment systems, local fire department facilities and rolling stock (vehicles)	DeChambeau Creek Foundation/Lee Vining Chamber
Public Lands infrastructure	Repairs and upgrades to parking lots, toilets, roads, trails (prioritize near- and connecting-community trails), campgrounds and visitor centers (especially Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitors Center and Bridgeport Ranger District information center).	DeChambeau Creek Foundation/Lee Vining Chamber
Forest Restoration and Community Fire Resiliency Capacity building	Investments in local workforce capacity to implement local forest restoration plans resulting in the reintroduction of fire on the landscape and enhanced forest ecological and watershed health, as well as local workforce capacity to implement community resiliency efforts from home hardening to defensible space.	DeChambeau Creek Foundation/Lee Vining Chamber
Public Parks enhancement	Investments in local parks (including creation in park-poor communities such as Mono City) focused on bathrooms, water bottle fill-stations, landscaping, play equipment, sports fields, interpretive trails and facilities, exercise equipment (similar to Bishop City Park) and skate/bike parks.	DeChambeau Creek Foundation/Lee Vining Chamber
Antelope Valley FPD	Static water supplies in strategic locations within the District area.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Birchim CSD	Updating infrastructure – providing updated pipelines, a backup storage tank, shut-off valves, a backup generator, and individual water meters.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Bridgeport FPD	Fire station improvements and an addition of a Type 6 brush truck	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Bridgeport PUD	Funding for an approximately four mile water main extension to serve up to 15 new connections for U.S. Forest Service housing.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Chalfant Valley CSD	Addition and remodeling improvements to the fire station. Recruitment of firefighters and EMTs. Improved District radio equipment.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Hilton Creek CSD	Improvements including wastewater treatment plant clarifier replacements and emergency generator.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
June Lake FPD	Wildland fuels management projects within the community and on surround Forest lands.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
June Lake PUD	Sewer slip lining, lift station, and treatment plant upgrades. Maintenance and capital improvement to aged system. Need for groundwater well to supplement surface water sources.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Lee Vining FPD	Improvements to the fire station, address budget shortfall, and community outreach	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Lee Vining PUD	Drilling and adding a well to the water system, establishing a second water supply for the water system, Existing water source vulnerability to wildfire, and providing long-term capacity improvements.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Long Valley FPD	Sunny Slopes fire station, Type 1 engine, and water tender.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Mono City FPD	Fire station improvements and expansion to shelter a new water tender.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Paradise FPD	Fuel reduction projects, planning for fire station improvements.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Wheeler Crest FPD	Firefighter training and retention and aged fire station in need of replacement.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
White Mountain FPD	A new water tender, fire protection water supply, upgrade to communications infrastructure, improvements to the Benton fire station as the primary long range project. If improvements occur at the Benton Station a relocating, repurposing of buildings to Hammil is proposed to create a second station.	Mono County/ Community Development/ Special District
Recreation Center	A public recreation center to serve the Antelope Valley	Antelope Valley RPAC
Existing Business Upgrades	Improvements to the Bridgeport General Store and the Walker Country Store	Bridgeport Indian Reservation
Community Recreation Center	Community recreation center with daycare options	Bridgeport Indian Reservation
New Hub Spot for recreation ability specific information.	Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra would like to build out a location to invite people with disabilities to gather and get information about accessibility information in the Eastern Sierra	Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra
Green Business Program	Sustainability initiatives that have economic development co-benefits. The HSEF needs \$15,000 in annual program funding to support the Eastern Sierra Green Business Program's success in unincorporated Mono County. They aim to assist Mono County in meeting local and state sustainability mandates, including waste diversion goals, carbon neutrality targets, renewable energy and water conservation objectives.	High Sierra Energy Foundation
Technical Assistance	Add capacity to Chamber, increase volunteer and training opportunities	Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce
Event Funding	Planning, implementation, funding, management, infrastructure for events.	Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce
June Lake Business Improvement District	Technical assistance needed to start and implement a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID)	June Lake Chamber of Commerce
June Lake Parking Lot	Additional parking is needed in downtown June Lake in to support the businesses, job growth and retention.	June Lake Chamber of Commerce
Technical Assistance	Add capacity to Chamber, increase volunteer and training opportunities. Hire employee to manage chamber.	June Lake Chamber of Commerce
Antelope Valley Recreation Center	Recreation center located in Antelope Valley	Northern Mono Chamber of Commerce
Event Funding	Establish events to keep tourists in Antelope Valley overnight to support businesses	Northern Mono Chamber of Commerce
Technical Assistance	Add capacity to Chamber, increase volunteer and training opportunities	Northern Mono Chamber of Commerce
Event Funding	Local and tourist based event funding	Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce

Attachment B
Mono County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project List

Project	Project Description	Project Source
Technical Assistance	Add capacity to Chamber, increase volunteer and training opportunities	Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce
Housing	All levels and units of housing	All agencies and nonprofits
Daycare/childcare	All levels of daycare and childcare	All agencies and nonprofits
	Road improvements, building improvements, broadband	Southern Mono Historical Society
Mono Basin Historical Society projects	<p>1. The MBHS needs an endowment, grant or a County funded staff position for a curator position. (Perhaps seasonal). We do not have the budget to keep the museum open on a regular basis throughout the season. A curator position could be a seasonal position but there is plenty of work in the museum (cataloging, display rotation etc.) that we could keep a curator busy throughout the year. We used to receive a yearly grant from SCE that partially funded a seasonal curator but that grant is no longer available. We are currently only able to keep the museum open 4 days per week (with volunteers) instead of the 7 days per week we have in the past.</p> <p>2. Need to repair/replace/upgrade several cases.</p> <p>3. Need to install safety fencing around the outdoor exhibits. This is being asked by our liability insurance. This project would include removing the grass around the outdoor exhibits and replacing with crushed rock saving water and preserving/protecting the exhibits from water damage.</p> <p>4. Refurbish the Upside down house – (replace floor, create a handicap access, replace outside railing) – The Upside down house is a big draw to the museum and to our area. Many of our visitors say they came to Lee Vining to see the Upside Down House that they saw on Huell Howser's California's Gold.</p>	Mono Basin Historical Society
Trail Stewardship in Mono County	Friends of the Inyo hires a seasonal crew of Trail Ambassadors from May-September every trail season to address deferred maintenance on USFS trails: dismantling illegal fire rings, packing out trash, cross-cutting downed trees blocking trail, improving the trail corridor so traffic is passable... all while making educational LNT visitor contacts to mitigate any harmful impacts. Additionally, the TAs lead educational interpretive programs throughout the summer.	Friends of the Inyo
Water Conservation Public Outreach in Bridgeport	This project consists of developing and presenting educational materials to customers and community members about water saving practices, which can contribute to reduced water consumption.	
Water Conservation Rebate Programs in Bridgeport	This project consists of developing and implementing a rebate program to encourage customers to replace older inefficient plumbing fixtures with new WaterSense-certified fixtures.	
Water Meter Installation, Tiered Rate Structure in Bridgeport	This project consists of installation of water meters on all water connections throughout Bridgeport PUD.	
Landscaping Irrigation Management in Bridgeport	This project includes development and enforcement of outdoor watering restrictions, typically during the summer months.	
Kirkwood Street Loop Water Replacement in Bridgeport	This project consists of replacement of up to 2,600 Linear Feet (LF) of 4- and 6-inch diameter water pipe with 6- and 8-inch water pipe.	
Stock Drive Water Extension in Bridgeport	This project consists of installation of approximately 1,600 LF of new 6- or 8-inch diameter water main to serve properties fronting Stock Drive within the Bridgeport Townsite area.	
Aurora Canyon Replacement Project in Bridgeport	This project consists of replacement of up to 2,040 LF of 4-inch diameter water pipe with 6- or 8-inch diameter pipe.	
Alpine Vista Sewer Extension in Bridgeport	This project consists of extension of approximately 600 LF of sewer main south along Sierra View Drive to serve Alpine Vista Estates, which is currently served by water but not served by sewer, and parcels are too small for septic tanks.	
Evans Tract Sewer Extension in Bridgeport	This project consists of a sewer main extension of approximately 4,600 LF (0.88 mi) south along US Hwy 395 to serve the Evans Tract area, which is currently served by water but not served by sewer.	
Bridgeport Water Treatment Plant in Bridgeport	This project consists of expansion of the existing water treatment plant in Bridgeport. The treatment plant currently reduces the concentration of naturally occurring arsenic in the groundwater produced by both currently active wells.	
Bridgeport Water Full Build-Out Improvements in Bridgeport	This project consists of expansion of the existing water system to accommodate future full build-out, including source development, water treatment expansion, additional water storage tanks, additional fire hydrants, and pipe replacement.	
Bridgeport Wastewater Treatment Expansion in Bridgeport	The capacity at the existing Bridgeport wastewater treatment plant is currently a limiting factor in sewer capacity for projects in Bridgeport.	
Bridgeport Sewer Full Build-Out Improvements in Bridgeport	This project consists of expansion of the existing sewer system to accommodate future full build-out, including wastewater treatment expansion, sewer manholes, main extension and replacement, and assumed addition of 2 lift stations.	
186 Milk Ranch Road in Bridgeport	This 74.3-acre property is east of the Bridgeport Townsite area and has water and sewer infrastructure along the west boundary of the property.	
BLM Land Exchange in Bridgeport	The property identified as this key site is over 163 acres located north of Bridgeport, along the east side of Bridgeport Reservoir.	
Water Conservation Public Outreach in Crowley Lake	This project consists of developing and presenting educational materials to customers and community members about water saving practices, which can contribute to reduced water consumption.	

Attachment B
Mono County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project List

Project	Project Description	Project Source
Water Conservation Rebate Programs in Crowley Lake	This project consists of developing and implementing a rebate program to encourage customers to replace older inefficient plumbing fixtures with new WaterSense-certified fixtures.	
Water Meter Installation, Tiered Rate Structure in Crowley Lake	The Mountain Meadows MWC already meters all water connections and has a tiered rate structure. The Crowley Lake MWC does not currently meter connections.	
Landscaping Irrigation Management in Crowley Lake	This project includes development and enforcement of outdoor watering restrictions, typically during the summer months.	
School District Parcel in Crowley Lake	This project consists of the extension of water and sewer mains into the School District parcel in Crowley Lake, which is currently near existing utilities, but does not have infrastructure within the property.	
Crowley Lake Drive Water Extension in Crowley Lake	This project consists of the extension of a water main north along Crowley Lake Drive to serve vacant mixed-use parcels that could be developed for multi-family housing.	
Crowley Lake Water Full Build-Out Improvements in Crowley Lake	This project consists of expansion of the existing water system to accommodate future full build-out, including source development, water treatment expansion, additional water storage tanks, additional fire hydrants, and pipe replacement.	
Crowley Lake Sewer Full Build-Out Improvements in Crowley Lake	This project consists of expansion of the existing sewer system to accommodate future full build-out, including wastewater treatment expansion, sewer manholes, main extension and replacement, and assumed addition of 2 lift stations.	
Crowley Lake RM in Crowley Lake	This 59.4-acre project property would require extension of water and sewer mains into the Crowley Lake RM parcel in Crowley Lake, which is currently adjacent to existing utilities, but does not have infrastructure within the property.	
379 Landing Road in Crowley Lake	This project would require extension of water and sewer mains into the 9.0-acre property located at 379 South Landing Road in Crowley Lake, which is currently adjacent to existing utilities, but does not have distribution infrastructure within the property.	
Sunny Slopes Water in Crowley Lake	This project would require extension of water mains into the 12.8-acre property located along the west side of Sunny Slopes, east of Crowley Lake, and within the Long Valley Area.	
Aspen Springs ER in Crowley Lake	The Aspen Springs ER property is not located within any existing water or sewer service territories.	
Aspen Springs Mixed Use in Crowley Lake	The Aspen Springs Mixed Use property is almost identical to the Aspen Springs ER site in utility limitations.	
Water Conservation Public Outreach in June Lake	This project consists of evaluating the existing water conservation programs and developing and presenting educational materials to customers and community members about water saving practices, which can contribute to reduced water consumption.	
Water Conservation Rebate Programs in June Lake	This project consists of developing and implementing a rebate program to encourage customers to replace older inefficient plumbing fixtures with new WaterSense-certified fixtures.	
Landscaping Irrigation Management in June Lake	This project includes development and enforcement of outdoor watering restrictions, typically during the summer months.	
June Lake Water Full Build-Out Improvements in June Lake	This project consists of expansion of the existing water system to accommodate future full build-out, including source development, water treatment expansion, additional water storage tanks, additional fire hydrants, and pipe replacement.	
June Lake Sewer Full Build-Out Improvements in June Lake	This project consists of expansion of the existing sewer system to accommodate future full build-out, including wastewater treatment expansion, sewer manholes, main extension and replacement, and assumed addition of 34 lift stations.	
Highlands Specific Plan in June Lake	This property is identified in the Housing Element as a priority site but is already developed for single-family homes and does not have areas for additional development, though there are some vacant single-family lots.	
Northshore Drive ER/SP in June Lake	This project would consist of the extension of water and sewer mains into the Northshore Drive ER/SP property to allow for single and multi-family development on the 14.1-acre site.	
25 Mountain Vista Drive in June Lake	This project would consist of extensions of water and sewer mains into the 25 Mountain Vista Drive property to allow for single and multi-family development on the 30.2-acre site.	
Rodeo Grounds Specific Plan in June Lake	This project would require extension of water and sewer mains into the 81.5-acre property located along June Lake Loop, west of Gull Lake.	
Water Conservation Public Outreach in Lee Vining	This project consists of developing and presenting educational materials to customers and community members about water saving practices, which can contribute to reduced water consumption.	
Water Conservation Rebate Programs in Lee Vining	This project consists of developing and implementing a rebate program to encourage customers to replace older inefficient plumbing fixtures with new WaterSense-certified fixtures.	
Water Meter Installation, Tiered Rate Structure in Lee Vining	This project consists of installation of water meters on all water connections throughout Lee Vining PUD.	
Landscaping Irrigation Management in Lee Vining	This project includes development and enforcement of outdoor watering restrictions, typically during the summer months.	
Lee Vining Water Full Build-Out Improvements in Lee Vining	This project consists of expansion of the existing water system to accommodate future full build-out, including source development, additional water storage tanks, additional fire hydrants, and pipe replacement.	
Lee Vining Sewer Full Build-Out Improvements in Lee Vining	This project consists of expansion of the existing sewer system to accommodate future full build-out, including wastewater treatment expansion, sewer manholes, and main extension and replacement.	
Tioga Inn Specific Plan in Lee Vining	The Tioga Inn Specific Plan property is not located within any existing water or sewer service territories.	

Eastern Sierra Region - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Inyo County Project List

In 2024, the Inyo County Board of Supervisors embarked on an effort to develop and adopt a multi-year Strategic Plan for the County of Inyo for the first time in over 20 years. Many of the goals, initiatives, and projects identified as priorities within the Strategic Plan align with the strategic goals and objectives of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This Project List identifies those priority projects of the County that also further the goals of the regional CEDS and for which the County make seek funding through the Economic Development Administration.

Access & Connectivity

CEDS Objective: Increase access to digital resources through broadband infrastructure buildout

1. Inyo County Project: Broadband Infrastructure Expansion

The County of Inyo has undertaken two grant-funded planning projects related to Broadband expansion and seeks future funding to build out last mile infrastructure for unserved and underserved areas. The County includes and incorporates by reference all projects and network designs identified in the County's Broadband Strategic Plan, and Local Agency Technical Assistance Program (LATA) funded engineering designs for last mile infrastructure.

CEDS Objective: Enhance the regional transportation network to provide residents, visitors, and businesses with more accessible, reliable options for moving in, out, and within the region

2. Inyo County Project: Commercial Air Service Infrastructure

Inyo County's Bishop Airport (BIH) was certified for commercial air service (Part 139) in 2021, and began offering seasonal daily flights with United Airlines. The County now must secure funding for the planning, environmental review, design work, and ultimately construction of a new commercial service terminal for BIH. This may include additional projects such as runway safety improvements and construction of a concrete aircraft parking apron at the site of the proposed new terminal building.

3. Inyo County Project: Enhanced Ground Transportation Services

Inyo County's Strategic Plan involves a variety of projects related to the development and expansion of public transit infrastructure, which will allow citizens to move easily around the region while reducing VMT, and will provide increased access to visitors – especially those who hike into the County's towns from nearby trails. Upcoming projects include a bus stop and shelter in the community of Wilkerson, and a potential collaboration with the Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA) and Cerro Coso Community College to establish transit opportunities for students attending the Bishop and Mammoth campuses.

Community and Culture

CEDS Objective: Garner support for economic development by developing and capitalizing on strong community engagement

4. Inyo County Project: Community Revitalization through Effective Planning

The Planning Department supports small towns throughout Inyo County's unincorporated area in strategizing the future of their downtowns and residential areas. This project includes

a review of existing plans in order to identify the issues, opportunities, and needs which could be addressed through visioning, public input, and plan revisions, and includes the completion of necessary requirements such as integration of those plans into the County General Plan and completion of CEQA requirements.

CEDS Objective: Enhance quality of life with additional amenities to attract and retain talent

5. Inyo County Project: Quality Parks and Recreation Facilities

The County's strategic plan emphasizes the importance of investing in new infrastructure within each of our small communities to better the lives of its residents and visitors. New and improved facilities generate local jobs, provide opportunities for new business and expansion of existing ones, while making Inyo County a great place to live. The following amenities would improve quality of life and provide economic benefits:

1. Improvements to County owned and County-run campgrounds and parks, including restrooms, parking areas, playgrounds, glamping opportunities, shade structures, and equipment. A first step in this process might be a parks improvement plan to help prioritize and develop improvement and maintenance schedules.
2. Improvements to sports fields, ballparks, and turf, including lighting, to make Inyo County's beautiful sports facilities a destination for games and tournaments for locals and visitors.
3. Investments in the archives and artifacts managed by the Eastern California Museum and marketing the Museum to make it a destination for locals and tourists alike.
4. Evaluate the need and feasibility of an indoor recreation center and/or community center in the City of Bishop.

Economic Expansion & Diversification

CEDS Goal: Grow and diversify regional economy through support of existing and new businesses

6. Inyo County Project: Small Business Resource Center

With a \$50,000 planning grant from the EDA, Inyo County has partnered with a private entrepreneur and a nonprofit business development organization to create the Eastern Sierra Small Business Resource Center (SBRC), in a redeveloped storefront in downtown Bishop. The SBRC is currently undergoing construction and will be open in Fall 2024 to provide resources, education, assistance and networking opportunities for new and existing small businesses. Inyo County will continue to work with partners to develop and support programming of value to local business owners and entrepreneurs.

7. Inyo County Project: Make Inyo County's Downtowns a Destination

Much of Inyo County's tourist traffic is from people passing through – driving to Mammoth in Mono County to ski; or driving to Death Valley, Yosemite, or to trailheads in the White Mountains or Inyo National Forest. Creating, marketing, and supporting new festivals and events that make Inyo County's towns a destination will bring more tourists to the County's small, locally owned businesses and provide opportunities for pop ups, food trucks and vending.

8. Inyo County Project: Visitor Information and Welcome Centers

Creating welcoming and exciting venues to capture the attention of tourists heading to the myriad nearby recreational destinations could be enhanced through the creation and staffing

of local Visitor Information and Welcome Centers. Inyo County seeks to work with allied agencies such as local Chambers of Commerce to understand the need and develop plans for visitor and welcome centers in appropriate communities.

Environmental Resilience & Sustainability

CEDS Objective: Reduce the challenges experienced by residents and visitors during climate events

9. Inyo County Project: Vegetation Management, Home Hardening, and Wildfire Mitigation Efforts

The County is working with wildfire prevention and other specialists to develop comprehensive strategies for defensible space and home hardening around Inyo County communities. Additional work will entail collaborations with agency partners and property owners to perform appropriate vegetation management efforts to reduce the risk of wildfire and working with schools and businesses to develop the workforce necessary to perform the work necessary to mitigate wildfire risk throughout Inyo County's vast acreage.

CEDS Objective: Consider sustainable tourism as a budding industry with workforce needs and entrepreneurial opportunities

10. Inyo County Project: Regional Recreation Improvements and Stewardship

An immediate opportunity to build upon interagency collaboration is in the arena of regional outdoor recreation sites, including campgrounds, trailheads, parking areas, and climbing areas. The bridge from enhanced recreation infrastructure to regional economic development are significant. Inyo County recommends that all projects related to outdoor recreation infrastructure, improvements, and stewardship efforts be accepted as key elements and directives of the CEDS.

Government Affairs and Advocacy

CEDS Goal: Promote stronger government affairs and advocacy efforts

11. Inyo County Project: Investment in High-Quality Government Employees, Service Infrastructure, and Improved Access and Facilities

Inyo County has begun the process of investing in employees, technology, infrastructure and capacity to strengthen and improve public access, communication, customer service, and facilities. Additional investments in capacity and services described in the Inyo County strategic plan are incorporated by reference.

Housing Availability & Land Use

CEDS Objective: Expand additional housing options within affordable range for regional workforce

12. Inyo County Project: Community Infrastructure to Allow Expansion

Inyo County manages the drinking water and wastewater systems in many of the small towns throughout the unincorporated County. These systems are long past their recommended lifespan and need upgrades in order to support any expansion in housing or

tourism. Upgrades and replacement of basic infrastructure is a critically necessary first step before any significant economic development initiatives throughout the County can take place. The first major step in this effort should be to conduct a Municipal Service Review for each of our Special Districts and from that develop a multi-year strategic plan aimed at improving operations and service capacity

13. Inyo County Project: Complete Housing Needs Assessment for Workforce and Special Populations

The County is investing heavily in identifying avenues to improve housing availability and affordability despite the lack of developable land available. Working with experts in housing development, we hope to create a strategy that will expand access to housing for critical workforce as well as seniors, justice-involved, and other special populations.

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Eastern Sierra Region - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Appendix D: Town of Mammoth Lakes Project & Program Specific Action Plan

The Town of Mammoth Lakes has identified the following projects and programs necessary to meet the strategic goals and objectives of the regional CEDS document. These projects and programs are part of the Town's planned and future work programs. This includes Town and regional projects. The following information documents how these projects advance the goals of the CEDS. The Town envisions this list to be dynamic and be updated at least annually. The Town has evaluated most of the projects through public engagement exercises and through public meetings by the Town Council and/or other public bodies. Additionally, Town Staff facilitates several meetings and programs that directly support the advancement of the CEDS goals. The Town has organized its projects under the same framework as the CEDS document and associated projects with the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic action plan.

Access & Connectivity

Objective: Increase access to digital resources through broadband infrastructure buildout

1. The Town of Mammoth Lakes received a Local Agency Technical Assistance Program (LATA) grant for a multi-step network design process. The grant is supporting the town in its effort to expand broadband service to unserved and underserved residents. Established by the CPUC the Town of Mammoth Lakes LATA grant includes three work products the final product will be a low-level network design developed for the identified priority unserved/underserved areas. The designs will build off the refined high-level design and foundation planning stage, resulting in "Approved for Construction" drawings that can/will be used to award contracts for construction. Low-level design and engineering will also include all required permitting, easements, and rights-of-way processing. The final product could be used to expand broadband service further creating opportunities for other economic development programs. The Town and its partners could seek additional funding to build out these opportunities. The Town is providing broadband connection to our new affordable housing project adding value and opportunity to local residents.
2. The Public Works Department hosts quarterly utility coordination meetings. This meeting serves as a forum for its members to discuss ongoing and developing projects. Opportunities are identified to work together and leverage open ground to install infrastructure at reduced cost.
3. Incorporate by reference the projects identified in the Towns Economic Development Strategy for Town of Mammoth Lakes Technology as adopted by the Town Council 9/13/16.

Objective: Enhance Regional Transportation Network

1. The Town of Mammoth Lakes maintains a database of roadway conditions. The StreetSaver software platform has been used consistently by the Town for nearly 15 years. The town uses the system to record pavement condition and run analytics. The reports generated aid staff in developing treatment programs and budgeting for rehabilitation and reconstruction. Pavements in the region degrade at a faster rate than in other parts of the state. Asphalt also

fails in unforeseen ways due to the stresses and impacts of snow removal. Tracking these changes helps to forecast needs and is a useful tool for the region.

2. Transit is a key component of the Towns circulation plan. At least twice a year the Town hosts meetings to discuss transit service. The first occurs at the Planning and Economic Development Commission (PEDC) sometime in the early spring. The meeting is specific to unmet needs and informs a larger regional process undertaken by the Local Transportation Commission (LTC). The Second meeting later in the fall occurs at Town Council and is indented to address larger transportation needs in the community.
3. Regional and local transit service is difficult due to several constraints. The Town is supporting Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA) in the acquisition of rolling stock. The town's commitment of funds will secure a fleet of vehicles for years to come and provide time to transition to a zero emission fleet.
4. Several Town documents outline the need for larger amenity filled transit hubs. The 2022 Mobility Hub Study and Program and Mobility Element of the General Plan are the key documents. The Town would like to incorporate by reference all the projects identified in these documents and potential projects needed to advance CEDS goals.
5. The Town has adopted a feet first policy to encourage a walkable (and bikeable) community. The strategy connects residents and visitors to the local business community, reduces traffic and VMTs, and encourages the use of public transit, and improves the health of the community. This includes improved walkable connectivity between parking areas, visitor bed base, and local housing with shopping and dining facilities and portals (gondola, chairlifts, transit stops, etc.) which increases economic vitality, jobs and long-term success. Connectivity includes sidewalks, bike lanes, paths, linkage via pedestrian bridges, etc.

Community and Culture

Objective: Improve partnerships and interagency collaboration

1. An immediate opportunity to improve and collaborate is in the arena of regional trails. Several efforts are underway led by local agencies and private entities alike. The opportunities and bridge to economic development are significant. Town recommends that all projects related to regional trails be accepted as key elements and directives of the CEDS.
2. The recreation facilities developed by the partner agencies are used by all residents. A key opportunity is in the development of the Whitmore Recreation Area. The Town is currently the lead on the development and management of this area. The Town believes that improvements to this facility will have a direct and regional economic impact and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. The Town invites collaboration and partnership on the planning and implementation of this facility.

Objective: Enhance quality of life with additional amenities

The Town has over the years identified opportunities to construct new infrastructure to better the lives of its residents. These facilities generate local jobs, provide opportunities for new business and expansion of existing ones. The following amenities would improve quality of life and provide economic benefits.

1. Community pool and aquatics center.
2. Community gym, wellness, gymnastics, and arts studios.
3. Facilities to support popular and unique sporting activities in the region – climbing, cycling, extreme sports.

4. Whitmore Recreation Area improvements - Indoor fieldhouse and locker rooms, sports fields (i.e. baseball, softball, soccer, etc.), dugouts, trailheads, restrooms, , support facilities and multi-use trails.
5. Community Theater with Arts and Cultural Center.
6. Park spaces, playgrounds, sport courts, bike and skate parks, climbing parks.
7. Trails and MUP's- Incorporate projects identified in the Trails System Master Plan and Mobility Element of the TOML General Plan.

Economic Expansion & Diversification

Goal: Grow and diversify regional economy through support of existing and new businesses

The Towns has identified a few businesses that would help to create jobs, meet community needs, diversify the local economy, and provide new jobs. The following projects are currently being pursued and facilitated by the Town. These projects will generate local and regional jobs, increase economic activity through visitation and support working families.

1. Bioenergy/Biomass Facility
2. Forest fuels and restoration projects.
3. Childcare Centers
4. Outdoor Events Venue
5. High Altitude Training Facilities
6. New and Expanded amenities noted above

Objective: Enhance network of entrepreneurial and small business resources

1. Incubator spaces could provide an opportunity for developing business to grow by having access to lower cost amenities. The Town sees a need in the areas of retail, restaurant, and hospitality. Facilities such as community kitchen space, pop-up retail, and local market could aid smaller businesses. Such opportunities could be hosted at existing facilities during events that have greater than average visitation.

Environmental Resilience & Sustainability

Objective: Reduce the challenges experienced by residents and visitors during climate events

1. An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) would provide a single location for the community to disseminate information, host solutions, and manage emergencies. The Town has developed schematic plans for a facility that would help the Town to manage emergencies directly related to climate change such as extreme weather events and fire. The facility would include a warming / cooling center, bunk rooms, showers, space for emergency operators, a community commercial kitchen, and food storage/pantry.
2. The Town encourages the development of a revised Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). Recent extreme events have demonstrated that changes need to be made to better serve the community. The Town believes the plan should include specific projects for implementation that would help to mitigate the impacts of future emergencies.
3. The Town should consider the development of a 911 dispatch center to support regional operations. The Town is in a unique position to provide these services and should work with regional partners to decide on how best to provide these services. A new facility in town could be mutually beneficial to the agencies currently served by the current program.

4. Complete high level and quality After Action Reports (AAR) for all disaster and extreme events. Carefully weigh and implement mitigations to better manage future situations. Incorporate recommended mitigation measures into associated documents such as an HMP.
5. Expansion of the electric grid and facilities supporting expanded use of electric vehicles.
6. Expansion of clean energy generation such as the use of geothermal, bioenergy and solar production facilities.

Government Affairs & Advocacy

Goal: Promote stronger government affairs & advocacy efforts

1. Work with lobbyists to champion ideas and values of CEDS. Promote and support legislative activities to advance projects and legislation that aid in bringing resources to regional partners.
2. Enhance the Eastern Sierra regional voice at the state and federal level supporting policies, programs, services and funding that enhance the economic vitality of the region while respecting the natural environment that is the primary economic driver of the region.

Housing Availability & Land Use

Goal: Increase stock and availability of housing units with a focus on affordability for regional workforce.

The Town's Housing Now! program is a multi-faceted program focused on expanding the availability of affordable workforce housing throughout the community in the near-term to support housing at all economic levels. The Housing Now! initiative aims to leverage federal and state grant program funds and local funds to achieve affordable new housing development and the creation of affordable housing through the conversion of existing market-rate housing. The program has four key components:

1. The Parcel - The Parcel development is a 25-acre undeveloped site centrally located in the Town of Mammoth Lakes intended for affordable housing. The Town acquired the site in 2018 and subsequently launched a comprehensive planning procedure to determine how best to develop the site. The Parcel Master Plan allows for up to 580 permanently affordable housing units.
2. Small Site Development - Town-sponsored affordable housing projects that take advantage of smaller sized lots.
3. Bridge Program - The Bridge Program is aimed at increasing the number of affordable ownership units within the Town through the purchase of existing market-rate homes that are then deed restricted and sold to qualified households at a subsidized price.
4. Partnership Programs - Partnership programs are intended to advance housing projects by working with local partners. Partners could include private businesses and local non-profit organizations. Leveraging opportunities and advantages of various partners helps the region to best use the limited resources available. These partnerships help overcome the challenges with complicated projects such as adaptive reuse and conversion of existing structures to housing.
5. Proviso of infrastructure improvement to unserved/underserved for access, water, sewer, power, broadband etc. to reduce the cost of development to achieve attainable (affordable) community based workforce housing that support the regional and local job and wage base.

Eastern Sierra Region - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

City of Bishop Project List

In 2022, City of Bishop staff and Council Members embarked on developing and adopting a multi-year Strategic Plan for the City. Many of the goals, initiatives, and projects prioritized within this Strategic Plan align closely with the strategic goals and objectives outlined in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY

CEDS Objective: Enhance the regional transportation network to provide residents, visitors, and businesses with more accessible, reliable options for moving in, out, and within the region.

- **City of Bishop Project:** Enhance and expand the multimodal transportation network.
 - Plan and implement sidewalk and bike lane improvements that connect with planned Caltrans projects on State Routes 395 and 168. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan for street improvements and secure funding.
 - Collaborate with relevant agencies to explore traffic-calming measures and improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment along the downtown portion of 395.
 - Develop and improve safe routes to schools from all areas of the City.
 - Work with Caltrans and ESCOG to revisit options for a truck route that redirects truck traffic from downtown while ensuring private motorist traffic remains.

CEDS Objective: Enhance emergency response services to ensure remote communities are equipped for periods with no access to services.

- **City of Bishop Goal:** Secure funding for essential safety equipment, including fire apparatus and personal protective equipment.

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

CEDS Objective: Enhance quality of life with additional amenities to attract and retain talent.

- **City of Bishop Goal:** Invest in expanding and modernizing parks and recreation facilities.

The City's Strategic Plan highlights the importance of investing in new infrastructure to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. Modernized and expanded facilities create local jobs, offer opportunities for new businesses and growth of existing ones, diversify tourism in the Eastern Sierra by creating new destination events, and make Bishop a regional attraction. The following initiatives will enhance quality of life and provide economic benefits:

- Enhance and construct new sports facilities in Bishop City Park, including upgrades to sports fields, ballparks, turf, and lighting to better accommodate local and regional needs for games and tournaments.
- Partner with Inyo County to develop a plan for improving athletic facilities at the Millpond recreation area.

ECONOMIC EXPANSION & DIVERSIFICATION

CEDS Goal: Grow and diversify the regional economy by supporting existing and new businesses.

- **City of Bishop Goal:** Build and support a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly city by investing in public spaces and promoting downtown events and activities.
 - Secure funds to invest in downtown rehabilitation projects, including the implementation of the Whitney Alley Project.
 - Plan and implement sidewalk and bike lane improvements that connect with planned Caltrans projects on State Routes 395 and 168.
 - Collaborate with Caltrans and ESCOG to revisit options for a truck route that redirects truck traffic from downtown while ensuring private motorist traffic remains.
 - Develop a City Parking Management Plan to address parking demands and improve walkability.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

CEDS Objective: Reduce challenges experienced by residents and visitors during climate events.

- **City of Bishop Goal:** Secure funding for the Bishop Regional Sewer Plant, a project focused on consolidating the two primary wastewater treatment plants that serve Bishop. Invest in modern technology and infrastructure to improve Bishop's aging critical infrastructure.
- **City of Bishop Goal:** Invest in critical infrastructure to support community resilience, including improvements to underground infrastructure such as sewer lines, water lines, and stormwater drainage. Due to the increased intensity of weather events, groundwater levels, and stormwater runoff are causing damage to infrastructure. This project aims to replace and/or line sewer lines to reduce infiltration, increase and extend water lines to meet fire flow requirements, and construct new storm drains to prevent flooding.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK: HOUSING AVAILABILITY & LAND USE

CEDS Objective: Increase the availability of land for private development.

- **City of Bishop Goal:** Conduct a Parking Demand and Land Use Study to assess existing parking usage, propose parking management strategies, and develop opportunity parcels for residential and city facility expansion.
- Identify and facilitate the development of City properties eligible for housing under the Surplus Land Act. This includes considering both large parcels for long-term housing goals and smaller lots for immediate community benefits. Rezone and list Well 3 sites under the Surplus Lands Act.

CEDS Objective: Improve and expand housing stock on available land.

CEDS Objective: Expand affordable housing options for the regional workforce.

- Invest in funding and staff time for a Regional Workforce Housing Assessment and Strategy, and develop a multi-year plan for affordable housing.
- Increase the inventory of affordable housing by actively supporting housing projects with partners in the service area. Work with Eastern Sierra Community Housing and Visionary Homebuilders to secure funding for Silver Peaks.

**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

**ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE FISCAL YEARS ENDED
JUNE 30, 2024 AND 2023**

(Unaudited)

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January ?, 2025

Members of the Board
Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
Joint Powers Authority
Mammoth Lakes, California

I am pleased to present the Annual Financial Report of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority (“ESCOG”) for the years ended June 30, 2024 and 2023. The ESCOG assumes full responsibility for the completeness and reliability of the information contained in this report, based upon an internal control framework established for this purpose. Because the cost of internal controls should not exceed anticipated benefits, the objective is to provide reasonable, rather than absolute, assurance that the financial statements are free of any material misstatements.

The records of the ESCOG have not been audited. ESCOG anticipates engaging an independent auditor to audit its financial transactions and compliance with grantor agreements for the year ended June 30, 2024, with the audit report to be issued on or before June 30, 2025. The fund financial statements including footnotes accompany this transmittal letter. Note that the government-wide statements are excluded from this report. I believe that the reported data is accurate in all material respects and that its presentation fairly depicts ESCOG’s financial position. I am confident that the included disclosures provide readers with an understanding of ESCOG’s financial affairs.

Governance

ESCOG is a multi-government regional jurisdiction organized to provide a forum for discussion and study of regional issues of interest to its member agencies, identify and plan for the solution of selected regional issues requiring multi-governmental cooperation, facilitate actions and agreements among the member agencies for specific project development, and conduct other regional wide functions as the members deem appropriate. Members of the joint powers authority include the Counties of Mono and Inyo, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and the City of Bishop. Each member jurisdiction appoints two governing board members to the ESCOG Board of Directors. The ESCOG is managed by an Executive Director on a contract basis. Legal services are provided by the County of Inyo. Financial services are provided by the County of Mono. Clerical and clerking services are provided by the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

Overview and Highlights

Activities of the joint powers authority (JPA) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, having significant fiscal impact include:

- Continued work on the grant award from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in the amount of \$3,384,239 for the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator, aimed at creating capacity for environmental planning in the Eastern Sierra by investing in dedicated professionals to build a locally based workforce around environmental planning. The grant period is September 1, 2021, through March 15, 2025. During the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, ESCOG reported grant revenues of \$1,095,482, reimbursing contractor direct program expenditures and ESCOG administrative costs to administer the grant.
- Work continued on infrastructure and recreational planning, funded with an award from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation grant. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, ESCOG reported grant revenues of \$223,007, reimbursing for contract direct program expenditures and a proportional share of ESCOG administrative costs.
- Continued work on an award from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant in the amount of \$370,443, receiving grant revenues of \$237,155, which offset direct and administrative costs.
- Member agency financial commitment remained at \$25,000 each.

Also during the fiscal year, ESCOG supported broadband related projects managed and performed by the Inyo-Mono Broadband Consortium. These financial statements do not include the Consortium's financial activities. Additional information about the Consortium is available at <https://ConnectedEasternSierra.net/>.

The Board of Directors generally meets every two months, with special meetings called when necessary. Member agencies provide annual contributions that fund the administrative efforts of ESCOG. With coordination provided by its Executive Director, community and agency stakeholders were engaged to facilitate collaboration efforts towards issues of regional concern, including sustainable recreational and local ecosystem management.

I would like to express my appreciation to the ESCOG administrative professionals for their professionalism, dedication, and efficiency in all ESCOG activities during the period covered by this report, and the preparation of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Dutcher, DPA, MPA, CGFM, CPA
Fiscal Agent, Treasurer and Auditor

**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

GOVERNING BOARD

As of June 30, 2024

Stephen Muchovej, Vice Chair (City of Bishop Councilmember)
Karen Schwartz, member (City of Bishop Councilmember)
Jeff Griffiths, member (Inyo County Supervisor)
Trina Orrill, member (Inyo County Supervisor)
Bob Gardner, Chair (Mono County Supervisor)
Lynda Salcido, member (Mono County Supervisor)
Chris Bubser, member (Town of Mammoth Lakes Councilmember)
John Wentworth, member (Town of Mammoth Lakes Councilmember)

AUTHORITY STAFF

Elaine Kabala, Executive Director (under contract)
Grace Chuchla, Legal Counsel
Janet Dutcher, Fiscal Agent, Treasurer and Auditor
Angela Plaisted, Clerk to the Board

**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Years Ended June 30, 2024 and 2023

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounting policies of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG or Authority) Joint Powers Authority conform to accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America as applicable to governmental entities, except the government-wide statements and corresponding reconciliation schedules have been omitted.

The Reporting Entity

In 1995, the Counties of Inyo and Mono and the Town of Mammoth Lakes executed a joint powers agreement establishing the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments. The 1995 agreement was amended in 1999 to add the City of Bishop. On January 7, 2020, the members to the agreement entered into a new joint powers agreement establishing ESCOG as a separate legal entity operating as a joint powers authority. ESCOG is a multi-government regional jurisdiction organized to provide a forum for discussion and study of regional issues of interest to its member agencies, identify and plan for the solution of selected regional issues requiring multi-governmental cooperation, facilitate actions and agreements among the member agencies for specific project development, and conduct other regional wide functions as the members deem appropriate.

ESCOG is governed by an eight-member board of directors comprised of two representatives from each of its member jurisdictions that include the Counties of Mono and Inyo, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, and the City of Bishop. ESCOG is legally separate and is fiscally independent of other state and local governments and is not included in any other governmental reporting entity.

Starting July 2022, the ESCOG four member agencies Board of Directors began serving at the governance board for the Inyo-Mono Broadband Consortium, an entity organized to collaborate with ESCOG, state agencies, local officials, internet service providers, and other stakeholders and consumers regarding internet-broadband infrastructure projects in the Eastern Sierra. On behalf of the Eastern Siuerra region, ESCOG submits all applications to access available funding and ESCOG provides administrative support. The financial records of the Consortium are maintained separately, and these financial statements do not include the financial transactions associated with the Consortium's activities for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024.

Basis of Presentation and Accounting

To simplify financial presentations, the government-wide financial statements are excluded from this annual financial report. ESCOG has no long-term assets or liabilities as of June 30, 2024, and there are few differences between its government-wide reporting and fund statement presentation.

Unaudited

**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Years Ended June 30, 2024 and 2023

The fund financial statements include the Authority's General Fund, which is its only fund. The General Fund is ESCOG's primary operating fund and is used to account for all its revenues and expenditures that support its activities. These statements are reported using the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under this method, revenues are recognized when measurable and available. Member contributions and interest are accrued when their receipt occurs within ninety days after the end of the accounting period so as to be measurable and available. Expenditures are generally recorded when a liability is incurred.

Cash and Investments

The Authority is a participant in the Mono County Investment Pool (Pool) under the oversight of the Treasurer of Mono County, as required by California Government Code Section 27134. The Authority's investment is presented at fair value in accordance with GASB No. 31, "Accounting and Financial Reporting for Certain Investments and for External Investment Pools". However, the value of the pool shares in the County that may be withdrawn is determined on an amortized cost basis, which is different than the fair value of the Authority's portion in the pool.

Equity / Fund Balance Classifications

In the fund financial statements, fund balance for governmental funds is reported in classifications that comprise a hierarchy based primarily on the extent to which the Authority is bound to honor constraints on the specific purpose for which amounts in the funds can be spent. Fund balance is reported in five components: nonspendable, restricted, committed, assigned and unassigned.

- *Nonspendable fund balance* – Amounts that cannot be spent because they are either not in spendable form or are legally or contractually required to remain intact.
- *Restricted fund balance* – Amounts with constraint placed on their use that are externally imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or laws and regulations of other governments. Constraints may also be imposed by law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.
- *Committed fund balance* – Amounts that can only be used for specific purposes determined by formal action of the ESCOG Board of Directors and that remain binding unless removed in the same manner. The underlying action that imposed the limitation needs to occur prior to the end of the reporting period. The amount subject to the constraint may be determined in the subsequent period.

Unaudited

**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Years Ended June 30, 2024 and 2023

- *Assigned fund balance* – Amounts that are constrained by the Authority’s intent to use resources for specific purposes. Intent can be expressed by the Board of Directors or by an official or body designated for that purpose.

- *Unassigned fund balance* – The residual classification for the Authority’s General Fund that includes all amounts not contained in the other classifications.

When both restricted and unrestricted resources are available for use, it is the Authority’s policy to use restricted resources first, followed by the committed, assigned, and unassigned resources as they are needed.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenditures during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

NOTE 2: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

ESCOG holds unrestricted cash and investments with the Treasurer of the County of Mono in a cash and investment pool. On a quarterly basis the Auditor-Controller allocates interest to participants based upon their average daily balances. The Treasurer’s investments and policies are overseen by the Mono County Treasury Oversight Committee. Required disclosure information regarding the categorization of investments and risk can be found in the County of Mono’s basic financial statements.

ESCOG categorizes its fair value measurements within the fair value hierarchy established by generally accepted accounting principles. The hierarchy is based on the valuation inputs used to measure the fair value of the assets. Level 1 inputs are quoted prices in an active market for identical assets; Level 2 inputs are significant other observable inputs; and Level 3 inputs are significant unobservable inputs.

As of June 30, 2024 and 2023, cash and investments consisted of the following:

Unaudited

**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Years Ended June 30, 2024 and 2023

	Measurement Input	Credit Quality Ratings	Fair Value June 30, 2024	Fair Value June 30, 2023
Investment in County of Mono Investment Pool	Level 2	Not Rated	\$ 214,441	\$ 434,823

Interest Rate Risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that changes in interest rates will adversely affect the fair value of an investment. As of June 30, 2024 and 2023, the weighted average maturity of the pool’s investments was _____ and 1.64 years, respectively.

Credit Risk

Credit risk is the risk that an issuer or other counterparty to a debt instrument will not fulfill its obligations. This is measured by the assignment of a rating by a nationally recognized statistical rating organization. The County’s investment policy limit investments in commercial paper to the rating of A1 by Standards and Poor’s or P-1 by Moody’s Investors Service. The purchase of corporate bonds are limited to the rating of A by Standard and Poor’s and Moody’s Investor Service. Credit limits are not imposed on purchases of government agency securities.

Concentration of Credit Risk

Concentration of credit risk is the risk of loss attributed to the magnitude of a government’s investment in a single issuer. As of June 30, 2024 and 2023, ESCOG was not exposed to any concentration of credit risk.

Custodial Credit Risk

Custodial credit risk for deposits is the risk that, in the event of the failure of a depository financial institution, a government will not be able to recover its deposits or will not be able to recover collateral securities that are in the possession of an outside party. The California Government Code and the County’s investment policy do not contain legal policy requirements that would limit the exposure to custodial credit risk for deposits, other than the following provisions for deposits: The California Government Code requires that a financial institution secure deposits made by state or local governmental units by pledging securities in an undivided collateral pool held by a depository regulated under state law (unless so waived by the governmental unit). The market value of the pledged securities in the collateral pool must equal at least 110 percent of the total amount deposited by the public agencies. California law also allows financial institutions to secure

Unaudited

**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

Notes to the Basic Financial Statements
For the Years Ended June 30, 2024 and 2023

ESCOG's deposits by pledging first trust deed mortgage notes having a value of 150 percent of the secured public deposits.

The custodial credit risk for investments is the risk that, in the event of the failure of the counterparty (e.g., broker-dealer) to a transaction, a government will not be able to recover the value of its investment or collateral securities that are in the possession of another party. The California Government Code and the County's investment policy do not contain legal or policy requirements that would limit the exposure to custodial credit risk for investments. With respect to investments, custodial credit risk generally applies only to direct investments in marketable securities. Custodial credit risk does not apply to a local government's indirect investment in securities through the use of government investment pools.

NOTE 3: REVOLVING LINE OF CREDIT

On December 10, 2021, the ESCOG Board of Directors entered into a Memorandum of Understanding between the Golden State Finance Authority (GSFA) for the advancement of up to \$500,000 on a revolving basis to perform the services of the CDFW grant award pending receipt of grant reimbursements. Each advance on the GSFA line of credit is due within two years at 0% interest.

On February 15, 2022, ESCOG drew down the entire line of credit in the amount of \$500,000. Repayment was made on is due by February 8, 2024, with accrued interest at 0%, in full satisfaction of the outstanding line of credit obligation. Fund balance at June 30, 2023 is restricted for the outstanding balance of the line of credit, or \$500,000.

NOTE 4: SUBSEQUENT EVENTS & CONTINGENCIES

Management has evaluated subsequent events through _____, the date which the financial statements were available to be issued. Based upon this evaluation, it was determined that the following subsequent events is disclosable. No other subsequent or contingencies occurred that require recognition or additional disclosure in the financial statements.

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**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

Balance Sheet

Governmental Funds - General Fund

As of June 30, 2023 and 2024

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Assets		
Cash held in Mono County Investment Pool	\$ 209,441	\$ 434,823
Due from other governments	221,346	319,460
Total Assets	<u>\$ 430,787</u>	<u>\$ 754,283</u>
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$ 351,968	\$ 260,700
Total Liabilities	<u>351,968</u>	<u>260,700</u>
Deferred Inflows of Resources		
Unavailable revenues	-	-
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Fund Balance		
Restricted for revolving line of credit	-	500,000
Unassigned	78,819	(6,417)
Total Fund Balance	<u>78,819</u>	<u>493,583</u>
Total Liabilities, Deferre Inflows of Resources, and Fund Balance	<u>\$ 430,787</u>	<u>\$ 754,283</u>

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**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance
Governmental Funds - General Fund
For the Years Ended June 30, 2024 and 2023

	2024	2023
Revenues		
Member contributions	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Grant revenues	1,575,207	844,799
Interest earnings	3,746	13,703
	<u>1,678,953</u>	<u>958,502</u>
Expenditures		
Insurance	3,516	2,978
Office	27	324
Services		
Clerical	20,000	20,000
Administrative staff	132,665	59,538
Financial	5,000	5,000
Legal	4,998	7,497
Website design services	-	7,020
Webhosting	766	266
Grant contractors	1,426,273	951,117
Publications and legal notices	97	251
Travel and training	375	-
Special Department	-	490
	<u>1,593,717</u>	<u>1,054,481</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	85,236	(95,979)
Other Financing Sources (Uses)		
Repayment to revolving line of credit	(500,000)	-
	<u>(500,000)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Change in Fund Balance	(414,764)	(95,979)
Fund Balance, Beginning of the Year	<u>493,583</u>	<u>589,562</u>
Fund Balance, End of the Year	<u>\$ 78,819</u>	<u>\$ 493,583</u>

Attachment A

**EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

Budget Comparison Schedule
General Fund
For the Year Ended June 30, 2024

	Original Budget	Final Budget	Actual	Variance with Final Budget
Revenues and other sources				
Member contributions	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ -
Grant revenues	1,620,000	1,620,000	1,575,207	(44,793)
Interest earnings	-	-	3,746	3,746
Total Revenues	1,720,000	1,720,000	1,678,953	(41,047)
Expenditures and other uses				
Insurance	4,000	4,000	3,516	484
Office	500	500	27	473
Services				
Clerical	20,000	20,000	20,000	-
Executive Director	225,000	225,000	132,665	92,335
Financial	5,000	5,000	5,000	-
Legal	10,000	10,000	4,998	5,002
Website design services	-	-	-	-
Webhosting	1,000	1,000	766	234
Grant contractors	1,415,000	1,415,000	1,426,273	(11,273)
Audit	10,000	10,000	-	10,000
Publications & legal notices	500	500	97	403
Travel & training	-	-	375	(375)
Contingency	29,000	29,000	-	29,000
Total Expenditures	1,720,000	1,720,000	1,593,717	126,283
Net Change in Fund Balance	-	-	85,236	85,236
Fund Balance, Beginning of the Year	-	-	(6,417)	(6,417)
Fund Balance, End of the Year	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 78,819</u>	<u>\$ 78,819</u>

Unaudited



**Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority Agenda**

STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Scott Armstrong, Regional Broadband Coordinator
Subject: Informational Broadband Update
Meeting date: February 26, 2025
Prepared on: February 19, 2025

Attachments: none

The following report provides information and updates associated with regional broadband activities. I would be happy to discuss these topics or any other broadband-related topics in more detail at your convenience.

General Broadband News:

The Inyo-Mono Broadband Consortium (IMBC) website (<https://ConnectedEasternSierra.net/>) includes broadband-related information for residents, businesses, and Internet Service providers in our region. The site also includes a variety of tools, such as a broadband needs estimator, speed tests, service issue reporting options, and several broadband-related maps.

Grants Information:

FFA & Infrastructure Grant (Construction):

CPUC Last-Mile Federal Funding Account (FFA) project grant applications have been awarded to Golden State Connect Authority (GSCA) for project areas in Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes (Convict Lake to McGee Creek, June Lake, and Mammoth and the Lakes Basin in Mono County). Project applications for 6 Counties are still being reviewed, including the FFA project

applications in Inyo County (Aspendell, Starlite, South Lake, Lone Pine, Alabama Hills, and Pearsonville) submitted by Frontier.

The CPUC's [Federal Funding Account Awards and Recommendations](#) page provides a visual depiction of Counties with project applications that have been awarded, but that doesn't mean that all project applications in those Counties have been awarded. There are several project applications that do not connect to the MMBN that have not yet been evaluated, and some project applications overlap, requiring additional evaluation. A full listing of approved FFA and Local Agency Technical Assistance project applications is on the CPUC's [Broadband Portal](#) page.

- FFA Awards and Recommendations: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/broadband-implementation-for-california/last-mile-federal-funding-account/federal-funding-account-awards>
- CPU Broadband Portal: <https://broadbandportal.cpuc.ca.gov/>
- CPUC FFA Awards Dashboard: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/cpuc.broadbandsupport/viz/FederalFundingAccountAwardsDashboard/FFADashboardOriginal>

BEAD (Construction and Digital Equity):

The CPUC published the State's timeline and final eligibility map for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) process. The subgrantee application window opens on March 25 and closes on April 23.

- Bead Program Page: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/beadprogram/>
- Eligibility Map Page: <https://register.challenge.cpuc.ca.gov/>

USDA BTA 2023 (Technical Assistance only, no construction):

The USDA Broadband Technical Assistance network-design projects for Hammil (Mono County) and Furnace Creek (Inyo County) are in the contract preparation and approval stage.

California Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI)

The State's purchase of the California Broadband Cooperative (CBC) Digital 395 network closed on October 31, 2024, and includes a list of rights-of-way and access agreements that are still being processed. The State entered into a Managed Services Agreement with Inyo Networks (Onward) to maintain the network, and the CBC will continue to provide last-mile services to current customers.

High-Level IMBC Metrics

The following are actions-to-date consistent with high-level metrics that are focused on the primary goal of the broadband grants — construction projects that result in broadband Internet service connections:

5 CPUC Federal Funding Account applications submitted (2023):

- Mammoth Lakes (GSCA) – Approved, 2024
- June Lake, Convict Lake to Hilton Creek, and Coleville (GSCA) – Approved, 2024
- Aspendell, Starlite & Bishop Creek area (Frontier) – Pending Approval
- Alabama Hills & Lone Pine (Frontier) – Pending Approval
- Pearsonville (Frontier) – Pending Approval

Developed concise location-specific narratives to be included in future grant applications or to assist providers in selecting feasible broadband expansion projects:

Inyo County (12):

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| • Aberdeen | • Independence |
| • Big Pine | • Keeler |
| • Cartago-Olancho-Grant | • Park Village |
| • Charleston View | • Sandy Valley |
| • Darwin | • Stewart Valley |
| • Deep Springs | • Tecopa |

Mono County (7):

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| • Bridgeport | • Twin Lakes |
| • Cottonwood Canyon | • Virginia Lakes |
| • Hammil | • Walker |
| • Oasis | |

Other Activities:

- Ratified the California Utilities Commission Resolution T-17778 Consent Form accepting California Advanced Services Fund Rural and Urban Regional Broadband Consortia Grant funding for the IMBC.
- IMBC regular updates provided by Scott Armstrong, Regional Broadband Coordinator: 8 presentations and 6 written reports.
- Regular updates to the IMBC website (ConnectedEasternSierra.net).
- There were no broadband construction grant opportunities in 2024.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

None, informational only.



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority

From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director

Subject: Adopt a Resolution of the Board of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Adopting Corrective Actions Pursuant to the California Department of Transportation's Division of Local Assistance Corrective Action Plan

Meeting date: February 26, 2025

Prepared on: February 15, 2025

Attachments: A) Resolution of the Board of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Adopting Corrective Actions Pursuant to the California Department of Transportation's Division of Local Assistance Corrective Action Plan

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

The ESCOG submitted a grant application under the Reconnecting Communities: California Highways to Boulevards funding opportunity, which required a pre-award audit to determine that the ESCOG's financial management system, which includes payroll, procurement, and contract management; is adequate to accumulate and segregate reasonable and allowable project costs in accordance with Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations, Subtitle A, Chapter 2, Part 200, and the terms of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) agreements.

The Caltrans audit required the ESCOG take the following actions to ensure compliance with Code of Federal Regulations requirements in order to enter into future funding agreements with Caltrans:

- 1) Ensure appropriate staff attend the Local Agency Architectural & Engineering (A&E) Contract Procurement training to become more familiar with the updated procedures in Chapter 10 of the Local Assistance Procedures Manual (LAPM). ESCOG must submit a list of staff who attended the DLA A&E webinar for verification.
- 2) Adopt Chapter 10 of the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual.
- 3) Provide updated grant management procedures to include, but not be limited to additional verification of timesheets for time spent on grants. This may include adding a step to for supervisor approval of the timesheet.

Accordingly, staff attended the Local Agency Architectural & Engineering (A&E) Contract Procurement training as provided by Caltrans. Staff has also provided the attached Grant Management Procedures, which specifically include the Board Chair will review and verify the Executive Director's timesheet if required by grant funding. Lastly, staff recommends the Board adopt the attached resolution, which includes adoption of the Chapter 10 of the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual for Caltrans funded projects.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requires the Board adopt a Resolution of the Board of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Adopting Corrective Actions Pursuant to the California Department of Transportation's Division of Local Assistance Corrective Action Plan.

RESOLUTION No. 25-

**RESOLUTION OF THE EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
APPROVE A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF THE EASTERN SIERRA
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS ADOPTING CORRECTIVE ACTIONS PURSUANT
TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S DIVISION OF
LOCAL ASSISTANCE CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

WHEREAS the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) submitted a grant application under the Reconnecting Communities: California Highways to Boulevards funding opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the application required a pre-award audit to determine that the ESCOG's financial management system, which includes payroll, procurement, and contract management; is adequate to accumulate and segregate reasonable and allowable project costs in accordance with Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations, Subtitle A, Chapter 2, Part 200, and the terms of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) agreements.; and

WHEREAS, the Caltrans audit required the ESCOG take the following actions to ensure compliance with Code of Federal Regulations requirements in order to enter into future funding agreements with Caltrans:

- 1) Ensure appropriate staff attend the Local Agency Architectural & Engineering (A&E) Contract Procurement training to become more familiar with the updated procedures in Chapter 10 of the Local Assistance Procedures Manual (LAPM). ESCOG must submit a list of staff who attended the DLA A&E webinar for verification.
- 2) Adopt Chapter 10 of the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual.
- 3) Provide updated grant management procedures to include, but not be limited to additional verification of timesheets for time spent on grants. This may include adding a step to for supervisor approval of the timesheet.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments as follows:

Section 1. The Board finds that the Executive Director of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments has attended the Local Agency Architectural & Engineering (A&E) Contract Procurement training.

Section 2. The ESCOG adopts Chapter 10 of the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual and future updates for all Caltrans funded projects and agreements between Caltrans and the ESCOG.

Section 3. The ESCOG adopts the attached Grant Management Procedures for all grant funded activities.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS ____ day of _____

Chair

ATTEST:

Clerk

Chapter 10 Consultant Selection

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[Exhibit 10-B: Suggested Consultant Evaluation Sheet](#)

[Exhibit 10-G: Individual A&E Task Order DBE Tracking Sheet](#)

[Exhibit 10-I: Notice to Proposers DBE Information](#)

[Exhibit 10-O1: Consultant Proposal DBE Commitment](#)

[Exhibit 10-O2: Consultant Contract DBE Commitment](#)

[Exhibit 10-Q: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#)

[Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boiler Plate Agreement Language](#)

[Exhibit 10-S: Consultant Performance Evaluation](#)

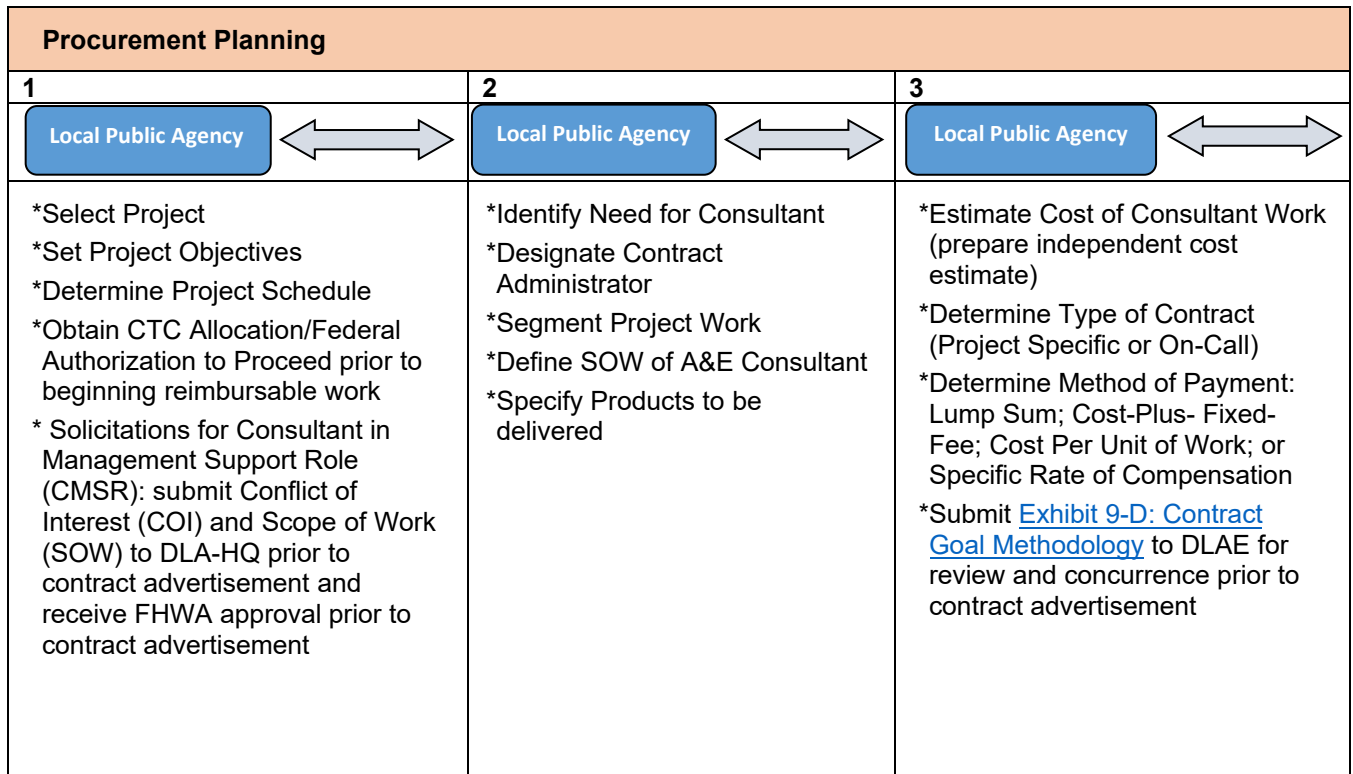
[Exhibit 10-T: Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality Statement](#)

[Exhibit 10-U: Consultant in Management Support Role Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement](#)

All LAPM Exhibits are located at:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/forms/local-assistance-procedures-manual-forms>

10.1 FEDERALLY-FUNDED A&E CONTRACTS



The Division of Local Assistance Acronyms List is available at:
<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/local-assistance/documents/guide/dla-acronyms.pdf>

Figure 10-1: A&E Contract Procurement Process Workflow Diagram




Solicitation Documents and Advertisement		
4	5	6
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Determine Solicitation Document; RFP or RFQ *Appoint Consultant Selection Committee *Collect signed Conflict of Interest forms and Confidentiality Statements (see Exhibit 10-T: Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality Statement) from all members involved in process *Determine Procurement Schedule *Develop Technical Criteria with level of importance (weights) for Evaluation of Proposals or the SOQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Prepare RFP or RFQ documents *Include SOW, evaluation process/criteria, DBE goals, MOP and cost proposal, minimum requirement of Proposal or SOQ, Notice to Proposers DBE Information (see Exhibit 10-I: Notice to Proposers DBE Information), submittal deadline *Advertise RFP or RFQ on public forum (newspaper, technical publications, web hosting site, other local websites) *Issue RFP or RFQ (direct mailing, web posting) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Prepare to respond to RFP/RFQ questions *Conduct Proposers Conference, if applicable *Receive Proposals or SOQs

Figure 10-1: A&E Contract Procurement Process Workflow Diagram (continued)

Evaluation and Selection of Consultant		
		Contract Negotiation
7	8	9
<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Local Public Agency</div> ↔	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Local Public Agency</div> ↔	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Local Public Agency</div> ↔
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Distribute Proposals or SOQs to Selection Committee members *Ensure Committee members receive the appropriate score sheet to use (see Exhibit 10-B: Suggested Consultant Evaluation Sheet) *Convene Selection Committee and evaluate submittals; perform reference checks *Develop Final Ranking or Short List *Notify proposers of ranking/Short List *Retain all original score sheets and summaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Send out RFPs to Short List (two-step process) *Conduct Interview of Short List (if needed) *Develop Final Ranking of Consultants, and notify all interviewees *Retain all original score sheets and summaries *Provide a copy of Standard Contract language to top ranked consultant and invite for negotiations (see Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boiler Plate Agreement Language for standard contract language and provisions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Open and analyze cost proposal from the Highest Ranked firm <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #FFD700; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> Caltrans IOAI </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Review and evaluate Financial Document Review Request and supporting documents, if applicable *Issue Financial Review Letter, if applicable *Perform contract audits and reviews, if applicable, or review of CPA audited ICR workpapers to issue Cognizant Letter of Approval

Figure 10-1: A&E Contract Procurement Process Workflow Diagram (continued)

Contract Negotiation		
	Contract Execution	
10	11	12
<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Local Public Agency</div> ↔	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Local Public Agency</div> ↔	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #E86A53; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">DLAE</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Negotiate contract costs with the most qualified Consultant *Prepare and retain record of cost negotiations *Initiate CT IOAI Financial Review Section (Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process) and send documents (Financial Document Review Request), if applicable, to Caltrans IOAI *Receive and analyze findings of the Financial Review Letter from CT IOAI, if any *Address and resolve all findings by IOAI and incorporate into final contract and cost proposal *If negotiations with First ranked firm is unsuccessful, formally terminate cost negotiations with Consultant and begin Step 9 with next ranked consultant *For CMSR, submit Exhibit 10-U: Consultant in Management Support Role Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement to DLA-HQ. LPA will receive FHWA's approved Exhibit 10-U via email. FHWA approval required prior to award of consultant contract. *Complete and submit the A&E Consultant Contract form to the A&E Consultant Contract database prior to award or after award, but no later than the first invoice *Retain A&E Consultant Contract form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Finalize contract, cost proposal *Retain copy of contract Financial Review Letter with acceptance, denial, or adjustment of the ICR *Sign and Execute contract *Offer and conduct debriefing meetings with consultant who asked for one *Send copies of executed contract and DBE Commitment Exhibits (Exhibit 10-O1: Consultant Proposal DBE Commitment and Exhibit 10-O2: Consultant Contract DBE Commitment) to DLAE *Close out contract procurement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Prior to concurring with invoice payment related to consultant services, ensure submittal of the A&E Consultant Contract form and District has received and has a file on copy of the executed consultant contract, Exhibit 10-O1 Consultant Proposal DBE Commitment, Exhibit 10-O2: Consultant Contract DBE Commitment. Also, check IOAI database to ensure that Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System, if applicable, has been accepted by IOAI. <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #FFD700; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Caltrans IOAI</div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Perform Incurred Cost Audit, if selected

Figure 10-1: A&E Contract Procurement Process Workflow Diagram (continued)

10.1.1 General

Introduction

A Local Public Agency (LPA) may engage consultants to perform architectural, engineering, and related services to develop a federal-aid funded project. LPAs requesting federal funds to reimburse Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Consultants must follow the selection and contracting procedures detailed in [Section 10.1: Federally-Funded A&E Contracts](#) of this chapter. LPAs using local funds to procure an A&E Consultant on a federal-aid funded project and will not seek federal reimbursement for the consultant cost may choose not to follow the selection and contracting procedures detailed in Section 10.1 of this chapter.

Definition of an Architectural and Engineering Consultant

23 CFR 172 and California Government Code 4525 defines A&E services as [program management, construction management, feasibility studies \(includes environmental studies and analysis\), preliminary engineering, design, engineering, surveying, mapping or architectural related services](#).

Architectural and Engineering Consultants

The Brooks Act (40 U.S.C.1101-1104) requires LPAs to award federally-funded engineering and design related contracts based on fair and open competitive negotiations, demonstrated competence, and professional qualifications (23 CFR 172), at a fair and reasonable price (48 CFR 31.201-3).

Cost proposals submitted to the LPA must be sealed and must not be included as a criterion for rating such consultants. After ranking, cost negotiations will begin with the most qualified consultant and only their cost proposal will be opened. Should negotiations fail or result in a price that the LPA does not consider fair and reasonable, negotiations must be formally terminated, and the LPA must then undertake negotiations with the second most qualified consultant.

If the negotiations with the second most qualified firm are not successful, negotiations must be formally terminated and the LPA must then undertake negotiations with the third most qualified consultant, and so on, until the price is determined to be fair and reasonable by the LPA.

In selecting an A&E consultant, a detailed technical proposal or qualifications proposal, and a proposed contract will be required.

Depending upon the scope of work, the required contract provisions may need to include the California State Prevailing Wages (Federal Payment of Predetermined Minimum Wage applies only to federal-aid construction contracts). Prevailing wages will apply if the services to be performed will involve land surveying (such as flag persons, survey party chief, rodman, or chainman), materials sampling and testing (such as drilling rig operators, pile driving, crane operators), inspection work, soils or foundation investigations, environmental hazardous materials and so forth. California State Prevailing Wage information is available through the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) websites below:

Consultants will need to provide their Prevailing Wage Policy if their participation on the project includes prevailing wage work. The policy will include information on the accounting treatment of delta base and delta fringe, and verify the accounting treatment is consistent every year.

- DIR FAQ [website](#)

- DIR Wage Determination [website](#)

Non-A&E Consultants

Consultants other than A&E consultants may be selected using cost, cost and qualifications (best value), or other critical selection criteria. The procedures outlined in this chapter can be modified for selecting non-A&E consultants by adding a cost item to the contract proposal.

For more details on non-A&E consultants, see [Section 10.3: Non-A&E Contracts](#) of this chapter.

Selecting the Project

The LPA is responsible for selecting and initiating a federal-aid financed transportation project. The decision to begin project development is influenced by the project needs, its acceptability, the timing of studies, financing, and construction. The LPA must identify the project's objectives including the general level of improvement or service, operating standards, maximum cost, and the target date for project completion before commencing any consultant selection process.

Subcontracted Services

The consultant is responsible for performing the work required under the contract in a manner acceptable to the LPA. The consultant's organization and all associated consultants and subconsultants must be identified in the proposal. If the consultant wishes to use a subconsultant not specified in the proposal, prior written approval must be obtained from the LPA. The subcontract must contain all required provisions of the prime contract. All subawards must include adequate oversight, management, and administration of engineering and design related consultant services and be administered in accordance with State laws and procedures specified in 23 U.S.C.106(g)(4) and 2 CFR 200.331-333.

Organizational and Consultant Conflicts of Interest

In the procurement of contracts for engineering services by private consulting firms using federal-aid highway funds, LPAs must take all the steps necessary to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. The LPA must develop and maintain a written code of conduct governing the performance of its employees (including the contract administrator) engaged in the award and administration of federal-aid highway funded contracts, including the prevention of conflicts of interest in accordance with 23 CFR 172.7(b)(4).

A conflict of interest occurs when a public official's private interests and his or her public duties and responsibilities diverge or are not consistent. Conflicts of interest may be direct or indirect (e.g., as result of a personal or business relationship). The appearance of a conflict of interest should be avoided as an apparent conflict may undermine public trust if not sufficiently mitigated.

Federal Regulation Governing Conflict of Interest (23 CFR 172.7(b)(4)) requires that:

- LPA must maintain a written code of standards of conduct for employees engaged in the award and administration of engineering and design service contracts;
- No contracting agency employee who participates in the procurement, management, or administration of federal-funded contracts or subcontracts must have, directly or indirectly, any financial or other personal interest in connection with such contract or subcontract;
- No person or entity performing services for a contracting agency in connection with a federal-funded project must have, directly or indirectly, any financial or other personal

- interest, other than employment or retention by the contracting agency, in any contract or subcontract in connection with such project;
- No person or entity performing services for a contracting agency in connection with a federal-aid highway funded project must have, directly or indirectly, any financial or other personal interest in any real property acquired for the project;
 - No contracting agency employees or agents must neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from consultants, potential consultants, or parties to sub-agreements;
 - LPA must promptly disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to FHWA.

Consultants Performing Work on Multiple Phases of Federal-aid Projects

LPAs may choose to hire the same consultant firm to perform construction engineering and/or inspection services on the same project on which the firm also performed design services. This can cause project delivery efficiencies, as the design firm is well-suited to verify that the project is being constructed in accordance with the design and can resolve issues related to the design on behalf of the contracting agency. However, this may also pose a potential conflict of interest if the firm has a vested financial interest in failing to disclose deficiencies in its design work product and seeks to insulate itself from pecuniary liability in subsequent phases of the project, such as minimizing or ignoring design errors and omissions, rather than serving the best interests of the contracting agency and the public. Procuring a different firm from the design firm to provide the construction engineering and/or inspection services provides another level of review and reduces the risk of, or potential for, a conflict of interest.

Although federal regulations do not expressly prohibit the same firm from providing services on subsequent phases, the LPAs are responsible for ensuring the public interest is maintained throughout the life of a project and that a conflict of interest, real or apparent, does not occur or is sufficiently mitigated by appropriate public agency controls. Prior to allowing a consulting firm to provide services on subsequent phases of the same project, the contracting agency must establish appropriate compensating controls in policies, procedures, practices, and other safeguards to ensure a conflict of interest does not occur in the procurement, management, and administration of consultant services.

When design and construction phase services are procured under a single solicitation, the selection of the consulting firm must be based on the overall qualifications to provide both design and construction phase services, which require different skill sets, experience, and resources. Procuring these services under different solicitations may result in selection of a more qualified firm to perform services in each phase, as the most qualified firm to perform design phase services may not be the most qualified firm to provide construction phase services. Similarly, the qualifications and capacity of a firm may change over time. As such, it may not be appropriate to contract with a consulting firm to provide construction phase services at the outset of a design phase, knowing that these services may not be needed for an extended period until the preconstruction phase of the project is complete and construction funding authorized. The contract with a consulting firm providing design phase services on a project may not be amended to include construction phase services unless the desired construction phase services were included within the original advertised scope of services and evaluation criteria of the solicitation from which a qualifications-based selection was conducted. All consultants acting in a management support role must complete [Exhibit 10-U: Consultant in Management Support Role Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement](#) (see [Section 10.1.9: Miscellaneous Considerations](#) in this chapter) and retain it in the LPA files.

Miscellaneous Considerations Authorization to Proceed

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) must give the LPA an Authorization to Proceed (E-76) with the work prior to performing of any work for which federal reimbursement is to be requested, (see [LAPM Chapter 3: Project Authorization](#)). Eligible consultant contracts may be procured using local funds prior to receiving the E-76, but reimbursement is for work performed after the E-76 authorization date. If contract is procured using state or local funds, federal procedures must have been followed if seeking federal reimbursement. For state-funded projects see [Section 10.2: State-Only Funded A&E Contracts](#) and [LAPG Chapter 25: State Programs for Local Agency Projects](#), for guidance on when work may proceed.

Copies of the Authorization to Proceed and the consultant contract must be retained in the LPA project files for future audit.

10.1.2 Identifying & Defining a Need for Consultants

The need for a consultant is identified by comparing the project's schedule and objectives with the LPA's capabilities, its staff availability of the required expertise, and its funding resources. If the LPA does not have sufficient staff capabilities, it may solicit assistance from another agency, or use a qualified private consultant to perform the required work.

If the LPA determines that there is a need to solicit assistance from another LPA, or to use a consultant, the District Local Assistance Engineer (DLAE) should be notified if federal-aid funds are to be requested for the project segment to be contracted out.

Designate Contract Administrator

The Contract Administrator is responsible for ensuring the quality of consultant contract products or services. The Contract Administrator is designated as soon as the need for consultant services is identified. The Contract Administrator is involved throughout the development of the selection process and the contract provisions, and in the administration of the consultant's work. The Contract Administrator must be a qualified LPA employee or have staff that is qualified to ensure the consultant's work is complete, accurate, and consistent with the terms and conditions of the consultant contract. On federal-aid contracts, the Contract Administrator or staff members must be a full-time public employee and familiar with the work to be contracted out and the standards to be used. The Contract Administrator must also abide by the laws, regulations and policies required as part of accepting federal or state funding for their project. Non-compliance with the laws, regulations, and policies may result in loss of project funding.

The Contract Administrator's duties are listed in 23 CFR 172.9(d)(1) and include:

- Contract negotiation, contract payment, and evaluation of compliance performance, and quality of services provided by the consultant;
- Being familiar with the contract requirements, scope of services to be performed, and products to be produced by the consultant;
- Being familiar with the qualifications and responsibilities of the consultant's staff and evaluating any requested changes in key personnel;
- Schedules and attends progress and project review meetings, commensurate with the magnitude, complexity, and type of work, to ensure the work is progressing in accordance with established scope of work and schedule milestones;

- Documents contract monitoring activities and maintaining supporting contract records as specified in 2 CFR 200.332-334;
- Provides direction to ensure the proposed work is advertised properly;
- Prepares and distributes the Request for Qualifications (RFQ), description of work, and Request for Proposals (RFP), if used;
- Prepares the draft contract;
- Arranges for preparation before an independent estimate of the value of the work to be contracted out;
- Ensures that the selection procedures are followed;
- Analyzes the selected/best-qualified consultant's cost proposal;
- Ensures contract audit and review procedure is followed;
- Ensures that fee/profit negotiation is conducted and keeps records;
- Serves as the LPA's primary contact person for the successful consultant;
- Monitors the consultant's progress and provides direction;
- Ensures consultant costs billed are allowable in accordance with the federal cost principles and consistent with the contract terms as well as the acceptability and progress of the consultant's work;
- Identifies other LPA staff for the consultant to contact, if needed;
- Closes out the contract at completion, by processing the final invoice; completing a mandatory consultant evaluation, and final DBE utilization reports ([Exhibit 17-F: Final Report - Utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises \(DBE\) and First-Tier Subcontractors](#)) or [Exhibit 17-F1: Final Report - Utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises \(DBE\) for A&E On-Call Contracts](#).

Segmenting Consultant Work

Consultant services are most effective when consultant work is segmented appropriately. The extent of segmenting depends upon the type and complexity of the work. Combining preliminary engineering tasks with the preparation of the required environmental analysis is normally desirable. Preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is more than simply writing a report. Assessment and impact reports include preliminary engineering needed to analyze project alternatives and produce an engineering and planning assessment. Initial project studies include only as much traffic and engineering analysis of alternatives, as is needed to produce a sound EA or EIS (see [LAPM Chapter 6 Environmental Procedures](#) and [Standard Environmental Reference \(SER\) Chapter 31:Environmental Assessment \(EA\)/Finding of No Significant Impact \(FONSI\)](#) and [SER Chapter 32:Environmental Impact Statement \(EIS\)](#)). Final design must not begin until NEPA environmental approval has been received if federal reimbursement is desired.

Refer to Figure 10-2: Segmenting Consultant Work, which illustrates several satisfactory ways to segment consultant activities.

	Well-structured Projects With Simple Right of Way Requirements	Well-structured Projects With Complex Right of Way Requirements	More Difficult Projects	Very Complex Projects
Preliminary Engineering				
Environmental Analysis				
Plans, Specifications & Estimates				
Right of Way Activities				
Utility Relocation				
Construction Engineering				

Figure 10-2: Segmenting Consultant Work

Specify Products to be Delivered

The Contract Administrator identifies the products and services to be delivered as a result of consultant contract work, and minimum qualification of consultant professionals and staff. These vary depending upon the type of projects and the phase of project development being addressed.

Scope of Consultant Work

The scope of work, which the contract must include, is a detailed description of the products or services the consultant is to provide. From a detailed scope of work, consultants respond to a project advertisement, determine personnel and time requirements, and develop a technical proposal. Therefore, the scope of work must be clear, concise, complete, and describe the deliverables, standards for design and other work, quality control measures, acceptance criteria and deadlines.

Title VI Assurances

Title VI Assurances Appendices A and E must be included in each consultant contract. Include Title VI Assurances Appendices B, C, and D if applicable. The consultant must include the Title VI Assurances Appendices A and E, and if applicable Appendices B, C, and D in all subcontracts to perform work under the contract. Include Title VI Assurances Appendices B, C, and D if applicable. Refer to [Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#), Article XXXII Title VI Assurances. Disadvantaged Business Enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability in consideration for an award.

Non-Discrimination Clause

The Non-Discrimination Clause ([Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#), Article XVI Non-Discrimination Clause and Statement of Compliance) must be included in each consultant contract. The consultant must include the non-discrimination and compliance

provisions of the Non-Discrimination Clause in all subcontracts to perform work under the contract.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Participation

When administering federal-aid projects, federal regulations (49 CFR 26) require the LPA to comply with the DBE program and take necessary steps to ensure that DBE firms have the opportunity to participate in the projects. Refer to [LAPM Chapter 9: Civil Rights and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises](#) for DBE requirements for A&E Consultant Contracts.

Estimated Cost of Consultant Work

An independent estimate for cost or price analysis is needed for all consultant contracts (23 CFR 172.7(a)(1)(v)(B)) to ensure that consultant services are obtained at a fair and reasonable price. The estimate must be prepared prior to opening the cost proposal from the top-ranked consultant, so the LPA has a cost comparison to evaluate the reasonableness of the consultant's cost proposal. The estimate, which is specifically for the use of the LPA's negotiating team, is to be kept confidential and maintained for records.

A good cost estimate can be prepared only if the scope of work is defined clearly. The scope of work must include a list of the products or services which the consultant is required to deliver, and a time schedule of when they must be delivered.

It should be stressed that all work to be derived from the consultant services, such as preliminary design, environmental, or final design, must be clearly identified in the solicitation of consultant services (RFQ or RFP) and included in the cost estimate. The addition of work to the original scope by amendment should be avoided whenever possible. Contract modifications are required for any amendments to the terms of the existing contract that change the cost of the contract; significantly change the character, scope, complexity, or duration of the work; or significantly change the conditions under which the work is required to be performed.

Some of the costs estimating techniques are:

Analogous Estimating

Analogous cost estimating is using the actual cost of a previous, similar contract as the basis for estimating the cost of the current contract. Analogous cost estimating is frequently used to estimate costs when there is a limited amount of detailed information about the project. Analogous cost estimating is generally less accurate, and it is most reliable when previous projects are similar in fact, and not just in appearance, and it uses expert judgment.

Parametric Estimating

Parametric estimating is a technique that uses statistical relationship between historical data and other variables to calculate a cost estimate for an activity resource. This technique can produce a higher level of accuracy depending upon the sophistication, as well as underlying resource quantity and the cost data. A cost example would involve multiplying the planned quantity of work by the historical cost per unit to obtain the estimated cost of the contract.

Bottom-up Estimating

This technique involves estimating the cost for individual work in the contract with the lowest level of detail. This detailed cost is then summarized or rolled up to determine a total cost of contract. Cost detail should include estimated hours per task, labor hourly cost for professional and non-professional classifications, subconsultant costs, other project direct costs, and profit. Labor costs should be broken down to direct labor and indirect cost rates, if possible.

If more than one project or phase of work is to be developed within the consultant contract, separate cost estimates are required for each project or phase of work. Separate cost estimates are required for each milestone and portion of the work expected to be subcontracted.

For on-call (as-needed) contracts, the cost estimate/analysis should include at minimum, a historical analysis of annual needs for consultant work, professional labor cost and market analysis, and reasonable profit analysis.

Determine Type of Contract

Types of contracts to be used are described as follows:

- Project-specific contract is between the LPA and consultant for the performance of services and a defined scope of work related to a specific project or projects.
- Multi-phase contract is a project-specific contract where the defined scope of work is divided into phases which may be negotiated and executed individually as the project progresses.
- On-call contract is a contract that may be utilized for a number of projects, under which task or work orders are issued on an as-needed basis, for an established contract period and maximum total contract dollar amount. On-call contracts are typically used when a specialized service of indefinite delivery or indefinite quantity is needed for a number of different projects, such as construction engineering, design, environmental analysis, traffic studies, geotechnical studies, and field surveying, etc. Many agencies use these contracts to address peaks in workload of in-house engineering staff and/or to perform a specialized service which the agency does not have. On-call contracts must specify a reasonable maximum length of contract, not to exceed five (5) years, and a maximum total contract dollar amount (23 CFR 172.7(a)(2)(iv)). The maximum dollar amount for all contracts awarded under the solicitation must be stated in the solicitation. The maximum dollar amount is the aggregate of the on-call contracts anticipated to be awarded. For example, if the solicitation lists that up to five (5) contracts may be awarded, the aggregate amount of these five (5) contracts is the maximum contract dollar amount. Setting maximum amount on each on-call contract under a multiple on-call solicitation does not meet the intent of 23 CFR 172. How many contracts are anticipated to be awarded must be stated in the solicitation. How task orders will be issued must be stated in the solicitation.

There are two options on how task orders must be awarded under multiple on-call contracts for the same type of service under the same solicitation:

1. Through an additional qualifications-based selection procedure also known as mini-RFP.
 - Solicit task order to the multiple on-call consultants on the master on-call contracts
 - Master on-call contracts are contracts awarded to on-call consultants at the initial RFQ/RFP procurement process.
 - Solicitation may be informal, e.g. email, letter, etc.; documentation is required.

- Evaluation criteria must be included in the solicitation. The mini-RFP contains evaluation criteria that matches the strengths of the qualified firms to the specifics of the known tasks, thereby selecting the most qualified firm for each task.
- The evaluation criteria can include:
 - i. availability of personnel,
 - ii. staff capabilities,
 - iii. DBE (10% or less of overall score); the overall DBE goal was established at the master on-call contract,
 - iv. completion of time,
 - v. experience of consultant
 - vi. specialized expertise, and past performance.
- Evaluate and rank proposals and select from the multiple on-call contracted consultants
 - Recommend at least three panel members to evaluate and rank
 - Evaluate based on criteria in mini-RFP solicitation
- Negotiate and award to the on-call contracted consultant
 - The mini-RFP or the task order will be negotiated with first ranked firm from each competition. Task order (mini-RFP) cost will be based on wage rates established in the master on-call contract, and the time and deliverable requirements in the task order.
- If only one proposal is received or there is an emergency, a Non-Competitive process must be justified, and [Exhibit 12-F: Cost Effectiveness / Public Interest Finding / A&E Noncompetitive](#) must be documented and signed by the DLAE
- Awarding task order to the multiple on-call consultants on a rotational basis does not meet the intent of the qualifications-based selection
- [Exhibit 10-G: Individual A&E Task Order DBE Tracking Sheet](#) must be used to track percentage of DBE after a task order is completed
- Each task order must have an [Exhibit 10-O1: Consultant Proposal DBE Commitment](#) and [Exhibit 10-O2: Consultant Contract DBE Commitment](#) as applicable

2. Regional basis where each on-call consultant is contracted to a designated area.

To maintain the intent of the Brooks Act (40 U.S.C.1101-1104) in promoting open competition and selection based on demonstrated competence and qualifications, on-call consultant contracts established through the RFQ process must meet the following requirements:

- Must define a general scope of work, complexity, and professional nature of services.
- Specify a task order procedure the LPA uses to procure project-specific work under the contract.

- Task order work performed after the master on-call contract has expired will result in those costs being ineligible for federal or state reimbursement.
- If multiple consultants are to be selected and multiple on-call contracts awarded through a single solicitation for specific services, the number of consultants that may be selected or contracts that may be awarded must be identified.
- Specify procurement procedures in the contracts the LPA will use to award/execute task orders among the consultants:
 - Either through an additional qualification-based selection process (see the Two-Step RFQ/RFP process later in this chapter), OR
 - On regional basis whereby the region is divided into areas identified in the solicitation, and consultants are selected to provide on-call services for assigned areas only. The RFP may list multiple regions that allow consultants to crossover or be a “backup” to other consultants that for specifically documented reasons are not able to perform the work in their assigned region. Per 23 CFR 172.9 (a)(3)(iv)(B)(2), the “backup” option needs to be listed in the respective contracts.

An example of acceptable contract wording in multiple on-call contracts for the same type of service:

- “Agency has or will enter into three (3) task order contracts for performance of the Scope of Services identified in Exhibit “A”, including this Agreement (“CM Services Task Order Contracts”). The other CM Services Task Order Contracts are [identify other two contracts by agreement numbers and consultant firms]. The total amount payable by Agency for the CM Services Task Order Contracts must not exceed a cumulative maximum total value of Seven Million, Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$7,500,000) (“NTE Sum”). It is understood and agreed that there is no guarantee, either expressed or implied that this dollar amount will be authorized under the CM Services Task Order Contracts through Task Orders. Each time a Task Order is awarded under any of the CM Services Task Order Contracts, the Agency must send written notification to Consultant and each of the other consultants entering into the CM Services Task Order Contracts. The notice must identify the total funds allocated under issued Task Orders, and the remaining unencumbered amount of the NTE Sum. Consultant acknowledges and agrees that Agency must not pay any amount under this Agreement that would exceed the NTE Sum, and Consultant must not enter into a Task Order that exceeds the NTE Sum.”

Determining the Project Schedule

The LPA develops a schedule for performance of work and completion of the project. The schedule must include sufficient time to allow for:

- Selecting the consultant;
- Developing the consultant contract;
- Completing the A&E consultant contract audit process;
- Conducting meetings and project reviews.

Determine Method of Payment

The method of payment of contract must be specified. The following four methods are permitted under 23 CFR 172.9(b) depending on the scope of services to be performed (sample cost proposals are provided on the DLA Consultant Selection and Procurement [website](#)):

- Cost-Plus-Fixed Fee
- Cost Per Unit of Work
- Specific Rates of Compensation
- Lump Sum

The method of payment to the consultant must be set forth in the original solicitation, contract, and in any contract modification thereto. A single contract may contain different payment methods as appropriate for compensation of different elements of work. Markups are not allowed on any of the four methods of payment.

The cost plus a percentage of cost and percentage of construction cost methods of payment must not be used. Both of these methods are explicitly prohibited by 23 CFR 172.9(b).

Cost-Plus-Fixed Fee

The consultant is reimbursed for costs incurred and receives an additional predetermined amount as a fixed fee (profit). Federal regulations require that profit be separately negotiated from contract costs. The determination of the amount of the fixed fee must take into account the size, complexity, duration, and degree of risk involved in the work. The fixed fee is not adjustable during the life of the contract. The fixed fee dollar amount must be clearly stated in the contract. See the DLA Consultant Selection and Procurement [website](#) for a useful tool on Profit/Fee Determination.

This method of payment is appropriate when the extent, scope, complexity, character, or duration of work cannot be precisely predicted. The fixed fee limit applies to the total direct and indirect costs. Fixed fees in excess of 15 percent of the total direct labor and indirect costs of the contract may be justified only when exceptional circumstances exist. The contract must specify a reasonable maximum length of contract period and a maximum total contract dollar amount (see [Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#), Article V, Option 1). The contract cost proposal must identify all key employees and/or classifications to be billed. New key employees and/or classifications must be approved by the LPA before they incur work on the contract, or the costs can be questioned or disallowed. LPAs are not required to update the A&E Consultant Contract form when new key employees and/or classification are added to a contract. For more details, reference [Section 10.1.8. Completing the Project](#).

Cost Per Unit of Work

The consultant is paid based on specific item of work performed. The item of work must be similar, repetitious, and measurable, such as a specific geotechnical investigation and material testing. This method of payment is appropriate when the cost per unit of work can be determined with reasonable accuracy in advance, but the extent or quantity of the work is indefinite. Contract payment provisions must specify what is included in the price to be paid for each item. Any item of work not identified in the contract cost proposal is not eligible for reimbursement. New items of work (those within the original scope of work only) must be amended into the contract before work is performed. The contract must also specify a

reasonable maximum length of contract period and a maximum total contract dollar amount (see [Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#), Article V Option 2).

Specified Rates of Compensation

The consultant is paid at an agreed and supported specific fixed hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly rate, for each class of employee engaged directly in the work. Such rates of pay include the consultant's estimated costs and net fee (profit). Federal regulations require that profit be separately negotiated from contract costs. The specific rates of compensation, except for an individual acting as a sole proprietor, are to include an hourly breakdown, direct salary costs, fringe benefits, indirect costs, and net fee. Other direct costs may be included, such as travel and equipment rentals, if not already captured in the indirect cost rate. Other direct costs regardless of amount are to be listed on the cost proposal.

This method of payment should only be used when it is not possible at the time of procurement to estimate the extent or the duration of the work, or to estimate costs with any reasonable degree of accuracy. This method should not be used for project-specific contracts and is recommended for on-call contracts for specialized or support type services, such as construction engineering and inspection, where the consultant is not in direct control of the number of hours worked, and it also requires management and monitoring of the consultant's level of effort and the classification of employees used to perform the contracted work. The contract must also specify a reasonable maximum length of contract period and a maximum total contract dollar amount (see [Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#), Article V Option 3).

Lump Sum

The consultant performs the services stated in the contract for an agreed amount as compensation, including a net fee or profit. This method of payment is appropriate only if the extent, scope, complexity, character, duration, and risk of the work have been sufficiently defined to permit fair compensation to be determined and evaluated by all parties during negotiations (see [Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#), Article V: Option 4). Normally, a lump sum contract will be paid in full at end of the contract when completed. However, a lump sum contract can be negotiated with progress payment if feasible. The progress payment must be based on percent of work complete or completion of clearly defined milestones. The contract cost proposal must document the agreed-upon progress payment and include the necessary milestones costs, or the percent work complete schedule.

A firm fixed price method of payment is not the same as lump sum. A firm fixed price contract must not be amended.

Changes to Cost Proposal

Changes to the cost proposal requiring resubmittal to Independent Office of Audits and Investigations (IOAI) for review:

- Consultant/subconsultant name change
- New participating subconsultant's Indirect Cost Rate (ICR)
- Change in ICR rate

Since these changes require an amendment, the LPA is to update the A&E Consultant Contract form.

10.1.3 A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process

This section outlines the audit and review process for A&E contracts that at any time use state or federal-aid highway funds in furtherance of highway construction projects. All proposed A&E contracts and supporting documents are subject to audit or review by Caltrans' Independent Office of Audits and Investigations (IOAI), other state audit organizations, or the federal government. Not all proposed contracts will be audited or reviewed; rather, they will be selected on a risk-based approach.

Applicable Standards

State and federal requirements listed below, and specific contract requirements, serve as the standards for audits and reviews performed.

LPAs, consultants, and subconsultants are responsible for complying with state, federal, and specific contract requirements. LPAs are responsible for determining the eligibility of costs to be reimbursed to consultants.

Applicable standards include, but are not limited to:

- Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual (LAPM);
- State and Federal agreements between LPAs and Caltrans, (i.e., Master Agreements);
- Project Program Supplemental Agreements;
- 23 U.S.C., Section 112 – Letting of Contracts;
- 40 U.S.C., Chapter 11: the Brooks Act;
- 23 CFR 172 - Procurement, Management, and Administration of Engineering and Design Related Services;
- 23 CFR, Chapter 1- Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation;
- 48 CFR, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Part 31- Contract Cost Principles and Procedures;
- 48 CFR, Chapter 99 – Cost Accounting Standards Board, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget
- 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards;
- United States Government Accountability Office, Government Auditing Standards - Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS);
- California Government Code sections 4529.5 and 4529.10-4529.20; and
- Proposed contract terms and conditions.

See Section [10.1.11: References](#) of this chapter for links to above referenced standards.

Audit Guidance Available

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Uniform Audit & Accounting Guide ([AASHTO Audit Guide](#)), which is referred to frequently in this section, is a valuable tool to guide LPAs, consultants, and Certified Public Accountants (CPA) through

the requirements for establishing, and audits of FAR-compliant ICR. The [AASHTO Audit Guide](#) is used extensively as an industry guide in the audit and review process.

LPAs may seek accounting assistance from internal audit staff and an independent CPA for compliance. The consultant may seek professional guidance in selecting its independent CPA. See also the [AASHTO Audit Guide](#), Chapter 2. Selection of CPA Firm as Overhead Auditor for guidance in the selection process. Training is also offered by FHWA's National Highway Institute (see <https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/home.aspx>). Courses offered include:

- Using the AASHTO Audit Guide for the Procurement and Administration of A&E Contracts (FHWA-NHI-231028)
- Using the AASHTO Audit Guide for the Development of A&E Consultant Indirect Cost Rates (FHWA- NHI-231029)
- Using the AASHTO Audit Guide for the Auditing and Oversight of A&E Consultant Indirect Cost Rates (FHWA-NHI-231030)

For training and additional information provided by Caltrans Local Assistance, visit the [Caltrans Local Assistance Blog](#). For FHWA's Q&A for ICRs and audits, and A&E related services, visit FHWA Consultant Services [website](#).

Allowable Costs

23 U.S.C.112(b)(2)(B) states that any A&E contract or subcontract awarded, whether funded in whole or in part with federal-aid highway funds in furtherance of highway construction projects, must be performed and audited in compliance with the federal cost principles.

LPAs are required to perform a cost analysis to ensure all costs are allowable and in compliance with federal and state requirements and retain documentation of negotiation activities and resources. Hourly rate(s) for each key personnel and/or classification of employee(s) proposed in cost proposals must be reasonable for the work performed and actual, allowable, and allocable in accordance with the federal cost principles.

All consultant ICRs must be supported with the required financial documents as outlined in the checklist on IOAI's [Financial Document Review \(FDR\) Request Form](#); however, Category 4 applies to all consultants regardless of the participation amount.

Costs must be allowable only if the cost is incurred and cost estimates included in negotiated prices are allowable in accordance with the federal and state regulations and procedures, and contract provisions.

Consultants must account for costs appropriately and maintain records, including supporting documentation, adequate to demonstrate that costs claimed have been incurred, and are allowable, reasonable, and allocable to the contract, and comply with federal cost principles.

IOAI and representatives of the Federal Government have the right to conduct an audit of all contract costs. If the costs are subsequently determined to be unallowable, these costs are subject to repayment. For further guidance, refer to 23 CFR 172 and 48 CFR 31.

Generally, whenever LPAs, consultants, and/or contractors are unable to provide requested documentation, it must be viewed that the services were either not performed or the costs not properly recorded. Retention of all documents is required as it reduces the possibility of audit findings and **disallowed costs**.

Safe Harbor Rate

Developing ICRs annually can place a significant burden on some small or new and emerging A&E consulting firms that lack financial sophistication to develop an ICR, as well as on other established A&E consulting firms that may not have previous experience with federally-funded contracts for which an ICR would have been developed in compliance with federal cost principles 48 CFR 31. This may create a barrier for otherwise eligible and qualified firms to compete for federally-funded contracts.

To help alleviate and remove potential barriers, the Division of Local Assistance (DLA) has adopted Caltrans Division of Procurement and Contract's (DPAC) Safe Harbor Rate (SHR) process and rates which took into account LPA data. The SHR information and rates can be found at the DLA Consultant Selection and Procurement website:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/guidance-and-oversight/consultant-selection-procurement>. To request information regarding the SHR methodology, email the A&E Oversight Branch at aeoversight@dot.ca.gov. Eligible A&E consultant firms can choose to use the DLA SHR rate on new A&E contracts using federal-aid highway funds executed by LPAs in the State of California.

Use and application of the SHR by eligible firms provides reasonable assurance of consultant compliance with the federal cost principles per 23 CFR 172.11(c)(2). A&E consulting firms approved to use the established SHR will have their accounting system evaluated for capabilities of accumulating and tracking direct labor for applying the SHR, as well as for billing other direct costs by contract, segregating indirect costs, etc.

Use of the SHR is voluntary on behalf of the A&E consulting firm and LPAs. LPAs have the discretion to determine certification of eligibility based on requirements shown on the following SHR certification form: [Consultant Firm Certification of Eligibility and Certification of Financial Management System](#).

A&E consultant firms (prime consultants and/or sub consultants) that have not had an ICR previously accepted by a cognizant agency may elect and request to use the SHR in a contract by submitting the completed SHR certification form, [Consultant Firm Certification of Eligibility and Certification of Financial Management System](#), including the Questionnaire for Evaluating Consultant Firm's Financial Management System section, and any other documents as needed. This requirement is in addition to the A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process requirements described in this chapter.

It is the LPA's responsibility to:

- Collect and screen all requests to use the safe harbor indirect cost rate. See SHR certification form, [Consultant Firm Certification of Eligibility and Certification of Financial Management System](#), including the Questionnaire for Evaluating Consultant Firm's Financial Management System section.
- Submit all SHR documents to the Independent Office of Audits & Investigations (IOAI) as part of the Financial Document Review Request package. The IOAI email address is: Conformance.Review@dot.ca.gov. Requests to use the safe harbor indirect cost rate must be accepted/approved by IOAI **before** contracts are executed.

Approval or Acceptance of Indirect Cost Rates

Cognizant Letters of Approval

A cognizant approved ICR has been audited by a cognizant agency (a State transportation agency of the State where the consultant's accounting and financial records are located or a

State transportation agency to which cognizance for the particular indirect cost rate(s) of a consulting firm has been delegated or transferred to in writing by the State transportation agency where the consultant's accounting and financial records are located) in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards to test compliance with the requirements of the federal cost principles (per 48 CFR 31), and the cognizant agency has either 1) issued an audit report of the consultant's indirect cost rate or 2) conducted a review of an audit report and related workpapers prepared by a certified public accountant and issued a letter of concurrence with the audited indirect cost rate(s). The cognizant agency approves the ICR and a cognizant approval letter is issued.

Caltrans Acceptance of Indirect Cost Rate

When the ICRs have not been established by a cognizant agency, Caltrans must perform an audit or review of a consultant's and subconsultant's ICR(s) to provide reasonable assurance of compliance with federal cost principles [for consultant contracts with a dollar value equal to or greater than \\$1M](#).

An audit or review of the ICR may consist of one or more of the following:

- Perform a review to determine if the ICR was prepared in accordance with 23 CFR 172 and 48 CFR 31;
- Perform an audit to determine if the ICR was prepared in accordance with 23 CFR 172 and 48 CFR 31; and issue an audit report;
- Review and accept an ICR audit report and related workpapers prepared by a CPA or another State Transportation Agency;
- [Perform other evaluations in accordance with a risk-based oversight process in accordance with 23 CFR 172 and 48 CFR 31.](#)

Financial Review Performed Prior to Contract Execution

All consultants, including prime consultants and subconsultants, on a proposed contract with a dollar value equal to or greater than \$1M are subject to an ICR financial review by IOAI. The financial documents required are detailed in the [Financial Document Review Request form](#). IOAI will review the ICR financial documents to either accept or adjust the indirect cost rate **prior to contract execution** using a risk-based approach as dictated by factors that include but are not limited to:

- History of satisfactory performance and professional reputation of consultant;
- Prior FAR compliant history and audit frequency;
- Experience of consultant with FAHP contracts;
- General responsiveness and responsibility;
- The approximate contract volume and dollar amount of all A&E contracts awarded to the consultant by Caltrans or an LPA in California within the last three calendar years;
- The number of states in which the consultant does business;
- The type and complexity of the consultant's accounting system;
- The relevant professional experience of any CPA performing audits of the consultants indirect cost rate;

- Assessment of consultant's internal control. Responses to internal control questionnaire, see AASHTO Audit Guide, Appendix B;

The outcome of an audit or review for contracts with a dollar value equal to or greater than \$1M is for Caltrans to approve or accept the ICR so that it can be relied upon for future contracts with the consultant for a given one-year accounting period and for reliance by other contracting agencies using the same consultant. Contracts below \$1 Million are not subject to the Caltrans Financial Document Review but LPAs are required to establish that all costs are in compliance with the federal cost principles, 48 CFR 31, and other applicable requirements are met. Cost analysis documents are required to be retained in the project files to demonstrate compliance. For further guidance, refer to 23 CFR 172.11(b)(1). If the consultant is subject to Cost Accounting Standards (CAS), the consultant must use the applicable ICR for the contract.

LPAs are required to apply Caltrans-accepted consultant or subconsultant's ICRs, to contracts. An ICR is valid for the one-year applicable accounting period accepted or reviewed by Caltrans. Consultants must update, on an annual basis, ICRs in accordance with the consultant's annual accounting period and in compliance with the federal cost principles. LPAs must ensure that only approved or accepted ICRs of consultants for the applicable one-year accounting period be applied to contracts, if rates are not under dispute. A consultant's accepted ICR for its one-year applicable accounting period must be applied to contracts; however, once an ICR is established for a contract, it may be extended beyond the one-year applicable period, through the duration of the specific contract, provided all concerned parties agree. Agreement to the extension of the one-year applicable period must not be a condition or qualification to be considered for the work or contract award. The contract must clearly specify the ICR period if it is beyond the one-year applicable period.

ICRs that have not been accepted by Caltrans for contracts with a dollar value equal to or greater than \$1M will not be eligible for indirect cost payment. An ICR approved by a cognizant agency may be used across states for the one-year applicable accounting period, but an ICR accepted by Caltrans may only be applied to A&E contracts with Caltrans or LPA contracts using pass-through Caltrans funding. LPAs include Cities, Counties, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Special Districts, and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies.

Local Public Agency Responsibilities

LPAs are responsible for obtaining all required ICR supporting documentation from A&E prime consultants and subconsultants as outlined in the Financial Document Review Request form. LPAs are responsible for forwarding these documents to IOAI for review. LPAs are also required to ensure that IOAI has a copy of the [Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System form](#). The ICR included in the LPA's cost proposal must match the ICR included in the Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System form and the consultant's ICR schedule. The proposed ICR, however, can be lower than ICR in the Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System form and the consultant's ICR schedule if the consultant elects to propose a lower ICR. For contracts spanning more than one year, LPAs are responsible for ensuring the Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System form and cost proposals are updated annually unless all concerned parties agree to fix the ICR for the term of contract, and this is clearly specified in the contract. ICR updates are not required to IOAI if the ICR is fixed for the life of the contract. ICR's are only reviewed for consultants that are being awarded a contract, not consultants on a short list or pre-qualified list.

The cost proposal includes contract costs: direct salary or wage rates, fixed fees, other direct costs, indirect costs, total costs, and certification for the costs. LPAs must perform and retain

documentation of activities and resources used to support that a cost analysis has been performed to establish that costs and elements were determined to be fair and reasonable in accordance with federal cost principles.

All contract supporting documentation must be retained by the LPA in project files for the required retention period. Unsupported costs may be disallowed and required to be returned to Caltrans. Having proper documentation policy and procedures, trained staff, and organized project files are essential for demonstrating that costs claimed and reimbursed have been incurred, are eligible, reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the contract and comply with federal cost principles.

Instructions are provided in the Financial Document Review Request form including requirements for submitting a complete Financial Review packet. Financial packets can be e-mailed to: conformance.review@dot.ca.gov.

Alternatively, Financial Review packets can be mailed to:

Department of Transportation
Independent Office of Audits and Investigations
MS 2 Attention: External Audit Manager
P.O. Box 942874
Sacramento, CA 94274-0001

LPA's may check IOAI's website to verify whether consultants have been reviewed by Caltrans for the valid ICR period. All approved or accepted ICRs are issued an Acceptance Identification (ID) number by IOAI that is posted to IOAI's [website](#). This ID number should be referenced on all future contracts that use the same fiscal year ICR. ICR can be fixed for the life of the contract in prior written document or annually updated. Once it has been updated, it must be annually updated and the most current fiscal year of ICR must be used.

Consultant Responsibilities (Both prime consultants and subconsultants)

A&E prime consultants and subconsultants in contract with LPAs using state or federal-aid highway funds should refer to the Financial Document Review Request form for the ICR financial documents required to be submitted to their LPA. Consultants must complete the Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System form that attests that the ICR rate proposed is in compliance with federal cost principles (48 CFR 31) and that the consultant's financial management system is adequate to accumulate and segregate reasonable, allowable, and allocable direct and indirect project costs. The Financial Document Review Request and Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System forms should be submitted to the LPA who will forward a copy to IOAI along with all other related and required financial documents. For all future contracts within a same fiscal year, the consultant needs to only provide a copy of the Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System form to the LPA.

Consultants must follow all the federal, state, and contract requirements outlined in the above, Applicable Standards section. Each contracting consultant must ensure its ICR is not combined with any parent company's or subsidiary's ICR.

ICR schedules for both prime consultants and subconsultants should be prepared using the accrual basis of accounting and be presented in compliance with the federal cost principles. See a [Standard Indirect Cost Rate Schedule](#) example that consultants can use when preparing their own.

For public works Prevailing Wage contracts, all workers must be paid the prevailing wage rate determined by the Director of the Department of Industrial Relations according to the type of work and location of the project: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/Prevailing-Wage.html>.

When determined necessary, IOAI may request additional information, such as a labor distribution summary and Executive Compensation Analysis (ECA). A consultant's labor distribution summary report is a labor expense report that detail all hours worked (paid and unpaid) for a fiscal year, wages earned, and benefits accrued by all the consultant's employees. The labor summary report should include employee names, salaries, hourly rates, total hours worked segregated by direct hours, indirect hours, paid time off hours, and uncompensated hours and amounts.

An ECA is an evaluation by the consultant to determine the allowability and reasonableness of executive compensation in compliance with federal cost principles and the AASHTO Audit Guide that can be based on either the National Compensation Matrix or independent compensation surveys.

Independent Office of Audits and Investigations' Responsibilities

After IOAI receives a consultant's complete financial document packet (per the Financial Document Review Request form) from the LPA, IOAI will review the proposed ICR and supporting documents and notify LPAs in writing whether the proposed ICRs are accepted or adjusted.

Contracts will be executed after IOAI either accepts or adjusts the ICR. Correction of the final cost proposal, however, does NOT need to be cleared through Caltrans IOAI before executing the contract. An email notification from IOAI serves as documentation to support an accepted ICR.

Audits and Reviews to be Performed

After contract execution, a consultant's ICR may be subject to further detailed review or audit by IOAI based on certain risk factors. Costs that are determined to be unallowable as a result of the review or audit will be subject to repayment.

Indirect Cost Rate Audits

During an ICR audit, IOAI or an independent CPA will examine the consultant's proposed ICR for a one-year accounting period to ensure that unallowable costs have been removed from the indirect costs, that allowable costs have been correctly measured and properly charged and allocated, and that the ICR has been developed in accordance with the federal cost principles (as specified in 23 U.S.C.112(b)(2)(B), 23 CFR 172.11, 48 CFR 31 and other FAR and State requirements). As a result of the audit, the LPA will work with the consultant to adjust the ICR based on audit recommendations.

For guidance regarding the existing policies and procedures set forth in the federal regulations, and acceptable ICR schedules, refer to the AASHTO Audit Guide, Chapter 5, and the example [Standard Indirect Cost Rate Schedule](#). The AASHTO Uniform Audit and Accounting Guide, Appendix A Review Program for CPA Audits of Consulting Engineers' Indirect Cost Rates is also a resource for consultants and CPAs when preparing an ICR for audit.

CPA Workpaper Reviews

During a workpaper review of a CPA audit of an ICR, IOAI will review the CPA's audit workpapers to determine whether to issue a Cognizant Letter of Approval for the ICR. The CPA

Workpaper Review determines whether: (a) the CPA's audit of the ICR was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), (b) the CPA adequately considered the auditee's compliance with the federal cost principles and related federal and state laws and regulations. Chapter 11 of the AASHTO Audit Guide provides information to the CPA on the required audit disclosures.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR CPAs: Contracts receiving state or federal funds are highly scrutinized. Materiality levels tend to be lower and more testing is required. GAGAS provides that auditors may find it appropriate to use lower materiality levels as compared with the materiality levels used in non-GAGAS audits because of the public accountability of government entities and entities receiving government funding, various legal and regulatory requirements, and the visibility and sensitivity of government programs. The AASHTO Audit Guide should be used as a tool for performing audits and attestations of A&E firms.

Contract Audits

During a Contract Audit, auditors will review a consultant's financial management system and contract cost proposal to determine if:

- The consultants' accounting system is adequate to accumulate and segregate costs;
- Costs are reasonable, allowable, allocable, and supported adequately;
- The contract contains all required fiscal provisions;
- Proper state and federal procurement requirements were followed.

Incurred Cost Audits

During an Incurred Cost Audit, auditors will review incurred contract costs to determine if:

- Cost data are maintained in an accounting system that adequately gathers, records, classifies, summarizes, and reports accurate and timely financial data for direct and indirect project costs by account;
- Costs are adequately supported, reasonable, allowable, and allocable;
- Costs incurred are in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations;
- Costs incurred are in compliance with the Master Agreement and Supplemental Agreement;
- Costs incurred are in compliance with the fiscal provisions stipulated in the contract; and
- The terms required by the Master Agreement and federal laws and regulations are in the contract.

Audit Findings and Review Deficiencies

If a consultant's ICR is audited or reviewed, LPAs are responsible for ensuring all executed and future contracts reflect the audited and adjusted fiscal year ICR(s). LPAs should request reimbursement from the consultant for overpayment on rates that were adjusted down.

The LPA may be subject to sanctions outlined in [Section 10.5 Sanctions](#) if the state or federal government determines that any reimbursements to the consultant are the result of lack of proper contract provisions, unallowable charges, unsupported activities, or an inadequate financial management system.

10.1.4 Consultant Selection Methods

There are three methods normally used in selecting a consultant:

- One-Step RFP
- One-Step RFQ
- Two-Step RFQ/RFP

The method used depends upon the scope of work, the services required, the project's complexity, and the time available for selection of the consultant; see [Consultant Selection Flowchart](#).

Beginning with [Section 10.1.5: Consultant Selection Using the One-Step RFP Method](#), each of the selection methods is explained in detail. Regardless of the method used, the LPA must retain all consultant selection documentation in their project files as required by 23 CFR 172.

One-Step RFP

The One-Step RFP method may be used for Project-specific contracts when the scope of work is well-defined or for Multi-phased contracts where the defined scope of work is divided into phases. Other considerations include when the consultant's services are highly specialized and there are few qualified consultants.

One-Step RFQ

The One-Step RFQ method is used when the requested services are specialized, or the scope of work is defined broadly and may include multiple projects. Typical services are preliminary engineering, surveying, environmental studies, preparation of Plans Specifications and Estimate (PS&E) and environmental documents, or construction management. This method or the two-step selection process is used for procurement of on-call contract(s). Note that specifications and requirements in the RFQ must cover all aspects of the final need. An RFP specific to the project, task, or service must be included in the solicitation for evaluation of a consultant's specific technical approach and qualifications.

Two-Step (RFQ Followed by RFP)

The Two-Step RFQ/RFP method may be used when the scope of work is complex or unusual. This method also may be preferred by LPAs that are inexperienced about negotiations and procedures for establishing compensation. However, the Two-Step RFQ/RFP method is recommended for procurement of multiple on-call contracts, or on-call list, through a single solicitation. Regardless of any process utilized for pre-qualification of consultants or for an initial assessment of a consultant's qualifications under a RFQ, a RFP specific to the project, task, or service is required for evaluation of a consultant's specific technical approach and qualifications. For more information, refer to description of on-call contract in [Section 10.1.2: Identifying & Defining a Need for Consultants](#). This method requires substantially more work and time than the other two methods described above.

10.1.5 Consultant Selection Using the One-Step RFP Method

Of the three methods discussed, this one is most easily modified for non-A&E consulting contracts. This procurement procedure usually involves a single step process with issuance of a request for proposal (RFP) to all interested consultants. For non-A&E consulting contracts, a cost proposal must be part of the RFP and the selection criteria. For A&E contracts, the cost proposal is not requested until the consultants have been final ranked based upon their submitted technical proposal.

Appoint Consultant Selection Committee

A consultant selection committee with a minimum of three members is appointed at the beginning of the consultant selection process. The committee reviews materials submitted by consultants, develops a short list of qualified consultants, and develops a final ranking of the most qualified proposals. Representation on the committee includes the Contract Administrator and subject matter experts from the project's functional area. The members should be familiar with the project/segment to be contracted out and with the LPA standards that will be used in the contract. Participation by a Caltrans district representative is at the option of the agency and subject to availability of the DLAE staff. Caltrans participation on the interview panel does not relieve the LPA of its responsibility to ensure that proper procurement procedures are followed, and all requirements are met.

LPA Contract Administrator ensures that all committee members meet the conflict of interest requirements (23 CFR 172.7(b)(4)) by completing and signing a conflict of interest statement prior to selection process initiation. A sample conflict of interest form is provided in [Exhibit 10-T: Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality Statement](#).

Develop Technical Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals

The Contract Administrator is responsible for developing the technical criteria, and their relative importance which are used to evaluate and rank the consultant proposals. In-state or local preference must not be used as factor in the evaluation, ranking, and selection phase. Local presence and DBE participation are the only two non-qualifications-based evaluation criteria that are permitted, however, the combined total of these criteria cannot exceed a nominal value of 10 percent of the total evaluation criteria (23 CFR 172.7(a)(1)(iii)(D)). All price or cost related items which include, but are not limited to, cost proposals, direct salaries/wage rates, indirect cost rates, and other direct costs are prohibited from being used as evaluation criteria.

The criteria and relative weights must be included in the RFP, and the same criteria and relative weights must be used in the evaluation sheets. Failure to include criteria and relative weights and to use the same criteria and weights during the evaluation will result in the contract costs being ineligible for federal or state reimbursement. [Exhibit 10-B: Suggested Consultant Evaluation Sheet](#) is a recommended evaluation sheet with criteria and rating points for A&E consultants, where cost is not used as a rating factor. This format is not mandatory, but it is recommended in the interest of developing consistency among the hundreds of agencies and consultants operating in the state. The LPA should consult with the DLAE before making major changes to the suggested approach.

Develop Schedule for Consultant Selection

Before the contract is advertised, the Contract Administrator completes a contract procurement schedule including key dates for consultant selection activities. The Contract Administrator should confirm key dates with all selection committee members before completing the schedule.

Prepare RFP

The information required in an RFP solicitation includes the following:

- Description of project;
- Clear, accurate, detailed Scope of work, technical requirements, and qualifications;
- Services to be performed;
- Deliverables to be provided;
- Procurement schedule;
- Applicable standards, specifications, and policies;
- Schedule of work (including estimated start and end dates of the contract);
- Method of payment, and cost proposal requirements. The cost proposal is submitted in a separate concealed format. Cost proposals are requested from the highest ranked firm. If these negotiations are formally terminated, the cost proposal is then requested from the next highest ranked firm. See sample cost proposals at the DLA Consultant Selection and Procurement [website](#);
- Contract audit and review process requirements (see [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#));
- Proposal format and required contents;
- Method, criteria, and weighting for selection;
- Requirements for any discussions that may be conducted with three or more of the most highly qualified consultants following submission and evaluation of proposals;
- Specify contract type;
- Special provisions or contracts requirements;
- A DBE contract goal is specified in the solicitation (see [Exhibit 10-I: Notice to Proposers DBE Information](#)), if a federal-aid contract;
- CMSR requirements (see [Exhibit 10-U: Consultant in Management Support Role Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement](#));
- Protest procedures and dispute resolution process per 2 CFR 200.318(k) and 23 CFR 172.5(c)(18).

The RFP specifies the content of a proposal, the number of copies required, due date, mailing address, and a physical address where the submittals may be hand-delivered if different from the mailing address. A minimum of fourteen (14) calendar days is required between the time the RFP is published and time that proposals must be submitted. More time may be required for complex contracts or projects.

Items typically required in a technical proposal include:

- Work plan (specify what is to be covered);
- Organizational chart;
- Schedule and deadlines;

- Staffing plan;
- Proposed Team—complete for prime consultant and all key subconsultants;
- Key personnel names and classifications—key team members identified in the original proposal/cost proposal must not change (be different than) in the executed contract;
- Staff resumes;
- Names of consultant’s project manager and the individual authorized to negotiate the contract on behalf of the consulting firm;
- Consultant DBE Commitment document, see [Exhibit 10-O1: Consultant Proposal DBE Commitment](#);
- References.

Financial Management and Accounting System Requirements

The LPA must ensure that consultant contract solicitation and advertising documents (RFPs) clearly specify that contracts must not be awarded to a consultant without an adequate financial management and accounting system as required by 48 CFR 16.301-3, 2 CFR 200, and 48 CFR 31. The LPA must ensure the selected consultants have adequate financial management systems as required by the applicable federal regulations.

Advertise for Consultants

The solicitation process for consultant services must be by public advertisement, or by any other public forum or method that assures qualified in-State and out-of-State consultants are given a fair opportunity to be considered for award of contract. The minimum length of advertisement is 14 calendar days.

Advertisement of the RFP in a major newspaper of general circulation, technical publications of widespread circulation, professional associations and societies, recognized DBE organizations, web hosting or clearing houses known for posting government contract solicitations such as BidSync, Planetbids, Public Purchase, or posting the RFP on the LPA’s or other widely used websites are all acceptable methods of solicitation.

To document website postings, the LPA should retain copies of screen shots displaying the posted begin/end dates.

The LPA must keep a record of all consultants that have downloaded RFP online as well as those receiving an RFP through other means, to ensure that any inquiry responses, addendums, or amendments to the RFP are given to all consultants that received the RFP.

Conduct Proposer’s Conference or Answer Written Questions

The LPA may allow for clarification of the RFP by inviting submittal of written questions or by conducting a proposer’s conference, or by doing both. The LPA must publish or mail their responses to any written questions to all consultants receiving the RFP. No response should be given to verbal questions. It is important that all competing consultants receive the same information. If a proposer’s conference is to be held, the exact time and place must be specified in the RFP. Attendance at a proposer’s conference normally is not mandatory. However, consultants not attending the conference do not receive notes from the meeting unless they request the notes.

Receive and Evaluate Technical Proposals

The Contract Administrator must verify that each proposal contains all of the forms and other information required by the RFP. If all required information is not provided, a proposal may be considered nonresponsive and rejected without evaluation. Late submittals, submittals to the wrong location, or submittals with inadequate copies are considered nonresponsive and must be rejected. Submittal of additional information after the due date must not be allowed.

Documentation of when each proposal was received must be maintained in the project files. Copies of date stamped envelope covers or box tops are recommended. The members of the consultant selection committee must evaluate each proposal according to the technical criteria listed in the RFP. Minimum of three proposals must be received and evaluated. If only two proposals are received, a justification must be documented to proceed with the procurement. The justification should state that the solicitation did not contain conditions or requirements that arbitrarily limited competition per 23 CFR 172.7(a)(1)(iv)(D) and competition is determined to be inadequate and it is not feasible or practical to re-compete under a new solicitation per 23 CFR 172(a)(3)(iii)(C). If only one proposal is received, a Non-Competitive process must be justified and an [Exhibit 12-F: Cost-Effectiveness / Public Interest Finding / A&E Noncompetitive](#) must be documented and signed by the DLAE. In either case, the re-advertisement of the RFP should be considered as an option.

The committee must also evaluate reference checks and other information gathered independently. Reference checks must be completed, and other information gathered before the interviews are conducted. If necessary, the results of the reference checks or other information may be discussed with the highest ranked qualified consultants at the interviews.

Develop Final Ranking and Notify Consultants of Results

The selection committee evaluates each proposal, interviews the three or more highest ranked consultants (short listed) if noted in solicitation, and develops a final ranking of the highest ranked consultants. All consultants that submitted proposals must be informed about the final ranking of consultants. It is important that all competing consultants receive the same information.

Most consultants will request information as to why they were not the highest ranked. The LPA may have an established procedure adopted for conducting debriefings but may also consider the following: The selection committee should keep notes as to why a particular consultant was not selected. When a consultant requests debriefing, the reasons for not being selected must be objective reasons. The consultant should not be compared to others and should not be provided with information about other consultants during this debriefing. Normally, the Contract Administrator does the debriefing; however, any member of the selection committee may be designated to do the debriefing.

Negotiate Contract with Top-Ranked Consultant

Cost proposal (for both prime consultant and all subconsultants), and contract audit and review documents such as the Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System and Financial Document Review Request forms, whichever is applicable (see [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#)) should be submitted in a separate sealed envelope.

Typically, the cost proposals are submitted by the short-listed consultants only, at time of interview. However, if time is of the essence and it can be justified, or if no interviews are planned, the cost proposal can be requested from all consultants with their technical proposal.

The cost proposal for the most qualified consultant will be opened and used to begin negotiations. If agreement cannot be reached, then negotiations proceed to the next most qualified consultant. Each consultant's cost proposal must remain sealed until negotiations commence with that particular consultant. The goal of negotiations is to agree on a final contract that delivers the services, or products required at a fair and reasonable cost to the LPA. At the completion of successful cost negotiations, all remaining sealed envelopes containing cost proposals must be returned to consultants.

Cost proposals in electronic form must be submitted separately from the RFP and contained in a secure database that is inaccessible to the members involved in the A&E consultant contract procurement process. Only the cost proposal of the most qualified consultant will be requested to be sent to the members. Cost proposals of unsuccessful consultants are confidential and must not be opened by the LPA or any private entity that the LPA uses to store the cost proposals. Any concealed cost proposals of the unsuccessful consultants must be returned unopened or properly disposed of in accordance with the LPA's written policies and procedures.

The independent cost estimate, developed by the LPA in advance of requesting a cost proposal from the top-ranked consultant, is an important basis and tool for negotiations or terminating unsuccessful negotiations with the most qualified consultant. Items necessary for the independent cost estimate include, hours/detailed work, direct labor costs, indirect labor costs, other direct costs, and profit/fee. Agencies must retain documentation of how the cost estimate was developed. It can be revised, if needed, for use in negotiations with the next most qualified consultant. A contract audit and review may be required (see [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#) in this chapter). LPA Contract Administrator ensures that all required documentations are provided to Caltrans IOAI within 10 days of written request, including all documents for a Financial Review, if applicable. Caltrans IOAI will not proceed with a Financial Document Review until all required documentation is completed correctly and submitted. Negotiations should be finalized after addressing all deficiencies noted in the Caltrans IOAI Financial Review Letter if applicable. An indirect cost audit may be performed within the record retention period of the contract.

Items typically negotiated include:

- Work plan;
- Schedule and deadlines (for deliverables and final duration of contract);
- Products to be delivered;
- Classification, wage rates, and experience level of personnel to be assigned;
- Cost items, payments, and fees. Fee is required to be negotiated as a separate element;
- Hours, level of effort by task and/or classification.

The consultant's ICR is not a negotiable item. A lower rate cannot be negotiated by the LPA. The LPA and the consultant will agree on the final cost proposal and incorporate into final contract. Retain all documentation related to negotiations.

Before executing the consultant contract, the LPA must review contract to ensure that all federal and state requirements have been met and adjustment or denial of ICR as identified in the Financial Review Letter has been included in the final cost proposal, if applicable.

Prior to contract award, or after contract award but no later than the first invoice, the LPA must submit a completed A&E Consultant Contract form for all new federal funded A&E consultant contracts using the A&E Consultant Contract database at:

<https://dla.dot.ca.gov/fmi/webd/AE%20Consultant%20Contract%20Form> (Firefox or Chrome browser). Submission of the A&E Consultant Contract form is not required for non-A&E consultant contracts.

If there are any changes requiring an amendment to the contract after submittal of the A&E Consultant Contract form, refer to [Section 10.1.8: Contract Amendments](#) of this chapter.

10.1.6 Consultant Selection Using the One-Step RFQ Method

The RFQ method is used when the services being procured are specialized, or the scope of work is defined broadly and may include multiple projects.

Appoint Consultant Selection Committee

A consultant selection committee with a minimum of three members is appointed at the beginning of the consultant selection process. The committee reviews and scores the materials submitted by consultants in response to the RFQ, develops a short list of qualified consultants, interviews those consultants, and develops a final ranking of the most qualified consultants. Representation on the committee includes the Contract Administrator and subject matter experts from the project's functional area. The members should be familiar with the scope of work to be contracted out and with the LPA standards that will be used in the contract.

Participation by a Caltrans district representative is at the option of the LPA and subject to the availability of the DLAE staff. Caltrans participation on the interview panel does not relieve the LPA of its responsibility to ensure that proper procurement procedures are followed, and all requirements are met.

LPA Contract Administrator ensures that all committee members meet the conflict of interest requirements (23 CFR 172.7(b)(4)) by completing and signing a conflict of interest statement prior to selection process initiation. A sample conflict of interest form is provided in [Exhibit 10-T: Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality Statement](#).

Develop Technical Criteria for Evaluation of Qualifications

The Contract Administrator is responsible for developing the technical criteria, and their relative importance which are used to evaluate and rank the consultant qualifications. In-State or local preference must not be used as factor in the evaluation, ranking, and selection phase. Local presence and DBE participation are the only two non-qualifications-based evaluation criteria that are permitted, however, the combined total of these criteria cannot exceed a nominal value of 10 percent of the total evaluation criteria (23 CFR 172.7(a)(1)(iii)(D)). All price or cost related items which include, but are not limited to, cost proposals, direct salaries/wage rates, indirect cost rates, and other direct costs are prohibited from being used as evaluation criteria.

The criteria and relative weights must be included in the RFQ, and the same criteria and relative weights must be used in the evaluation sheets. Failure to include criteria and relative weights and to use the same criteria and weights during the evaluation will result in the contract costs being ineligible for federal or state reimbursement. [Exhibit 10-B: Suggested Consultant Evaluation Sheet](#) is a recommended evaluation sheet with criteria and rating points for A&E consultants, where cost is not used as a rating factor. This format is not mandatory, but it is recommended in the interest of developing consistency among the hundreds of agencies and

consultants operating in the State. The LPA should consult with the DLAE before making major changes to the suggested approach.

Develop Schedule for Consultant Selection

Before a contract is advertised, the Contract Administrator completes a contract procurement schedule including key dates for consultant selection activities. The Contract Administrator should confirm target dates with all selection committee members before completing the schedule.

Prepare RFQ

As a minimum, the RFQ generally includes the following:

- General description of the services or project(s);
- Scope of work;
- Schedule of work (including contract begin and end dates);
- Method of payment, and cost proposal requirements. The cost proposal is submitted in a separate sealed envelope. See sample cost proposals at the DLA Consultant Selection and Procurement [website](#);
- Contract audit and review process requirements (see [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#));
- Statement of Qualification (SOQ) format and required content to be submitted;
- Method and criteria and weights for selection;
- A DBE contract goal is specified in the solicitation (see [Exhibit 10-I: Notice to Proposers DBE Information](#)), if a federal-aid contract;
- Consultants acting in a management support role requirements [Exhibit 10-U: Consultant in Management Support Role Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement](#); Protest procedures and dispute resolution process per 2 CFR 200.318(k) and 23 CFR 172.5(c)(18).

The RFQ specifies the content of the SOQ, the number of copies required, due date, mailing address, and a physical address where the submittals may be hand-delivered if different from the mailing address. Two to four weeks is usually allowed between the time the RFQ is published and time that SOQs must be submitted. More time may be required for complex contracts or scope of work.

Items typically required in a statement of qualification include:

- Qualifications of key personnel (including consultant project manager) proposed for the contract. Key team members identified in the original proposal/cost proposal must not change (be different than) in the executed contract;
- Staff resumes;
- Related projects that key personnel have worked on;
- Qualifications/experience of the firm;
- Organizational chart;

- Forecast or Schedule of work;
- Consultant DBE Commitment document, see [Exhibit 10-O1: Consultant Proposal DBE Commitment](#);
- References.

Financial Management and Accounting System Requirements

The LPA must ensure that Consultant contract solicitation and advertising documents (RFQs) clearly specify that contracts must not be awarded to a consultant without an adequate financial management and accounting system as required by 48 CFR 16.301-3, 2 CFR 200, and 48 CFR 31. The LPA must ensure the selected consultants have adequate financial management systems as required by the applicable federal regulations.

Advertise for Consultants

The solicitation process for consultant services must be by public advertisement or any other public forum or method that assures qualified in-state and out-of-state consultants are given a fair opportunity to be considered for award of contract. The RFQ must contain sufficient project work information, so that interested consultants can submit an appropriate SOQ.

Advertisements for RFQ may take one of two approaches. The most common is an advertisement or publication of the RFQ in a major newspaper of general circulation, technical publication of widespread circulation, professional associations and societies, recognized DBE organizations, web hosting or clearing houses known for posting contract solicitations such as Bid Sync, PlanetBids, or posting the RFQ on other widely used websites. To document website postings, the LPA should retain copies of screen shots displaying the posted begin/end dates.

In the second approach, the LPA advertises the availability of the RFQ in a major newspaper of general circulation, technical publications of widespread circulation, professional associations and societies, recognized DBE organizations, or through a web hosting or clearing houses known for posting contract solicitations such as BidSync or PlanetBids, and requests that interested consultants send a letter of interest to the LPA for the RFQ. The RFQs must then be sent to those firms who indicated interest in the RFQ. In some cases, it may be desirable to advertise nationwide for a particular project or service. This approach provides a registry for firms who received the RFQ and therefore facilitates the broadcast of any revisions or addenda to the RFQ, if necessary.

Issue/Publish RFQ

The LPA must publish the RFQ online and also issue the RFQ to all consultants responding to newspaper advertisement. The LPA must keep a record of all consultants that have downloaded the RFQ online as well as those receiving an RFQ through other means, to ensure that any inquiry responses, addendums, or amendments to the RFQ are given to all consultants that received the RFQ.

Receive/Evaluate Statements of Qualifications and Develop Short List

The first step in the evaluation process is to determine that each SOQ contains all forms and other information required by the RFQ. Otherwise, the submittals may be considered nonresponsive and rejected without evaluation. Late submittals, submittals to the wrong location, and submittals with inadequate copies are considered nonresponsive and must be rejected. Submittal of additional information after the due date must not be allowed.

Documentation of when each proposal was received must be maintained in the project files. Copies of date stamped envelope covers or box tops are recommended.

Minimum of three proposals must be received and evaluated. If only two proposals are received, a justification must be documented to proceed with the procurement. If only one proposal is received, a Non-Competitive process must be justified, and an [Exhibit 12-F: Cost Effectiveness / Public Interest Finding / A&E Noncompetitive](#) must be documented and signed by the DLAE. In either case, the re-advertisement of the RFP should be considered as an option.

The consultant selection committee reviews the submitted SOQ according to the published evaluation criteria and weighting factors. The committee makes an independent random check of one or more of the consultant's references. This check applies to major subconsultants also. The committee establishes a short list of consultants who are considered to be best qualified to perform the contract work. The short list includes enough qualified consultants to ensure that at least three consultants are interviewed.

Notify Consultants of Short List

All consultants that submitted an SOQ must be notified of the results of the review. The notification also identifies those consultants (short list) that will be requested to attend interviews if interviews were an option in the solicitation. Most consultants will request information as to why they were not placed on the short list. Therefore, the selection committee should keep notes why a particular consultant was not selected for the short list. When a consultant requests a debriefing, the reasons given for not being selected must be objective reasons. Consultants should not be compared with each other during the debriefing. Normally, the Contract Administrator does the debriefing; however, any member of the selection committee may be designated to do the debriefing.

Interview Top-Ranked Consultants

Each consultant to be interviewed is given a copy of the draft of the proposed contract, defining the detailed scope of work, and/or description of required services, and other information. This should be sent with the initial notification of the interview.

Between the time of the notification of the short list and interviews, the LPA may answer any questions concerning the scope of work to be contracted out, if not done earlier during the solicitation. In addition, the LPA may conduct additional reference checks for each consultant to be interviewed. Consultants should submit their questions about the RFQ and receive their answers from the LPA in writing. It is required that all consultants on the short list receive the questions and answers and are given the same information.

The committee should evaluate reference checks and other information that is gathered independently. Reference checks must be completed, and other information gathered before the interviews are conducted. If necessary, the results of the reference checks and other information may be discussed with the consultant at the interview.

Interviews are to be structured and conducted in a formal manner. Each consultant must be allowed the opportunity to make a presentation if desired; however, a time limit should be specified. Interview questions are prepared in advance.

Two types of questions may be asked:

- Questions that are to be asked of all competing consultants, and

- Questions relating to each specific consultant, based upon the reference checks, and the strengths and weaknesses identified during evaluation of the SOQ

The agency can request competing consultants to bring additional information or examples of their work to the interviews; if the additional information facilitates the interview or evaluation process. Additional information requested should be kept at a minimum, that is, only information required to select the most qualified consultant for the contract. The selection committee or LPA must not gather additional information concerning the consultants after the interviews are completed.

Develop Final Ranking and Notify Consultants of Results

All consultants interviewed must be informed about the final ranking of consultants. It is important that all competing consultants receive the same information.

Most consultants will request information as to why they were not selected as the most qualified. Therefore, the selection committee should keep notes as to why a particular consultant was not selected. When a consultant requests debriefing, the reasons for not being selected must be objective. Consultants should not be compared with each other or provided with information about other consultants during the debriefing.

Normally, the Contract Administrator does the debriefing; however, any member of the selection committee may be designated to do the debriefing. The next two sections provide guidance when the RFQ is solicited for specialized services and additional information is required prior to cost negotiations with consultant. For on-call contracts, skip the next two sections and begin Negotiation phase.

Conduct Scoping Meeting

The Contract Administrator should meet with the first-ranked consultant's project manager to review the project, and to ensure that the consultant has a complete understanding of the work that is required. The consultant is shown as much material as is available regarding the project. Any technical questions regarding the project are answered for the consultant.

Request Cost Proposal

The first-ranked consultant is asked to provide a cost proposal to perform the work described in the draft contract and discussed at the scoping meeting. The work is to be performed according to the conditions described in the draft contract using the payment method described therein. Alternatively, if time is of the essence and it can be justified, sealed cost proposals may be requested from all of the consultants on the short list.

If the contract involves more than one project, the consultant must provide a separate cost proposal for each project in addition to a summary cost proposal for the total contract. If the contract involves milestones, the consultant must furnish a separate cost proposal for each milestone with a summary cost proposal for the total costs. If the contract involves subconsultants, the prime consultant must include a separate cost proposal for each subconsultant. Each subconsultant's cost proposal must follow the same format as the prime consultant's cost proposal.

Negotiate Contract with Top-Ranked Consultant

Cost proposals (for both prime consultant and all subconsultants), and contract audit and review documents such as Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System and Financial Document Review Request forms, whichever applicable (see [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#)), will be submitted in a separate sealed envelope. Typically, the cost proposals are submitted by the short-listed consultants only, at time of interview. However, if time is of the essence and it can be justified, or if no interviews are planned, the cost proposal can be requested from all consultants with their statements of qualification.

After the top-ranked consultant submits a sealed cost proposal, the LPA reviews the cost proposal and compares it with the LPA's confidential detailed independent cost estimate and enters into negotiations. The goal of negotiation is to agree on a final contract that delivers to the LPA the services or products required at a fair and reasonable cost.

Negotiations should commence with the most qualified consultant. If agreement on a fair and reasonable price cannot be reached, negotiations should then be formally terminated. Negotiations then proceed to the next most qualified consultant, and so on. Each consultant's cost proposal must remain sealed until negotiations commence with that particular consultant.

At the completion of successful cost negotiations, all remaining sealed envelopes containing cost proposals must be returned to consultants.

Cost proposals in electronic form must be submitted separately from the RFQ and contained in a secure database that is inaccessible to the members involved in the A&E consultant contract procurement process. Only the cost proposal of the most qualified consultant will be requested to be sent to the members. Cost proposals of unsuccessful consultants are confidential and must not be opened by the LPA or any private entity that the LPA uses to store the cost proposals. Any concealed cost proposals of the unsuccessful consultants must be returned unopened or properly disposed of by permanently deleting the cost proposals in accordance with LPA's written policies and procedures.

The independent cost estimate, developed by the LPA in advance of requesting a cost proposal from the top-ranked consultant, is an important basis and tool for negotiations or terminating unsuccessful negotiations with the most qualified consultant. Items necessary for the independent cost estimate include, hours/detailed work, direct labor costs, indirect labor costs, other direct costs, and profit/fee. Agencies must retain documentation of how the cost estimate was developed. It can be revised, if needed, for use in negotiations with the next most qualified consultant.

A contract audit and review may be required (see [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#) earlier in this chapter). LPA Contract Administrator is responsible for the submittal of all required documentations to Caltrans IOAI in a timely fashion, including all documents for a Financial Review, if applicable. Caltrans IOAI will not proceed with a Financial Review until all required documentation is completed correctly and submitted. Negotiations may be completed after receipt of the Caltrans IOAI Financial Review Letter. An indirect cost audit may be performed within the record retention period of the contract.

The items typically negotiated include:

- Work plan;
- Staffing plan;

- Schedule (including contract begin and end dates);
- Products to be delivered;
- Classification, wage rates, and experience level of personnel to be assigned;
- Cost items, payments, and fee. Fee is required to be negotiated as a separate element.

The consultant's ICR is not a negotiable item. A lower rate cannot be negotiated by the LPA. For on-call contracts, typically a price agreement is reached based on specific rate of compensation for the term of the contract. The subsequent task orders (or mini agreements for individual project work) is negotiated based on cost plus fee, or lump sum, which is derived from the wage rates agreed upon earlier for the on-call contract.

Before executing the consultant contract, the LPA must review the contract to ensure that all federal and state requirements have been met, and receive Caltrans IOAI's Financial Review acceptance letter, if applicable.

Prior to contract award, or after contract award but no later than the first invoice, the LPA must submit a completed A&E Consultant Contract form for all new federal-funded A&E consultant contracts using the A&E Consultant Contract database at <https://dla.dot.ca.gov/fmi/webd/AE%20Consultant%20Contract%20Form> (Firefox or Chrome browser).

If there are any changes to the contract after submittal of the A&E Consultant Contract form, refer to [Section 10.1.8: Contract Amendments](#) of this chapter.

10.1.7 Consultant Selection Using the Two-Step RFQ/RFP Method

Combined RFQ and RFP

Selecting consultants using the Two-Step RFQ/RFP method requires combining certain steps from each of the other two methods previously described. The consultants are rated based upon both their qualifications and their technical proposals. This procurement procedure involves a two-step process with issuance of a request for qualifications (RFQ) whereby responding consultants are evaluated and ranked based on qualifications and a request for proposal (RFP) is then provided to three or more of the most highly qualified consultants. The two-step method leads to an executed project specific contract.

A different process may also be used that includes assessing minimum qualifications of consultants to perform services under general work categories or areas of expertise through a pre-qualification process whereby annual statements of qualifications and performance data are encouraged. These consultants are not ranked, and an RFP must be submitted to the entire list for evaluation and consideration. Regardless of any process utilized for pre-qualification of consultants or for an initial assessment of a consultant's qualifications under a RFQ, a RFP specific to the project, task, or service is required for evaluation of a consultant's specific technical approach and qualifications.

The initial steps in the Two-Step RFQ/RFP method (up to the development and notification of the short list) are similar to the steps followed when using the One-Step RFQ method. At this point, the consultants from the short list are issued an additional RFP. The remaining steps are the same as the later steps followed in the One-Step RFP method. Because it is a combination of the One-Step RFQ and One-Step RFP methods, this method of consultant selection requires

more work and time than the other two methods. Consequently, the Two-Step RFQ/RFP method is recommended for use only when the scope of work is not clearly known, very complex, or unusual.

The Two-Step RFQ/RFP is also well-suited for procuring multiple on-call contracts through a single solicitation (see [Section 10.1.2 Determine Type of Contract](#)). The outcome of the first step RFQ will be multiple contracts, or on-call list of consultants. For multiple on-call contracts, project work will be procured through subsequent competition or mini-RFPs amongst the on-call consultants.

LPAs may also use the Two-Step RFQ/RFP method to:

1. Develop and maintain a pre-qualified file/list of consultant firms by specific work categories or areas of expertise. This list includes all consultants that meet the minimum published pass/fail requirements. The pre-qualified list can be updated annually or at least every two years and must be maintained by the agency. This list has not gone through the evaluation process.
2. Create a short list of evaluated and ranked consultants that leads to executed contracts

Because it is a combination of the One-Step RFQ and One-Step RFP methods, the Two-Step RFQ/RFP method of consultant selection requires more work and time than the other two methods. Consequently, the combined RFQ/RFP method is recommended for use when the scope of work is very complex or unusual.

Categorize Work

Descriptions of the categories of work, deliverables, and the minimum qualification standards for each category must be clearly identified.

The LPA may prequalify consulting firms in the following (or more) categories:

- Roadway Design
- Bridge Design
- Bridge Inspection
- Traffic Engineering
- Environmental Services
- Roadway Construction Inspection and Administration
- Landscape Architecture
- Land Surveying
- Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)
- Federal-aid Highway Project Development Support Services

Establish Minimum Qualifications

In an effort to ensure quality performance and results, a consultant should be required to meet certain minimum qualifications to be eligible for consideration in the pre-qualification process.

General criteria guidelines should be established for consultant selection for a pre-qualified list. The criteria may be established by an individual or a panel of subject matter experts for the specific task of developing the criteria. Some agencies also establish appropriate weights for

each criterion. It may be necessary to modify the criteria to fit specific cases. When a RFQ is published, it should state the criteria that will be used in the selection process.

Criteria for evaluating statements of qualifications, may include but are not limited to:

- Special expertise and experience of the firm's key employees
- Proposed staffing (include number of licensed and specialized staff) for the project and previous experience of those identified
- Experience of the firm and their personnel on previous projects similar to the one under consideration
- Consultant DBE Commitment document (see [Exhibit 10-O1: Consultant Proposal DBE Commitment](#))
- Professional references by the firm with the LPA
- Understanding of the project by the firm as demonstrated by their approach to organizing and management of the work
- Current workload of the firm and their ability to meet the proposed project schedule
- Quality of previous performance by the firm with the LPA
- Use of subconsultants to accomplish work on the project
- Equipment the firm has available and proposes to use as compatibility with Computer-Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) and other equipment proposed to be used in accomplishing the work
- Familiarity with federal, state, and local codes, requirements, standards, and procedure
- Examples of minimum qualifications for work categories above are provided here based on Caltrans best practices

Issue RFQ

The need for services of a consulting firm may be advertised in appropriate national, state, and local publications and web sites. Notices can also be sent to firms known to be qualified to do specific work, to professional societies, and to recognized Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) organizations. The advertisements and notices seek statements of interest and qualifications from consultants who are interested in the project. The DBE goal is established at the master on-call contract and included in the solicitation document.

The SOQ should list consulting firm details, names of principals, office locations, personnel by discipline, project experience and examples, current workload, types of service the firms are qualified to perform, and previous performance. Also, resumes of key persons, specialists, and other associates that may be assigned to the project or projects should be included. This information should be the basis for evaluating and placing a consulting firm on a general pre-qualification list.

Federal regulations require that any procedures related to prequalifying consultants cannot restrict competition.

Pre-qualification of consultants may be allowed as a condition for submitting a technical proposal for a contract only if the period between the date of the issuance of the RFP and the deadline for submitting a technical proposal affords sufficient time to enable a consultant to obtain pre-qualification status.

Another practice is to qualify consultants on a project-by-project basis. This is accomplished for some agencies by advertising or publishing notices in national, state, and local publications for needed services for specific, individual projects. These notices include a precise project location, a defined preliminary scope of services to be performed, a specific schedule within which the work is to be completed, and a list of products and deliverables to be provided by the consultant. Specific project advertisements usually are published when the proposed project is large and complex, in-house resources are not available, special expertise is required, or the objectivity of an outside authority is desired.

Appropriate federal-aid requirements should be complied with on federal-aid projects.

Set-Up Evaluation Process

The first step in the evaluation process is to determine that each SOQ contains all forms, qualifications, and other information required by the RFQ. Otherwise, the submittals may be considered nonresponsive and rejected without evaluation. Documentation of when each SOQ was received must be maintained in the project files. Copies of date stamped envelope covers or box tops are recommended.

If all required information is not provided, a SOQ may be considered nonresponsive and rejected without evaluation. Late submittals, submittals to the wrong location, or submittals with inadequate copies are considered nonresponsive and must be rejected. Submittal of additional information after the due date must not be allowed.

The LPA must establish a process by which SOQs are evaluated and consultants who are deemed meeting the minimum qualifications are accepted and placed on a pre-qualified list. Whether the LPA has a “committee” of experts evaluating the SOQs or individuals responsible for the evaluation, the process must be well-defined, open, and transparent. The pre-qualification process must also allow for consultants to be re-evaluated in cases of denials. The LPA must specify how long the pre-qualified list lasts, not to exceed two years. Federal regulation recommends refreshing the SOQs on an annual basis.

LPA Contract Administrator ensures that all committee members meet the conflict of interest requirements (23 CFR 172.7(b)(4)) by completing and signing a conflict of interest statement prior to selection process initiation. A sample conflict of interest form is provided in [Exhibit 10-T: Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement](#).

Evaluate Qualifications and Add Firm to List

All SOQs received should first be reviewed for completeness. Each response must contain all required forms and any other information requested in the advertisement. The response may be considered incomplete and rejected without further evaluation if all required information is not provided or if the submittal is late.

The qualifications of all responding firms are then reviewed according to established evaluation criteria or factors. The agency then establishes a short list of at least three consultants that are determined to be the most highly qualified to perform the required work. Firms not selected should be notified in writing.

Maintain List

Pre-qualification of a consultant expires in two years. Pre-qualified consultants must renew their pre-qualification status every two years. Firms can apply to be on the list at any time. After a period of two years, firms should re-apply (repeat the process of submitting SOQs) to be on the list. In addition to the required two-year renewal process, the consultant should also be required

to update the firm's organizational structure within one year when there is a corporate/affiliate change, ownership control, type of work expertise, capacity, or any other major change.

If the consultant does not meet the minimum requirements and their SOQ is rejected, the committee must respond to the consultant explaining the reason for their rejection. The consultant is allowed to reapply to be on the list again provided the reasons for rejection are corrected.

The list of qualified firms can be maintained online through the agency's website. Firms can also apply to be on the list through the agency website for ease of operation.

Issue RFP to Pre-qualified Consultants on List

An RFP is sent to the short-listed firms. The RFP should indicate the content of the technical proposal, technical review procedures, anticipated schedule of activities, scope of work, project description, where the technical proposals are to be delivered, the number of copies required, and the due date.

Some agencies receive the technical proposal orally as part of an interview conducted for this purpose. In these cases, written documentation may not be required.

Items typically required in a technical proposal include:

- Work plan
- Organization plan
- Schedule for meeting time frame
- Available computer equipment and programs
- Staffing plan and resumes including subconsultants
- Pre-award audit/financial package information (if deemed appropriate)
- Examples of similar work previously completed
- Subconsultants, DBE, their proposed participation, and other related information

Conduct Proposer's Conference or Answer Written Questions

The LPA may allow for clarification of the RFP by inviting submittal of written questions or by conducting a proposer's conference, or by doing both. The LPA must publish or mail their responses to any written questions to all consultants receiving the RFP. No response should be given to verbal questions. It is important that all competing consultants receive the same information. If a proposer's conference is to be held, the exact time and place must be specified in the RFP. Attendance at a proposer's conference normally is not mandatory. However, consultants not attending the conference do not receive notes from the meeting unless they request the notes.

Receive and Evaluate Technical Proposals

The Contract Administrator must verify that each technical proposal contains all forms and other information required by the RFP. If all required information is not provided, a technical proposal may be considered nonresponsive and rejected without evaluation. Late submittals, submittals to the wrong location, or submittals with inadequate copies are considered nonresponsive and must be rejected. Submittal of additional information after the due date must not be allowed.

Documentation of when each technical proposal was received must be maintained in the project files. Copies of date stamped envelope covers or box tops are recommended.

A consultant selection committee with a minimum of three members is appointed at the beginning of the consultant selection process. The members of the consultant selection committee must evaluate each technical proposal according to the technical criteria listed in the RFP. A minimum of three technical proposals must be received and evaluated.

If only two technical proposals are received, a justification must be documented to proceed with the procurement. If only one technical proposal is received, a Non-Competitive process must be justified, and an [Exhibit 12-F: Cost-Effectiveness / Public Interest Finding / A&E Noncompetitive](#) must be documented. In either case, the re-advertisement of the RFP should be considered as an option.

The committee must also evaluate reference checks and other information gathered independently. Reference checks must be completed, and other information gathered before the interviews are conducted. If necessary, the results of the reference checks or other information may be discussed with the highest ranked qualified consultants at the interviews.

Develop Final Ranking and Notify Consultants of Results

The selection committee discusses and documents the strengths and weaknesses of each technical proposal, interviews the three or more highest ranked consultants (short listed), and develops a final ranking of the highest ranked consultants. All consultants that submitted technical proposals must be informed about the final ranking of consultants. It is important that all competing consultants receive the same information.

Most consultants will request information as to why they were not the highest ranked. Therefore, the selection committee should keep notes as to why a particular consultant was not selected. When a consultant requests debriefing, the reasons for not being selected must be objective reasons. The consultant should not be compared to others and should not be provided with information about other consultants during this debriefing. Normally, the Contract Administrator does the debriefing; however, any member of the selection committee may be designated to do the debriefing.

Request Cost Proposal and Negotiate Contract with Top-Ranked Consultant

The first-ranked consultant is asked to provide a cost proposal to perform the work described in the draft contract and discussed at the scoping meeting. The work is to be performed according to the conditions described in the draft contract using the payment method described therein. Alternatively, if time is of the essence and it can be justified, sealed cost proposals may be requested from all the consultants on the short list.

If the contract involves more than one project, the consultant must provide a separate cost proposal for each project in addition to a summary cost proposal for the total contract. If the contract involves milestones, the consultant must furnish a separate cost proposal for each milestone with a summary cost proposal for the total costs. If the contract involves subconsultants, the prime consultant must include a separate cost proposal for each subconsultant. Each subconsultant's cost proposal must follow the same format as the prime consultant's cost proposal.

Cost proposals (for both prime consultant and all subconsultants) and contract audit and review documents, such as Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System and

Financial Document Review Request forms, whichever applicable (see [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#)), will be submitted in a separate sealed envelope.

After the top-ranked consultant submits a sealed cost proposal, the LPA reviews the cost proposal and enters into negotiations. The goal of negotiation is to agree on a final contract that delivers to the LPA the services or products required at a fair and reasonable cost.

Negotiations should commence with the most qualified consultant. If agreement on a fair and reasonable price cannot be reached, negotiations should then be formally terminated. Negotiations then proceed to the next most qualified consultant, and so on. Each consultant's cost proposal must remain sealed until negotiations commence with that particular consultant. At the completion of successful cost negotiations, all remaining sealed envelopes containing cost proposals must be returned to consultants.

The independent cost estimate, developed by the LPA in advance of requesting a cost proposal from the top-ranked consultant, is an important basis and tool for negotiations or terminating unsuccessful negotiations with the most qualified consultant. Items necessary for the independent cost estimate include, hours/detailed work, direct labor costs, indirect labor costs, other direct costs, and profit/fee. Agencies must retain documentation of how the cost estimate was developed. It can be revised, if needed, for use in negotiations with the next most qualified consultant.

A contract audit and review may be required (see [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#)). The LPA Contract Administrator is responsible for the submittal of all required documentations to Caltrans IOAI in a timely fashion, including all documents for a Conformance Review, if applicable. Negotiations may be completed after receipt of the Caltrans IOAI Conformance Letter. An indirect cost audit may be performed within the record retention period of the contract.

Items typically negotiated include:

- Work plan
- Schedule and deadlines (for deliverables and final duration of contract)
- Products to be delivered
- Classification, wage rates, and experience level of personnel to be assigned
- Other Direct Cost items, and profit or fee

The consultant's ICR is not a negotiable item. A lower rate cannot be negotiated by the LPA.

The LPA and the consultant will agree on the final cost proposal and incorporate into final contract.

Before executing the consultant contract, the LPA must review the contract to ensure that all federal and state requirements have been met.

10.1.8 Completing the Project

Develop the Final Contract

The Contract Administrator requests a revised cost proposal from the consultant after: (1) negotiations have been completed, (2) the LPA and consultant have agreed to a fair and reasonable price, and (3) a letter, if applicable, is released by Caltrans IOAI that accepts, denies, or makes an adjustment to the proposed ICR. The Contract Administrator should review

the revised cost proposal to ensure that all the items and changes discussed during negotiation were included. This revised cost proposal then becomes the final cost proposal and is attached to and made a part of the consultant contract. Sample contract language and format have been included as [Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#).

The Contract Administrator has responsibility to ensure that the final negotiated contract is complete and has verified that all required backup documents have been provided. Copies of the contract are sent to the consultant for signature first.

Review and Approval of Contracts

Proposed contracts for consultant services (including subcontracted work) must be reviewed by the LPA to verify that:

- Compensation is fair and reasonable and includes prevailing wage rates, if applicable;
- Work activities and schedules are consistent with the nature and scope of the project;
- DBE goal [Exhibit 10-O2: Consultant Contract DBE Commitment](#) is included for all contracts regardless of goal;
- Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System (for prime consultants and subconsultants) and Financial Document Review Request forms and all supporting documents, if applicable (contracts at or above \$1 Million), have been submitted to Caltrans IOAI;
- If applicable, adjustment or denial of the ICR identified in the Financial Review Letter have been included in the final cost proposal;
- [A&E Consultant Contract database](#) must be used to ensure that required documentation has been provided;
- A cost proposal must include the costs of materials, direct salaries, payroll additions, other direct costs, indirect costs, fees, and backup calculations.

Before approving a contract for consulting services, the Contract Administrator must be satisfied that the consultant's organization:

- Is qualified to perform the services required;
- Is in a position, considering other work commitments, to provide competent and experienced personnel to perform the services in the time allowed;
- Is fully aware of all applicable federal and state laws including implementing regulations, design standards, specifications, previous commitments that must be incorporated into the design of the project, and administrative controls including those of Caltrans and FHWA.
- Has an adequate financial management system as required by the applicable federal regulations.
- Is not disbarred or suspended from state or federally-funded contracts. Per 23 CFR 172.7(b)(3) "A contracting agency shall verify suspension and debarment actions and eligibility status of consultants and subconsultants prior to entering into an agreement or contract in accordance with 2 CFR 1200 and 2 CFR 180."

The contract must provide for a defined level of acceptability and a statement to the effect that the consultant may be required to modify its work as necessary; to meet that level of acceptability as defined in the contract. The contract must provide for LPA reviews at appropriate stages during performance of the work, to determine if any changes or other actions are warranted.

The contract must provide that the consultant and subconsultants must maintain all books, documents, papers, accounting records, and other information pertaining to costs incurred. Such materials must be available for inspection and audit by federal, state, and LPA authorized representatives; and copies thereof must be furnished, if requested.

Following final settlement of the contract accounts with the State or FHWA, such records and documents may be archived at the option of the LPA and must be retained for a three-year period after processing of the final voucher by FHWA.

Execute Contract and Issue Notice to Proceed to Consultant

The Contract Administrator sends the consultant a fully executed copy of the contract with an original signature and issues a notice to proceed. Funds may not be used to reimburse the agency for any work or costs incurred before the Authorization to Proceed is issued, or for consultant costs incurred prior to the execution of the consultant contract. All executed on-call contracts must have a begin and end date. All executed project-specific or multiphase contracts must have a begin date and should have an end date prior to the Project End Date. Work performed after the Project End Date is not eligible for reimbursement; see [LAPM Chapter 3: Project Authorization](#). LPA consultant selection and contract execution costs may be reimbursable.

For on-call contracts, a fully executed copy of the contract with original signatures will be sent to the consultant. Each subsequent task order (for individual project) will be accompanied with a copy of the signed task order and a Notice to Proceed, once it is negotiated and approved. Task order expiration dates must not exceed the Master On-call agreement end date.

Administer the Contract

Project work begins as specified in the contract after the notice to proceed is issued to the consultant. Thereafter, the LPA manages and administers the contract to ensure that a complete and acceptable product is received on time, within standards, and within budget and terms of the contract.

Contract administration activities help to ensure that contractual obligations are completed satisfactorily. Generally, these activities include:

- Monitoring project progress and compliance with contract requirements;
- Receiving, reviewing, and assessing reports, plans, and other required products/deliverables;
- Receiving and reviewing state prevailing wages (see Department of Industrial Relations websites below):
 - DIR FAQ website: http://www.dir.ca.gov/OPRL/FAQ_PrevailingWage.html
 - DIR Wage Determination website: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/opri/DPreWageDetermination.htm>

- Reviewing invoices to ensure costs claimed are in accordance to the method of payment and contract cost proposal, approving payments;
- If new consultant personnel are added or substituted, labor rates must be verified prior to approving invoices.
- Record keeping and reporting;
- Controlling costs;
- Identifying changes to the scope of work and preparation of amendments (must ensure that any changes to the scope is within the constraints of the original RFP/RFQ;
- Completing the consultant performance evaluations (see [Exhibit 10-S: Consultant Performance Evaluation](#)).

Substitution of Consultant Personnel and Subconsultants

After contract execution the consultant should not substitute key personnel (project manager and others listed by name in the cost proposal) or subconsultants without prior written approval from the LPA. Refer to [LAPM Chapter 9: Civil Rights & Disadvantaged Business Enterprise](#) and 49 CFR 26 for DBE substitution requirements. To do so can result in the costs being ineligible for federal or state reimbursement. The consultant must request and justify the need for the substitution and obtain approval from the LPA prior to use of a different subconsultant on the contract.

The proposed substituted person must be as qualified as the original, and at the same or lower cost. For engineering types of consultant contracts, the consultant's project manager must be a registered engineer in the State of California.

Invoicing (or Progress Payments)

The frequency and format of the invoices/progress payments are to be determined by the contract. Program Supplement Agreements (see [LAPM Chapter 3: Project Authorization](#)) need to have been prepared prior to any payments being requested. Payments to the consultant are to be in arrears. In other words, the consultant must have actually incurred and paid the costs before invoicing the LPA.

For federal reimbursement of consultant costs on a project, the LPA must submit the following to the DLAE, for each consultant or consulting firm used on the project (failure to do so will result in the consultant's invoices for reimbursement being returned to the agency unprocessed):

- Copy of Executed Consultant contract;
- [Exhibit 10-O1: Consultant Proposal DBE Commitment](#)
- [Exhibit 10-O2: Consultant Contract DBE Commitment](#)
- Copy of issued task order and Exhibit 10-O2 for the task order for on-call contracts.

DLAE must confirm that the LPA has submitted copies of the Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System form (for prime consultant and subconsultants) to Caltrans IOAI and that LPA has submitted the A&E Consultant Contract form to Caltrans.

The LPA is to follow the procedures given in [LAPM Chapter 5: Invoicing](#), to obtain reimbursement of federal or state funds.

Contract Amendments

Contract amendments are required to modify the terms of the original contract for changes such as extra time, added work, or increased costs. Only work within the original advertised scope of services must be added by amendment to the contract. The addition of work outside the original advertised scope will make that work ineligible for federal or state reimbursement (see FHWA's [Q&A](#) for A&E related services).

There is no prescribed format for contract amendments. They may take the form of letter-type agreements meeting the legal requirements of the LPA, clearly outlining the changes and containing a mutually agreed-upon method of compensation. Such agreements must conform to the requirements of this manual with regard to payment.

A consultant contract may be amended at any time prior to the expiration date of the original contract. The most common amendment is to extend the ending date of the contract. All contract amendments must be fully executed before the ending date of the contract by formal amendment. Failure to amend a contract prior to the ending date will make the subsequent costs ineligible for federal and state reimbursement. Task orders are not considered an amendment and therefore not appropriate to extend the terms of the contract.

All contract amendments must be negotiated following the same procedures as the negotiation of the original contract and must be in writing and fully executed by the consultant and LPA before reimbursable work begins on the amendment. For any additional engineering and design related services outside of the scope of work established in the original solicitation, a contracting agency must either procure the series under a new solicitation, perform the work itself using agency staff, or use a different, existing contract under which the services would be within the scope of work. Overruns in the costs of the work must not automatically warrant an increase in the fixed fee portion of a cost-plus-fixed fee reimbursed contract. Permitted changes to the scope of work or duration may warrant consideration for adjustment of the fixed fee portion of cost-plus-fixed fee or lump sum reimbursed contracts. If an emergency exists of such magnitude that a delay cannot be tolerated, the LPA and the consultant may agree on an amendment initiating the work, so that reimbursable work may begin. The initiating amendment is then followed by a final amendment once the full scope of the emergency work is known and agreed to by both parties. In both cases, sufficient funding should be included in the amendments to pay for all work to be performed by the consultant. The final amendment must be executed as quickly as possible. Failure to fully comply with this section may result in the loss of LPA funding. [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#) of this chapter must apply to the entire contract and must be completed prior to execution of the contract amendment. For contracts greater than or equal to \$1 Million, submit the [Financial Document Review Request form](#) to IOAI for all amendments on consultant/subconsultant's name change, amending an ICR, or adding new subconsultant's ICR. ICRs that have not been accepted by IOAI are not eligible for federal or state reimbursement. For contracts with original amounts under \$1 Million but subsequently became greater than or equal to \$1 Million after amendment, IOAI Financial Document Review is not required. If there are any changes to the contract after submittal of the A&E Consultant Contract form, the LPA must submit an amended form to the A&E Consultant Contract [database](#) prior to the first invoice after the contract has been amended. Submission of the A&E Consultant Contract form is not required for non-A&E consultant contracts. All amendments must incorporate any current requirements of the federal regulations including the federal fiscal provisions and submit the A&E Consultant Contract form to the A&E Consultant Contract database prior to the first invoice after the contract has been amended (please use Firefox or Chrome if not supported by your browser).

Performance Evaluation

Pursuant to 23 CFR 172.9(d)(2) agencies are required to prepare an evaluation of the consultant when the project has been completed. The Contract Administrator evaluates the consultant's performance after the consultant's final report has been submitted, and the Contract Administrator has conducted a detailed evaluation with the consultant's project manager. See [Exhibit 10-S: Consultant Performance Evaluation](#) for a suggested format for use by the LPA.

Project Records

Federal-aid Highway Program funding recipients and subrecipients must maintain adequate and readily accessible project performance and financial records, supporting documents, and other records considered pertinent to the grant agreement and in compliance with federal laws and regulations (e.g., 23 USC 112; 40 USC 1101-1104, 23 CFR 172, 48 CFR 31, and 2 CFR 200). These records must be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years following issuance of the final voucher from FHWA (forwarded by Caltrans) and the closure of all other pending matters (2 CFR 200.334).

For audit purposes, project records and documentation must be kept for three (3) years after payment of the final federal or state voucher. Among the records to be retained are as follows (not an all-inclusive list):

- Copies of RFPs and RFQs, changes, addendums, etc. and bidder's list;
- Documentation of DBE participation (including [Exhibit 10-O1: Consultant Proposal DBE Commitment](#), [Exhibit 10-O2: Consultant Contract DBE Commitment](#)), [Exhibit 10-G: Individual A&E Task Order DBE Tracking Sheet](#), [Exhibit 17-F: Final Report – Utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and First-Tier Subcontractors](#) or [Exhibit 17-F1: Final Report-Utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise for A&E On-Call Contracts](#), and [Exhibit 17-O: Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Certification Status Change](#)).
- Solicitation and advertisement records;
- Identification of selection committee members;
- Record of receiving proposals, statement of qualifications;
- Evaluation and ranking records such as original score sheets from all panel members, short list questions, and other documentation (see [Exhibit 10-B: Suggested Consultant Evaluation Sheet](#));
- Independent cost estimate (prepared in advance of requesting a cost proposal from the top-ranked consultant);
- Record of negotiations (to include a separate negotiation of profit in accordance with federal guidelines);
- Financial Review Letter and Cognizant Agency Letter, when applicable;
- CPA-audited ICR Audit Report or Approved State DOT Cognizant Indirect Rate Letter, if any;
- Consultant Certification of Costs and Financial Management (Certification of Indirect Costs and Financial Management System form) for contracts at or above \$1 Million;

- A&E Consultant Audit Request Letter and Checklist (Financial Document Review Request form) for contracts at or above \$1 Million and all supporting documentation.
- Executed consultant contracts, cost proposals, and amendments (see [Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#));
- Contract oversight and progress meeting documents;
- Progress and final payments, and supporting documentation;
- Performance evaluation (see [Exhibit 10-S: Consultant Performance Evaluation](#));
- A&E Consultant Contract form (see [A&E Consultant Contract database](#));
- Accounting records documenting compliance with State and federal administrative requirements;
- Certifications and Conflict of Interest forms ([Exhibit 10-T: Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality Statement](#), all personnel involved in the procurement of the agreement should complete Exhibit 10-T, [Exhibit 10-U: Consultant in Management Support Role Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement](#), and [Exhibit 10-Q: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities](#), as appropriate). Exhibit 10-Q is included in the solicitation and must be completed if the consultant needs to disclose any lobbying activities.

Retention Clauses

At the option of the LPA, a retention clause may be included in the consultant contract. A retention clause in the consultant contract is recommended (see [Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#), Article VIII).

Review of Local Public Agency Actions

Federal-aid or state reimbursement is contingent on meeting the federal or state requirements and can be withdrawn, if these procedures are not followed and documented. The LPA files are to be maintained in a manner to facilitate future FHWA or Caltrans process reviews and audits. As specified in the Review and Approval of Contracts above, the Contract Administrator must review the proposed consultant contract before execution.

The A&E Consultant Contract form is to be completed prior to award, or after contract award but no later than the first invoice. A copy of this form must be retained in the LPA project files.

10.1.9 Miscellaneous Considerations

Agreements with Other Governmental Agencies

Intergovernmental or inter-entity agreements are encouraged if appropriate. If another governmental agency is requested to do work or provide services to an agency, an interagency agreement is needed (2 CFR 200, PCC 10340, and California Government Code 11256).

Small Purchase Contracts

Contracts that are less than \$250,000 are considered small contracts in accordance with federal regulations. However, within the State of California, there is no recognized small purchase procedure and all A&E contracts are procured using qualifications-based selection and not cost. For federal contracts that are less than \$250,000 and are not anticipated to exceed this amount, the agency must use either [Section 10.2: State-Only Funded A&E Contracts](#) or the federal guidance for contracts greater than \$250,000. If the contract is anticipated to exceed \$250,000,

use one of the accepted procurement procedures listed in the previous sections. Small contracts using the simplified acquisition procedure (see Section 10.2: State-Only Funded A&E Contracts) must not exceed \$250,000 or the additional costs are considered not reimbursable. The entire contract could also be considered ineligible by FHWA depending on circumstances. The scope of work, project phases, and contract requirements must not be broken down into smaller components to permit the use of small purchase procedure. DBE requirements apply for all federally-funded projects.

Noncompetitive Negotiated Contracts (Sole-Source)

Procurement by noncompetitive proposals may be used only when the award of a contract is infeasible under sealed bids or competitive proposals (23 CFR 172.7(a)(3)).

FHWA considers these types of contracts as Sole Source contracts and should be used only in very limited circumstances. An Exhibit 12-F prepared by the LPA and approved by Caltrans is required before establishing these services (23 CFR 172.7(a)(3)); also see [Exhibit 12-F: Cost-Effectiveness/Public Interest Finding/A&E Noncompetitive](#).

Conditions under which noncompetitive negotiated contracts may be acceptable include:

- Only one organization is qualified to do the work;
- An emergency exists of such magnitude that cannot permit delay;
- Competition is determined to be inadequate after solicitation of a number of sources.

The LPA must:

- Follow its defined process for noncompetitive negotiation;
- Develop an adequate scope of work, evaluation factors, and cost estimate before solicitation;
- Conduct negotiations to ensure a fair and reasonable cost.

The LPA must carefully document details of the special conditions, obtain Caltrans approval on the [Exhibit 12-F: Cost Effectiveness / Public Interest Finding / A&E Noncompetitive](#) and retain all documents in the project files for future Caltrans' or FHWA's review.

Retaining a Consultant in a Management Support (CMSR) Role

Management support role means performing engineering management services or other services acting on the contracting agency's behalf, which are subject to review and oversight by agency officials, such as a program or project administration role typically performed by the contracting agency and necessary to fulfill the duties imposed by Title 23 of the United States Code, other federal and state laws, and applicable regulations. Other services can include supervising construction including serving as single point of contact, developing and maintaining project document tracking system, establishing project internal communication protocol, performing document control and implementing a quality assurance program.

Management support roles may include, but are not limited to, providing oversight of an element of a highway program, function, or service on behalf of the contracting agency or may involve managing or providing oversight of a project, series of projects, or the work of other consultants and contractors on behalf of the contracting agency. Contracting agency written policies and procedures as specified in 23 CFR 172.5(c) may further define allowable management roles and services a consultant may provide, specific approval responsibilities, and associated controls necessary to ensure compliance with federal requirements.

The LPA may retain a qualified CMSR on its staff in professional capacities for federal-aid projects such as:

- A City Engineer (or equivalent) who manages the engineering unit for the city, providing oversight of a project, series of projects, managing or directing work of other consultants or contractors on behalf of the city.
- A County Engineer (or equivalent) who manages the engineering unit for the county such as duties described above.
- A Project Manager (or equivalent) who manages and oversees a project, series of projects, or the work of other consultants and contractors on behalf of the public agency.
- A Program Manager (or equivalent) who manages and oversees an element of a highway program, function, or service on behalf of the public agency.

However, typically a CMSR is not:

- A consultant engineer performing project-specific design, and/or construction contract administration and construction engineering for the public agency.
- A consultant providing support to administrative duties such as federal authorization process, labor compliance activities, and other management and administrative tasks.

The use of a CMSR should be limited to unique or very unusual situations. These situations require a thorough justification as to why the LPA cannot perform the management. Consultants used in management support roles must be selected using the same procedures as those for other consultants specified in this chapter. [CMSR contracts with local/state funding only do not require FHWA approval. However, if the CMSR is not approved, they may not be used as a local/state match on another activity when the CMSR provides services on a federal-aid project \(i.e., soft match\).](#)

Eligibility for federal reimbursement for a CMSR requires the following:

- Compliance with the selection procedures specified in this chapter;
- Existence of a contract between the LPA and the consultant specifying the LPA engineering services to be performed;
- Written designation by the LPA of the responsibilities and authority of the consultant as an agency engineer;
- For a federal-aid project, completion of [Exhibit 10-T: Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality Statement](#) by all panel members (both consultants and employees) prior to participating in the A&E Selection Panel pertaining to the specific selection process and the firms being considered;
- Selection of consultants for A&E management positions must be by the use of qualification-based selection procedures on an open and competitive basis resulting in a contract with defined beginning and ending dates not to exceed five (5) years;
- For a federal-aid project, the LPA's CMSR must not:
 - Participate in, or exercise authority over the A&E selection process, if that consultant's firm is one of the proposing firms, or subconsultant to a proposing firm;
 - Participate in, or exercise authority over management of work performed by the consultant's firm, or to a consultant's firm of which the LPA consultant firm is a

subconsultant. This would include, but not be limited to, managing or directing the work, approving changes in the schedule, scope, or deliverables, and approving invoices.

- Apply for or receive reimbursement of federal-aid funds for the LPA's federal-aid project if either of the foregoing has occurred. However, reimbursement for the construction contract portion of the project will still be allowed provided all other federal-aid requirements have been met.
- Where benefiting more than a single federal-aid project, allocability of consultant contract costs for services related to a management support role must be distributed consistent with the cost principles applicable to the contracting agency in 23 CFR 172.7(b)(5).

If engineering services for a project are within the scope of the services described in the retained consultant's contract, these services may be performed by the person or firm designated as an agency engineer. If the services are not within the scope, eligibility for federal reimbursement for these services require a new consultant contract to be developed using the selection procedures in this chapter. Retained consultants involved in the preparation of the RFP or RFQ must not be considered in the selection of consultants for the resulting project specific work.

When a CMSR is procured with federal-aid funds, the LPA (subgrantee) must fully comply with the following:

- Subparagraphs of 2 CFR 200.318 maintain a contract administration system and maintain a written code of standards. No employee, officer, or agent of the subgrantee must participate in selection, or in the award or administration of a contract supported by federal funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved.
- Subparagraph of 23 CFR 172.7(b) requires that the LPA must receive approval of the CMSR from FHWA.
- Liability insurance should normally be required from the consultant (errors and omissions, etc.).

For federally-funded projects, LPAs that solicit to hire A&E consultant(s) in a management support role must obtain FHWA approval prior to contract execution.

In order for a contract for a CMSR to be federally eligible, the following are required prior to contract execution:

- The LPA must submit a request for approval via email, the Scope of Work (SOW) and Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy to the Division of Local Assistance-Headquarters (DLA-HQ) at aeoversight@dot.ca.gov, prior to contract advertisement.
- Once the LPA receives FHWA's written response, the LPA may need to revise the documents reflecting FHWA's opinions and can proceed with the RFQ.
- Before award, the LPA must submit the completed [Exhibit 10-U: Consultant in Management Support Role Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement](#) to DLA-HQ at aeoversight@dot.ca.gov. LPA will receive FHWA's approved [Exhibit 10-U](#) via email. FHWA approval required prior to award of consultant contract.

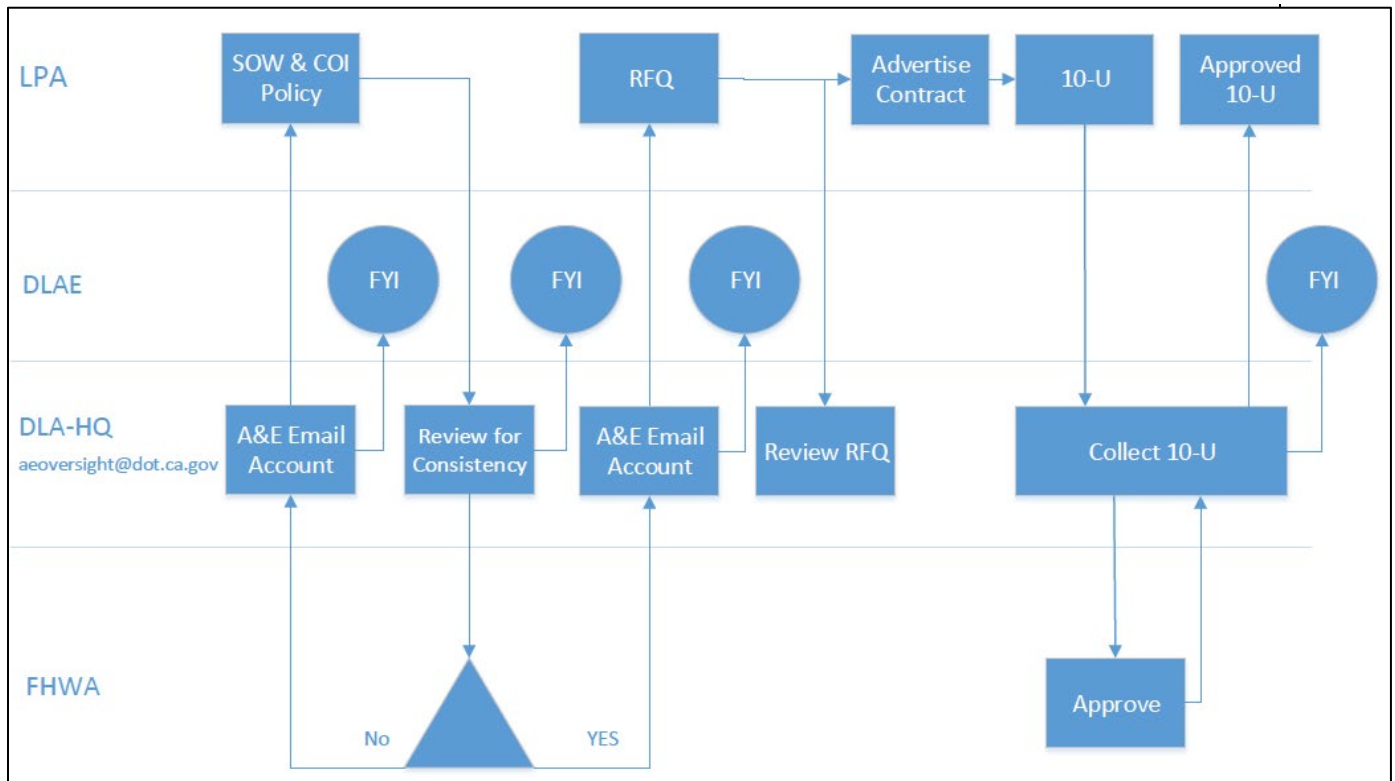


Figure 10-3: Consultant in a Management Support Role Flowchart

Construction Engineering Services

Under federal-aid regulations and state policy, the primary responsibility for general supervision of construction must remain with the LPA. The LPA must also ensure that the work is performed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications, by employing or retaining as a consultant a registered engineer for construction engineering services on the project.

All construction engineering activities performed by a consultant must be under the overall supervision of a full-time employee of the agency who is in responsible charge. These activities may include preparation of contract change orders, construction surveys, foundation investigations, measurement, and computation of quantities, testing of construction materials, checking of shop drawings, preparation of estimates, reports, and other inspection activities necessary to ensure that the construction is being performed in accordance with the plans and specifications. The construction engineering consultant’s contract defines the relative authorities and responsibilities of the full-time employee of the LPA in charge of the project and the consultant’s construction engineering staff.

If a technical inspection consultant is to provide professional assistance to the LPA, a formal consultant contract must be executed which follows this chapter’s requirements. The contract must provide for reviews at appropriate stages during performance of the work to determine if any changes or other actions are warranted; these reviews are to be made by the LPA.

10.1.10 Program Management

According to 23 CFR 172.5, LPAs are required to adopt written policies and procedures prescribed by Caltrans. As such, the LPA must adopt LAPM Chapter 10: Consultant Selection, which contain the A&E policies and procedures.

To meet this requirement, LPAs are required to email and provide one of the following documents to the DLA Office of Guidance and Oversight (OGO) at aeoversight@dot.ca.gov:

1. A Board Resolution showing that the LPA is adopting Caltrans LAPM Chapter 10; OR
2. An official letter signed by the LPA's Public Works Director or equivalent manager addressed to the DLA OGO Office Chief, stating that the agency is adopting Caltrans LAPM Chapter 10

The DLA Consultant Selection and Procurement [website](#) includes an example of the adoption [resolution](#) and [letter](#). These examples are for reference only; the appropriate language to be used is determined by the individual agency.

LPAs are responsible for providing all resources necessary for the procurement, management, and administration of A&E consultant contracts including subcontracts. Ensuring consultant costs billed are allowable in accordance with the federal cost principles and consistent with the contract terms as well as the acceptability and progress of the consultant's work;

- Monitoring the consultant's work and compliance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of the contract;
- Preparing a consultant's performance evaluation when services are completed and using such performance data in future evaluation and ranking of consultant to provide similar services;
- Closing-out a contract;
- Retaining supporting programmatic and contract records, as specified in 2 CFR 200.334 and the requirements of this part;
- Determining the extent to which the consultant, which is responsible for the professional quality, technical accuracy, and coordination of services, may be reasonably liable for costs resulting from errors and omissions in the work furnished under its contract;
- Assessing administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances where consultants violate or breach contract terms and conditions, and providing for such sanctions and penalties as may be appropriate; and
- Resolving disputes in the procurement, management, and administration of engineering and design related consultant services.

10.1.11 References

2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirement, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1>

2 CFR Part 215 Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2013-title2-vol1/CFR-2013-title2-vol1-part215/context>

- 23 U.S.C.112 Letting of Contracts
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2021-title23/USCODE-2021-title23-chap1-sec112/context>
- 23 CFR Part 172 Procurement, Management, and Administration of Engineering and Design Related Services
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-23/chapter-1/subchapter-B/part-172>
- 40 U.S.C. Chapter 11 Brooks Act
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2021-title40/USCODE-2021-title40-subtitle-chap11/context>
- 41 CFR Public Contracts and Property Management
http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title41/41tab_02.tpl
- 41 U.S.C. Public Contracts
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2020-title41/context>
- 48 CFR Part 15 – Contract By Negotiation
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-48/chapter-1/subchapter-C/part-15>
- 48 CFR Part 31 – Contract Cost Principles and Procedures
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-48/chapter-1/subchapter-E/part-31>
- 48 CFR Part 16 – Types of Contracts
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-48/chapter-1/subchapter-C/part-16>
- 48 CFR 27, Subpart 27.3 – Patent Rights under Government Contracts
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-48/chapter-1/subchapter-E/part-27/subpart-27.3>
- 48 CFR 31.201-3 – Determining Reasonableness
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-48/chapter-1/subchapter-E/part-31/subpart-31.2/section-31.201-3>
- 48 CFR, Chapter 99 - Cost Accounting Standards Board, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-48/chapter-99>
- 49 CFR Part 26 Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in Department of Transportation Financial Assistance Programs
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-A/part-26>
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Uniform Audit and Accounting Guide
<https://transportation.org/audit/>
- Caltrans Division of Procurement and Contracts Website
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dpac/index.html>
- California Labor Code, Section 1775
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=1775
- California Government Code Sections 4525 through 4529.5
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=5.&title=1.&part=&chapter=10.&article=

California Government Code Sections 4529.10 through 4529.20

https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=5.&title=1.&part=&chapter=10.1.&article=

Government Auditing Standards (GAS) issued by the United States Government Accountability Office

<http://www.gao.gov/yellowbook/overview>

Standard Environmental Reference (SER)

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/>

10.2 STATE-ONLY FUNDED A&E CONTRACTS

10.2.1 General

LPAs are required to follow all applicable local and state regulations including those listed in LAPM Chapter 10 in accordance with their State Master Agreement. Although the requirements listed in this section are minimum requirements, the LPA must use good engineering judgment and best practices to document their processes and procedures when procuring A&E contracts utilizing qualifications-based selections. LPAs using local funds to procure an A&E Consultant on a state-only funded project and will not seek state reimbursement for consultant cost may choose not to follow the selection and contracting procedures detailed in Section 10.2: State-Only Funded A&E Contracts of this chapter.

All consultants must comply with 48 CFR 31: Contract Cost Principles and Procedures. Also, consultants and LPAs must comply with 2 CFR 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, excluding sections 200.318-200.326 Procurement Standards.

Agency state-only funded (SOF) agreements must contain the required federal fiscal provisions from 2 CFR 200 in all Division of Local Assistance funded agreements. [Exhibit 10-R: A&E Boilerplate Agreement Language](#) contains 2 CFR 200 requirements and may also be used in SOF agreements. Depending upon the scope of work, the required contract provisions may need to include the California State Prevailing Wages.

All proposed A&E contracts and supporting documents (including state-only funded) are subject to audit or review by Caltrans' Independent Office of Independent Office of Audits and Investigations (IOAI), other state audit organizations, or the federal government and required to follow [Section 10.1.3 A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#).

CMSR contracts with local/state funding only do not require FHWA approval. However, if they are not approved, they may not be used as a local/state match on another activity when the CMSR provides services on a federal-aid project (i.e., soft match). Refer to Section 10.1.9 Retaining a Consultant in a Management Support Role (CMSR).

DBE contract goals are not required for state-only funded contracts.

This guidance is for contracts utilizing state funds only. If any federal funds are added or reimbursed, the federal process must be followed.

Non-A&E consultant contracts reference [Section 10.3: Non-A&E Contracts](#).

Reference: California Government Code Title 1, Division 5, Chapter 10, Contracts with Private Architects, Engineering, Land Surveying, and Construction Project Management Firms §4525-4529.5.

10.2.2 Definition of A&E

Architectural, landscape architectural, engineering, environmental, and land surveying services includes those professional services of an architectural, landscape architectural, engineering, environmental, or land surveying nature as well as incidental services that members of these professions and those in their employ may logically or justifiably perform.

Construction project management means those services provided by a licensed architect, registered engineer, or licensed general contractor. Any individual or firm proposing to provide construction project management services must provide evidence that the individual or firm and its personnel carrying out onsite responsibilities have expertise and experience in construction project design review and evaluation, construction mobilization and supervision, bid evaluation, project scheduling, cost-benefit analysis, claims review and negotiation, and general management and administration of a construction project.

Environmental services mean those services performed in connection with project development and permit processing in order to comply with federal and state environmental laws.

Reference: California Government Code §4525-4529.5 and 4529.10-4529.20

10.2.3 Minimum Audit Requirements

A. Written Procedures

LPAs must follow the minimum requirements listed below in addition to any local laws and regulations.

California Government Code §4526

B. Conflict of Interest

The LPA must develop and maintain a written code of conduct governing the performance of its employees engaged in the award and administration of state-funded contracts, including the prevention of conflicts of interest.

California Government Code §4526, §1090, §4529.12

C. Records

LPAs must keep adequate records of all contracts including the procurement, project management, accounting, and financial administration.

California Government Code §4529.14, §4006

D. Full & Open Competition

All A&E contracts must be procured through a qualifications-based selection utilizing open and fair competition. Evaluate at least three consultants using published evaluation criteria and rank these firms in order of preference. If less than three consultants are evaluated, provide justification for agency file.

California Government Code §4526, §4527, §4529.12

E. Selection Basis

Selection of a firm must be based on qualifications and the order of ranked preference.

California Government Code §4526, §4527

F. Publication

Solicitations for A&E contracts must be in a manner that is open and competitive.

California Government Code §4527

G. Solicitation

The solicitations must include published evaluation criteria to rank in order of preference. Clearly define expectations in the solicitation in order to evaluate firms.

California Government Code §4527

H. Cost Comparison

An independent cost comparison to the consultant's cost proposal must be done in order to ensure the contract is negotiated at a fair and reasonable price.

California Government Code §4528

I. Negotiations

Negotiations must be documented to verify a fair and reasonable contract has been executed using public funds.

California Government Code §4528

J. Audit and Review Process

A&E contracts procured by public agencies must be subject to standard accounting practices and may require financial and performance audits. All LPAs must follow the Audit and Review Process as stated in [Section 10.1.3: A&E Consultant Audit and Review Process](#).

California Government Code §4529.14, 2 CFR 200

K. A&E Consultant Contract Form

The A&E Consultant Contract form must be completed and submitted in the A&E Consultant Contract database at <https://dla.dot.ca.gov/fmi/webd/AE%20Consultant%20Contract%20Form> (Firefox or Chrome browser) prior to contract award, or after contract award but no later than the first invoice for all new state-only funded A&E consultant contracts.

If there are any changes requiring an amendment to the contract after submittal of the A&E Consultant Contract form, the LPA must submit an updated form to the A&E Consultant Contract [database](#) prior to the first invoice after the contract has been amended. Submission of the A&E Consultant Contract form is not required for non-A&E consultant contracts.

10.2.4 References

California Government Code Section 1090

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=1090.

California Government Code Section 4006

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=4006.

California Government Code Section 4525

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=4525.

California Government Code Section 4526

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=4526.

California Government Code Section 4527

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=4527.

California Government Code Section 4528

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=4528.

California Government Code Section 4529.5

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=4529.5.

California Government Code Section 4529.12

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=4529.12.

California Government Code Section 4529.14

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=4529.14.

California Government Code Section 4529.20

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=4529.20.

10.3 NON-A&E CONTRACTS

Scope

This section covers the procurement requirements for the services that are not included in [Section 10.1 Federally-Funded A&E Contracts](#) and [Section 10.2 State-Only Funded A&E Contracts](#). This guidance is for contracts utilizing federal-aid funds and state funds. Federal regulations refer to state and local regulations for non-A&E type contracts. Although LPAs are required to follow 2 CFR 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards for all contracts, the Procurement Standards section 200.318-200.326 is exempt. The guidance in this section follows the established regulations in the California Public Contract Code (PCC). Depending upon the scope of work, the required contract provisions may need to include the California State Prevailing Wages.

LPA must designate one person within the LPA as a contract manager. A contract manager must be a full-time, public employee of the contracting agency. The contract manager must have knowledge of legal and contractual arrangements (PCC 10348.5).

LPAs using local funds to procure non-A&E consultants on a federal-aid funded or state-only funded project and will not seek federal or state reimbursement for consultant costs may choose not to follow the selection and contracting procedures detailed in Section 10.3: Non-A&E Contracts of this chapter.

Determining Non-A&E

After identifying that there is a need for consulting services, the LPA must determine that the services needed are more of a technical nature and involve minimal professional judgement and that requiring a cost proposal would be in the public's best interest. These type of consultant services that are not directly related to a highway construction project or that are not included in the definition of engineering and design-related services are considered non-A&E. The services

must not be included in [Section 10.1.1: Definition of Architectural and Engineering Consultant](#) and [10.2.2: Definition of A&E](#).

The determining factor is whether the services being procured are related to a specific construction project and whether the services require work to be performed, provided by, or under the direction of a registered engineer or architect.

Example of Determining Non-A&E

Material testing has been requested to ensure quality assurance on a construction project. The service includes only performing the material test and providing material test data. Although the service is related to a construction project, the overall service did not provide an evaluation or a discipline report. In this example, the LPA can determine that the service provided is more of a technical nature and is therefore a non-A&E service.

The following is a list of the more common non-A&E services:

- Right-of-Way Appraisal
- Right-of Way acquisition activities
- Conducting public outreach during environmental clearance or construction
- Active Transportation Program educational and outreach activities
- Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)
- Non-Infrastructure
- Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP) associated with Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)-funded projects
- Traffic Counts
- Speed Surveys

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Projects

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) means electronic, communications, or information processing used singly or in combination to improve the efficiency or safety of a surface transportation system. ITS projects are those that in whole or in part, fund the acquisition of technologies or systems of technologies that provide significant contributions to the provision of one or more ITS user services as defined in the National ITS Architecture.

The federal-aid procurement regulations identify three possible contract procurement procedures for ITS projects including engineering and design related services (A&E), construction, and non-engineering/non-architectural (non-A&E).

If ITS projects include physical installation of field devices and/or communications infrastructure, such as new traffic signals, new controller cabinets, changeable message signs, radio and computers, vehicle detectors, and conduits for cabling in the roadway, then that work and required equipment usually meets the definition of construction. The construction contract must be procured based on competitive bidding. If the ITS project involves software development, system integration, hiring engineers, and specialists for ITS design and installation support, inspection, design documentation, training and deployment, it may be considered an engineering and design services contract and the contract must be procured as an A&E consultant contract. If the scope of work is unclear as to whether it is an A&E type of work, contact aeoversight@dot.ca.gov for assistance.

However, if an ITS project does not meet either the definition of construction or engineering and design services, then the contract may be considered to be a non-A&E consultant contract.

Examples of non-A&E consultant contracts are:

- The procurement of hardware and software associated with incident management system;
- Software systems for arterial and freeway management systems;
- Operating the 511 traveler information service;
- Nonprofessional services for system support such as independent validation and verification, testing and specification development;

For more information regarding Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Program procurement requirements, refer to [LAPG Chapter 13: Intelligent Transportation Systems \(ITS\) Program](#).

Non-Infrastructure Projects

Non-infrastructure (NI) projects are those transportation-related projects that do not involve either engineering design, Right-of-Way acquisition (for additional guidance refer to [LAPM Chapter 13: Right of Way](#)), or the eventual physical construction of transportation facilities.

Procurement of non-A&E consultant contracts associated with non-infrastructure projects must follow Non-A&E procurement procedures described in this chapter. For more information on NI projects, refer to [LAPM Chapter 3: Project Authorization](#).

Governing Regulations and Codes for Non-A&E

When procuring non-A&E services with federal-aid funds, LPAs must comply with 2 CFR 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, excluding sections 200.318-200.326 Procurement Standards. LPAs must follow the same policies and procedures that the State uses for procurement with its non-federal funds. When procuring non-A&E services with federal-aid and state-only funds, the governing procurement code is California Public Contract Code 10335-10381.

Procurement of Non-A&E Consultant Contracts

All non-A&E procurements contracts must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with federal and state standards. LPA must meet the code of conduct governing the performance of its employees engaged in the award and administration of federal-aid and state-funded contracts, including the preventions of conflict of interest in PCC 10410.

The following are the fundamental rules when procuring a non-A&E consultant contract.

1. The request for proposal (RFP) must not limit the competition directly or indirectly to any one consultant. The RFP must be publicized, and all evaluation factors and their relative importance identified (PCC 10339).
2. Splitting a single transaction into a series of transactions for the purpose of evading the procurement requirements is not allowed (PCC 10329).
3. LPA must secure at least three competitive proposals for each contract (PCC 10340). When receiving less than three proposals, refer to the [Cost-Effective/Public Interest Finding](#) in this section as an alternative to re-advertisement.

4. No proposals must be considered which have not been received at the place, and prior to the closing time as stated in the RFP (PCC 10344(a)).
5. LPA must have a written procedure for evaluating proposals (PCC 10344).

RFP Basic Requirements

There are two general types of consulting service contract solicitations:

- A. Request for Proposal using Cost only
- B. Request for Proposal using Cost and Qualifications

The LPA must include the following in the request for proposal:

- A. A clear, precise description of the work to be performed or services to be provided.
- B. Description of the format that proposals must follow and the elements they must contain.
- C. The standards the agency will use in evaluating proposals. This includes qualifications and certifications if applicable.
- D. The date the proposals are due.
- E. The procurement schedule that the LPA will follow in reviewing and evaluating the proposals.

(PCC 10344)

Additional Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Additional Requirements for Request for Proposal using Cost only

- A. LPA must require consultants to submit their proposals and cost in a separate, sealed envelope.
- B. LPA must determine those that meet the format requirements and the standards specified in the request for proposal.
- C. The sealed envelopes containing the price and cost information for those proposals that meet the format requirements and standards must then be publicly opened and read.
- D. Contract must be awarded to the lowest responsible consultant meeting the standards.

(PCC 10344(b))

Additional Requirements for Request for Proposal using Cost and Qualifications

- A. LPA must include in the proposal the description of the evaluation and scoring method. Substantial weight in relationship to all other criteria utilized must be given to the cost amount proposed by the consultant.
- B. LPA must determine those that meet the format requirements specified in the RFP.
- C. LPA evaluation committee must evaluate and score the proposals using the methods specified in the RFP. All evaluation and scoring sheets must be available for public inspection after the committee scoring process. Evaluation committee should comply to the prevention of conflict of interest in PCC 10410.
- D. The non-A&E contract must be awarded to the consultant whose proposal is given the highest score by the evaluation committee.

(PCC 10344(c))

When using RFP (Cost and Qualifications), the criteria used to evaluate the consultant's proposals must have a logical foundation within the scope of work or within other technical requirements contained in the RFP. Each criterion must have a weight or level of importance, and it is recommended that total possible score for the evaluation criteria be one hundred (100) points. The proposed cost should be at least thirty percent (30%) of total points in evaluation criteria.

An [example RFP](#) for non-A&E is provided on the DLA Consultant Selection and Procurement [website](#) and may be modified.

Submission of the A&E Consultant Contract form is not required for non-A&E consultant contracts.

Consultant's Proposal

The consultant's proposal should include the following information:

- Consultant Project Manager – qualifications, roles, and responsibilities.
- Methodology - description of work and overall approach, specific techniques that will be used and specific administrative and operations expertise to be used.
- Workplan and Work Schedule - the technical proposal should include activities and tasks, and their delivery schedule.
- Personnel - List of personnel who will be working on the project, and their resumes.
- Facilities and resources (If applicable) - Explanation of where the services will be provided and what type of equipment is needed to perform services.
- Subcontracts - Identify all subcontracts that are to be used, description of each, and the work by each subconsultant/subcontractor. No work must be subcontracted unless listed in the technical proposal. Subconsultant resumes should be provided.
- References - The technical proposal should provide at least three (3) clients for whom the proposer has performed work of similar nature to the request.

Cost Proposal Worksheet

The RFP should provide a standard format for cost proposal that all proposers must include in their proposal. The cost proposal format can be broken down by specific tasks, showing hourly labor rates, level of effort and material, and/or by milestones and deliverables.

LPA is not required to award a contract if it is determined that the contract price is not reasonable (PCC 10344(d)).

DBE Consideration

DBE consideration is required on all federal-aid funded contracts including non-A&E.

Administrative Requirements

Advertisement for RFPs may be through the LPA website, local publications, and national publications. Minimum solicitation time is 14 calendar days. The solicitation should inform potential qualified consultants that questions must be submitted in writing to the Agency Contract Manager/Administrator by a specified date and time. All pertinent technical information

and answers to consultant's questions must be provided to all potential consultants. Written responses to all questions will be collectively compiled and provided as an addendum.

A proposal may be considered nonresponsive and rejected without evaluation if all required information is not provided. Proposals without information regarding, or not meeting, the required DBE utilization goal or without a Good Faith Effort documentation (see [Exhibit 15-H: Proposer/Contractor Good Faith Efforts](#)), late submittals, submittals to the wrong location, or submittals with inadequate copies are considered nonresponsive and must be rejected. Submittal of additional information after the due date must not be allowed. Documentation of when each proposal was received must be maintained in the project files. Copies of date stamped envelope covers or box tops are recommended.

No consultant who has been awarded a consulting service contract may be awarded a subsequent contract for the services or goods which are required as an end product of the consulting service contract, unless the subcontract is no more than 10 percent of the total monetary value of the consulting services contract. Excludes A&E contracts.

(PCC 10365.5)

Contracts may be modified or amended only if the contracts so provide. Amendments must be requested and executed prior to the termination date of the most recently approved original or amended contract. All records of contract activities must be kept for three years after federal final voucher E-76 or state final voucher for State-Only funds. Costs are reimbursable after state allocation by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and/or the issuance of the federal E-76. The per diem rate must not exceed the state rate. Contract Managers are responsible for monitoring expenditures on all contracts and verifying categories of work that require prevailing wage. A person in Responsible Charge of contract management is required for all federally-funded projects.

Oral Presentations Optional

When oral presentations are required by the LPA, the evaluation criteria must include factors/sub-factors and weights used to score the proposers performance at the oral presentation. The evaluation committee will only be able to score each proposer based upon these criteria. The Contract Manager/Administrator should develop a set of questions related to the scope of work or the project to be asked during the evaluation committee question and answer (Q & A) section of the oral presentations. All proposers are asked the same questions for consistency.

The committee must also evaluate reference checks and other information gathered independently. Reference checks must be completed, and other information gathered before the interviews are conducted. If necessary, the results of the reference checks or other information may be discussed with the highest ranked qualified consultants at the interviews.

Cost-Effective / Public Interest Finding

A minimum of three proposals must be evaluated to establish effective competition. Any agency that has received less than three proposals on a contract must document the names and addresses of the firms or individuals it solicited for proposals. Prepare an explanation as to why less than three proposals were received. When only two proposals are received, a justification must be documented to proceed with the procurement. When only one proposal is received, a Non-Competitive process must be justified and a Public Interest Finding (PIF) ([Exhibit 12-F: Cost-Effectiveness/Public Interest Finding/A&E Noncompetitive](#)) must be documented. In either case, the re-advertisement of the RFP should be considered as an option. Retain document as supporting documentation in the contract file.

(PCC 10340(c))

Protest / Appeals / Reinstatement Procedures

Both state and federal regulations require well-defined protest/reinstatement procedures. It is essential that the procedures include a reasonable opportunity for the prospective consultant to present his/her case. The appeals procedures strengthen the process by which the contracting agency reaches its ultimate goal and helps defend its action against a claim of lack of due process. A termination clause and a provision for settlement of contract disputes are required. Protest procedures and dispute resolution processes should be in accordance with PCC 10345.

10.4 A&E OVERSIGHT PROGRAM AND PROCESS REVIEW

General

The A&E Oversight Branch is responsible for the oversight of consultant contracts procured by LPAs complying with federal regulations 23 CFR 172 and 23 U.S.C.112, and California Government Code 4525-4529.5.

For locally-administered federal-aid highway projects, A&E consultant contract oversight reviews will be performed by Caltrans' Local Assistance A&E Oversight Engineers (A&EOEs). DLAE staff should participate in the reviews.

Type of Reviews

The purpose of A&E consultant contract oversight reviews is to verify LPA compliance with federal and state consultant contract administration requirements. A risk-based approach has been identified by the A&E Oversight Branch to aid LPAs with compliance that includes requiring LPAs to complete and submit the A&E Consultant Contract form prior to contract award, or after contract award but no later than the first invoice. The objective is to create a database documenting all consultant contracts and to perform process reviews on a sample of contracts for the annual performance measures report.

Although the risk-based approach is the submittal of the A&E Consultant Contract form via the database, a process review may be conducted on projects for reporting purposes and to determine accuracy of the A&E Consultant Contract form information.

A&E Consultant Contract Form Review

The purpose of the A&E Consultant Contract form is to provide oversight and guidance to an LPA regarding consultant contract administration on a federal or state-funded project prior to the award of the contract. The A&E Consultant Contract form includes items considered critical for compliance with federal and state regulations.

Subsequent process reviews may be performed on selected state and/or federal projects requiring a greater degree of oversight if deemed necessary for LPAs with a noncompliance history.

The following factors may be used when selecting projects for subsequent review:

- LPAs with identified deficiencies during an Incurred Cost Audit
- Projects administered by agencies with previous sanctions/findings
- Lack of experienced/trained LPA personnel
- Request by LPA or DLAE for additional assistance

During subsequent process reviews, the A&EOE will meet with the LPA's consultant contract administration team and discuss project record documentation requirements using the A&E Consultant Contract form. The timing of these types of reviews is targeted for pre-advertisement, pre-negotiations, and pre-award of the consultant contract. This will allow for any changes to take place prior to execution or termination of negotiations for re-advertising. The A&EOE will also explain new policies or procedures, discuss available training, and highlight common problem areas and the means to avoid them.

Review Findings and Deficiencies

Caltrans will not be involved in most project-level reviews and approval activities. Instead, the Process Review as outlined in this section is Caltrans' primary method of ensuring that federal and state requirements are met. During a Process Review of the LPA's project files, errors and/or deficiencies that may violate federal or state law or regulation could be found. If that happens, federal and/or state funds may be withdrawn from a project depending on the severity and circumstance of the deficiency, as well as the possibility of jeopardizing future federal and/or state funding opportunities for the agency's other projects.

It is important to note that the formal process review is not the only method of discovering project deficiencies. Errors or deficiencies are discovered occasionally as part of the normal routine of processing project submittals by DLAEs or DLA Area Engineers.

Review findings from any subsequent reviews will be forwarded to the LPA and the DLAE within five business days. Deficiencies identified during a review may require development of a corrective action plan by the LPA in consultation with the district within 30 calendar days of receipt of the deficiency notification, unless the agency disagrees with the deficiencies identified and appeals the decision as discussed below.

A list of common A&E consultant procurement-related deficiencies is found at the DLA Consultant Selection and Procurement [website](#). These examples, not all-inclusive, should assist LPAs with knowing common deficiencies found in the past and the possible ramifications for those errors and deficiencies. The key to avoiding possible sanctions is to follow the procedures outlined in this chapter and other appropriate policies and guidelines, and if you have any questions, to consult your DLAE.

Corrective action plans, if required, will identify actions the LPA will take to address each deficiency noted. Corrective actions may include the following: Re-advertising, modifications of LPA policies and procedures, and participation in training to address systemic related deficiencies. Project-specific issues may require additional measures to remedy deficiencies to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements and ensure reimbursement eligibility. Corrective action plans must also include timelines for each action to be implemented. Failure to provide and implement corrective actions may result in sanctions or federal/state ineligibility notices against the project or LPA and could prevent federal or state participation in all or a portion of the project.

In the event the LPA disagrees with the deficiencies identified, the LPA will have 30 calendar days from receipt of the deficiency notification to submit their written request for appeal in accordance with the DLA's [Local Agency Dispute Resolution Process](#). If the appeal is denied, the LPA will have 30 calendar days from receipt of the decision to submit their corrective action plan.

The Dispute Resolution Process provides a means for the LPA to appeal a sanction that they feel has been imposed upon them unfairly or they feel the penalty is too harsh for the error or

deficiency. This appeal process is not limited to just the appeal of sanctions; it can be used by LPAs when they disagree with the decision, they receive from a district office.

10.5 SANCTIONS

Depending on the severity and circumstances of the deficiencies which may require sanctioning by Caltrans, the DLA or DLAE may impose one of the following sanctions:

- Freeze on all future programming of federal or state funds until corrective action is implemented
- Freeze progress payments for a federal-aid project until the project's deficiency is corrected
- Percentage of federal or state funds for a project withdrawn
- All federal or state funds withdrawn from a project

The DLAE will be responsible for notifying the LPA of sanctions imposed. Whether or not sanctions are imposed against an LPA, the LPA will be expected to develop a corrective action plan and implement it to correct the deficiencies. LPAs will be given adequate time to develop and implement their action plan. Failure to correct the deficiencies in a timely manner will be grounds for imposing additional sanctions.

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) Grant Management Procedures

1. Purpose The purpose of these procedures is to ensure proper oversight, accountability, and transparency in the management of grants awarded to the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG). These procedures include an additional layer of verification of timesheets by the ESCOG Board for the approval of time spent on grant-funded activities.

2. Scope These procedures apply to all ESCOG staff, consultants, and Board members involved in grant-funded projects.

3. Grant Management Responsibilities

- The ESCOG Executive Director is responsible for the overall administration and compliance of grants.
- The Finance Officer oversees financial tracking and reporting requirements.
- The ESCOG Board Chair provides additional oversight by verifying and approving staff timesheets related to grant-funded activities.

4. Timesheet Submission and Verification

4.1 Employee Responsibilities

- If required by the terms of the grant, employees and consultants working on grant-funded projects must complete detailed timesheets specifying hours worked, tasks performed, and associated grant funding sources.
- Timesheets must be submitted monthly to the ESCOG Board Chair for initial review.

4.2 Board Chair Approval

Timesheets are submitted to the ESCOG Board Chair at the monthly for verification and approval.

- The ESCOG Board reviews timesheets for consistency with approved grant activities and overall budget allocations.
- Board members may request additional information or clarification before approval.
- Approval is documented with the Board's signed approval. Signature may be digital.

5. Grant Expenditure Authorization

- The Finance Officer ensures that only approved consultant payments and timesheets are included in grant reimbursement requests.

6. Reporting and Compliance

- The Executive Director ensures compliance with all grant reporting requirements.

7. Audit and Record Keeping

- All grant-related timesheets, financial reports, and Board approval records shall be maintained for a minimum of five years.

Attachment C

- Periodic internal audits will be conducted to ensure adherence to these procedures.

8. Amendments These procedures may be revised by a majority vote of the ESCOG Board to ensure continued compliance with grant regulations and best practices.

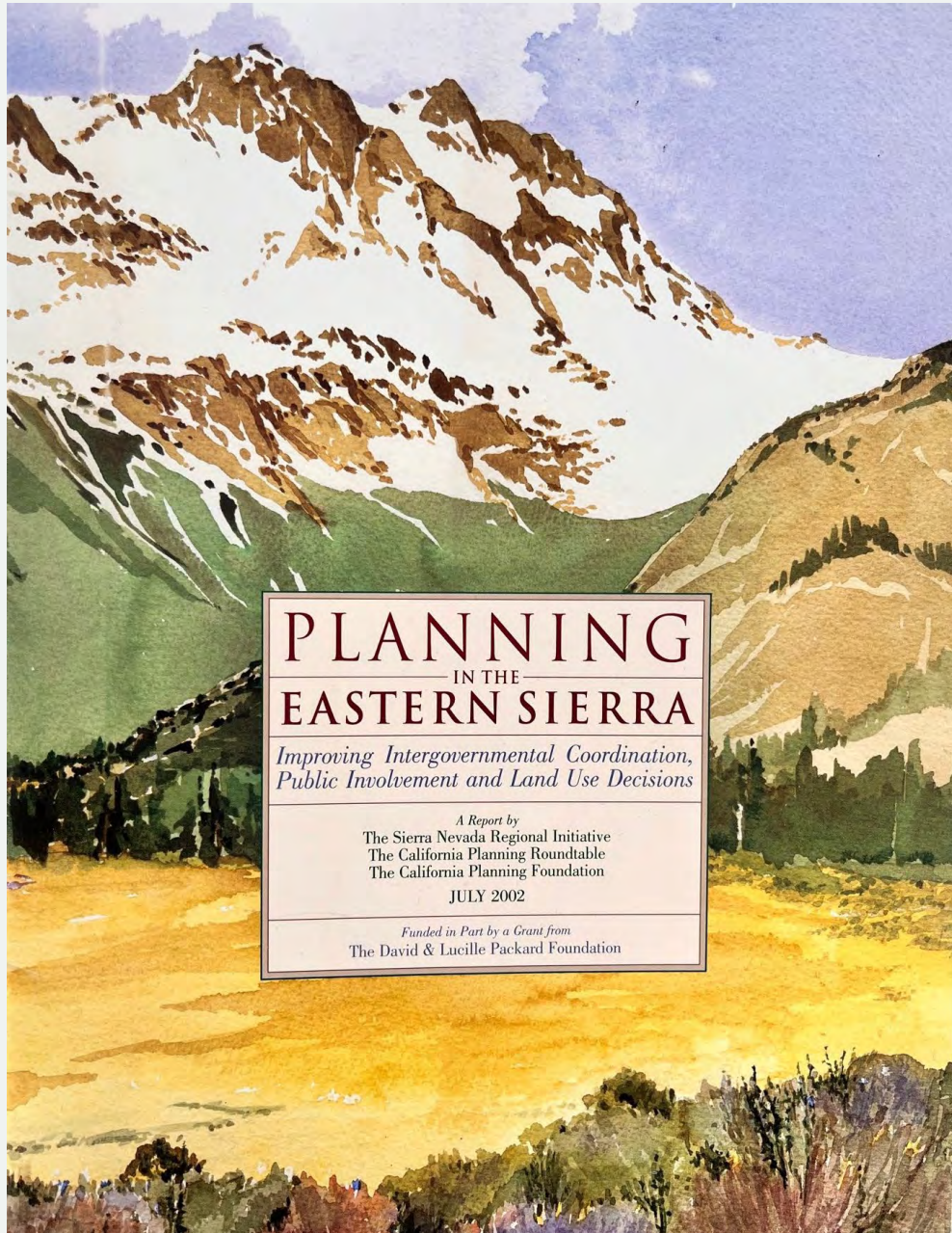


ESCOG Strategic Plan Overview

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
February 26, 2025

Agenda

1. History of Regional Collaborative Planning in the Eastern Sierra
2. ESCOG Successes in the First Five Years
3. Overview of Board Priorities from 2024 Strategic Retreat
4. Goals for 2025-2026 / Capacity Needs
5. Overview of Inyo County Project Management Office
6. Board Discussion Regarding 2025-2026 Priorities and Capacity

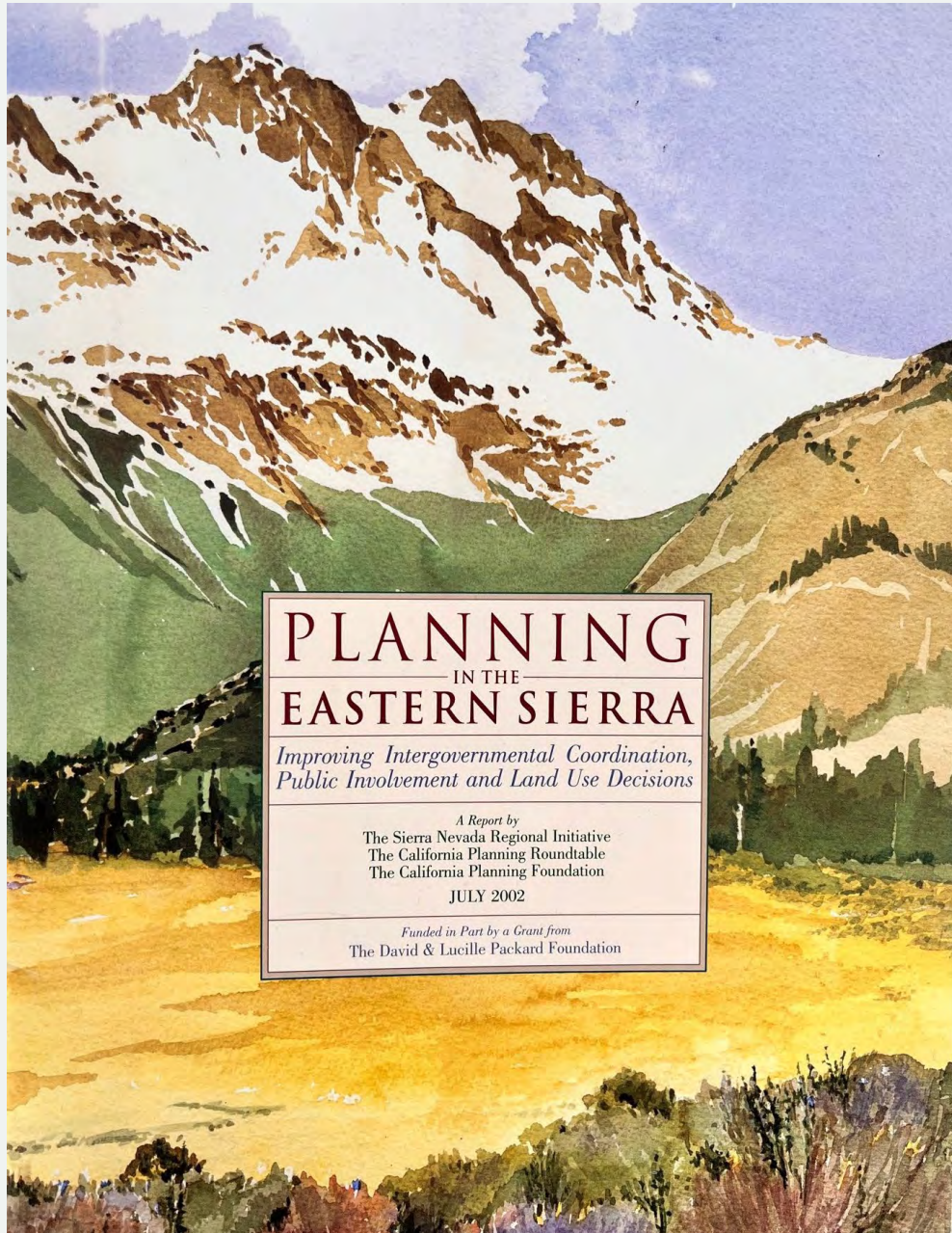


Artwork by Linda McNeill

PLANNING IN THE EASTERN SIERRA (2002)

“In the Eastern Sierra, there is no Council of Governments or other regional governmental infrastructure to provide the institutional support and coordination needed by the decision-makers and land planners of the different jurisdictions.

... The following approaches may be worthy of additional consideration and discussion....



PLANNING
IN THE
EASTERN SIERRA

*Improving Intergovernmental Coordination,
Public Involvement and Land Use Decisions*

A Report by
The Sierra Nevada Regional Initiative
The California Planning Roundtable
The California Planning Foundation

JULY 2002

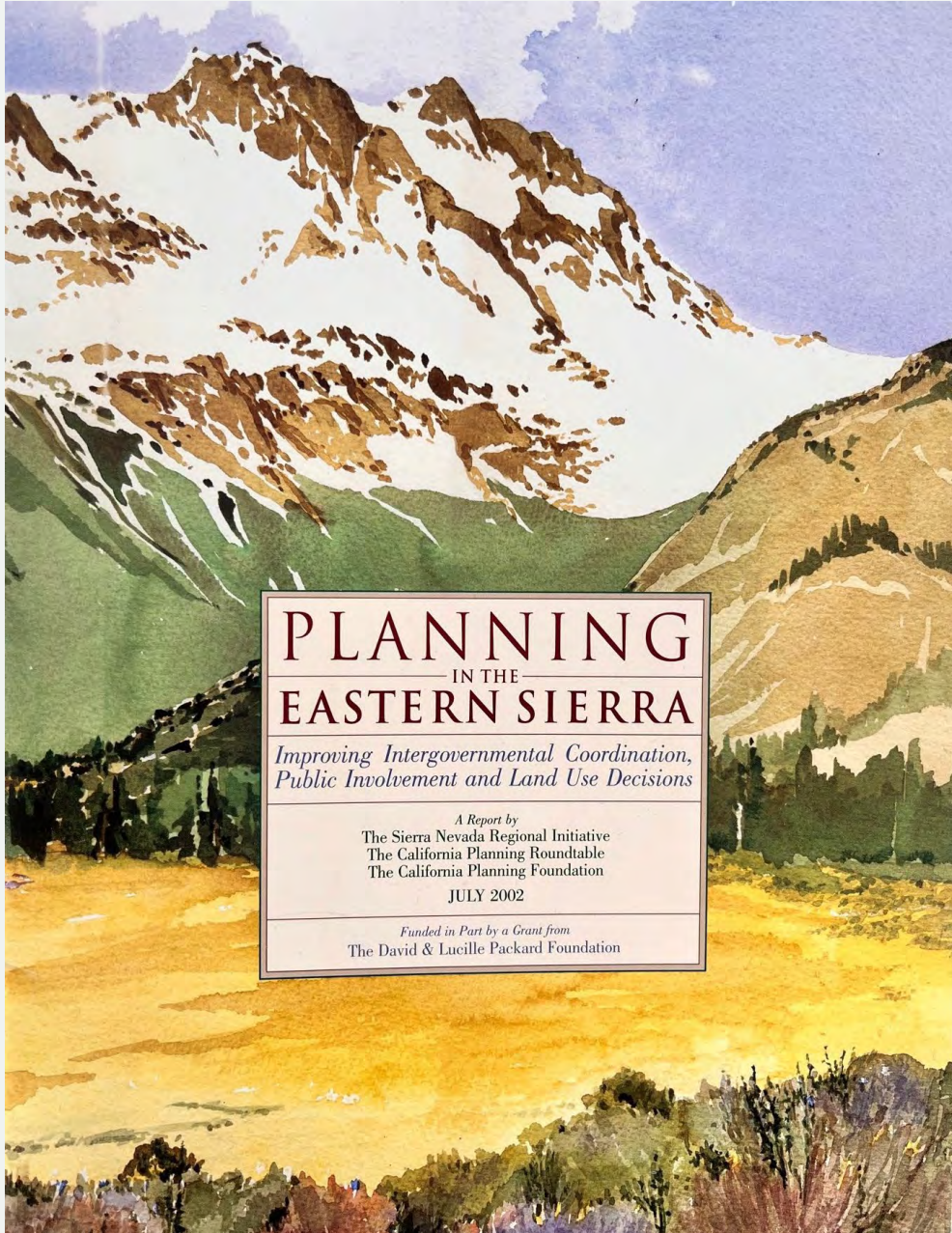
Funded in Part by a Grant from
The David & Lucille Packard Foundation

Artwork by Linda McNeill

Regional Collaboration: Convene regional forums, workshops and other means to maintain dialogue and collaboration on critical issues, such as transportation, housing, air quality, airports, infrastructure financing, economics, open space, water supply and quality, watershed protection, and public investment.

Intergovernmental Collaboration: Consideration establishing on or more governmental entities charged with addressing matters of regional concern. This might take a variety of forms, such as a single purpose agency, *a traditional Council of Governments with a non-traditional mission*, or others.

Availability of Comprehensive Data: Develop, maintain, and disseminate regional geographic information system databases, imagery and applications, including the publication of maps.



PLANNING IN THE EASTERN SIERRA (2002)

“The panel concluded by agreeing that we are in the infant stages of collaboration. We need to learn to collaborate on large scales, like the Sierra, but we don’t have the tools yet to do this. We are in the process to develop those tools. Sometime collaborative planning will not lead to a solution, which should not view it as a tool that will work in every situation. There are some issues that don’t lend themselves to collaborative planning, but [the panel] would like to see collaboration carried beyond what it is today. Beyond partisan politics, political philosophies, to try and make land use decisions on local needs integrated into the state and national land use policies. [The panel] would like to see opportunities for more public participation in the planning process. And [they] would like to see the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments reestablished. [They] would like to see the counties start to think regionally rather than locally, and this would be a good opportunity to do that. ”

**JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
AS A SEPARATE LEGAL ENTITY FROM ITS MEMBER AGENCIES**

This agreement, made and entered into this 7th day of January 2020, by and among the County of Mono, a political subdivision of the State of California ("Mono"), the County of Inyo, a political subdivision of the State of California ("Inyo"), the Town of Mammoth Lakes, a municipal corporation ("Town") and the City of Bishop, a municipal corporation ("City") (collectively "Member Agencies" or "Members"), shall supersede and replace, in its entirety, that Amended Joint Powers Agreement Eastern Sierra Council of Government Entities (COG) entered into by and among the Parties on or about February 26, 1999.

II. Purposes

- 2.01 The ESCOG shall continue to be organized to: (1) provide a forum for discussion and study of regional issues of interest to the Member Agencies; (2) identify and plan for the solution of selected regional issues requiring multi-governmental cooperation; (3) facilitate actions and agreements among the Member Agencies for specific project development; (4) conduct other region wide functions as the Members deem appropriate.
- 2.02 In addition to the above, the ESCOG shall be organized to identify funding sources and to apply for and receive funding for the planning and implementation of programs of regional impact or significance, and to implement such programs, upon approval of the governing bodies of each Member Agency.
- 1.03 The Member Agencies acknowledge and agree that there are circumstances where it is necessary or desirable for the Member Agencies to function collectively on a regional basis, such as where regionalization enhances funding opportunities, provides resources and capabilities that would not otherwise be available, or improves the delivery of services to benefit the interests of the Members' constituents.
- 1.04 The Member Agencies further agree that the creation of a regional joint powers authority that is a separate legal entity from the Members would position the ESCOG to maximize and take advantage of these opportunities.

EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Organization

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Board of Directors

Executive Director

SREMP (activated by reso.)

<u>Sustainable Recreation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ BIRPI✓ Towns to Trails• Regional Rec. Capacity*• Climate Adaptation	<u>Eco. Management</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ CDFW / Pace and Scale Accelerator*• Climate Adaptation• Wildfire Task Force
--	--

Econ. Dev.

- ✓ CEDS Development
- ✓ CAJF Development
- ✓ Phase 1: Planning
- ✓ Phase 2: Implementation

Housing (no reso.)

- ✓ Housing Roundtable / Partnership meetings
- ✓ Regional Housing Plan

Outreach and Advocacy

- ✓ Regional coordination with local partners
- ✓ building
 - USFS / BLM / NPS / LADWP
- Regional advocacy w/ State/Fed agencies
- ✓ Branding / Outreach / Website

Funding

- Member agency contributions
- CDFW Prop 1 grant
- NFWF BIRPI grant
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant

Funding

- Member agency contributions
- Inyo Co. RCRC CEDS grant
- CAJF funding

Funding

- Member agency contributions

Funding

- Member agency contributions

ESCOG Successes in the First Five Years

- **Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator**

- \$3.8 million CDFW Grant Awarded to build capacity in ESCOG and in regional wildfire resiliency partners
- NEPA completed / Notice of Decision executed allowing for 58,000 acre landscape scale mitigation project surrounding TOML to proceed
- Supports capacity building for implementation workforce development throughout region
- Strengthened inter-jurisdictional collaboration to expand mitigation planning efforts

- **Buttermilk Infrastructure and Recreation Planning Initiative**

- \$247,000 National Fish and Wildlife grant
- Completed community-led collaborative planning process to establish consensus on desired conditions for key Bishop recreation *destination, implemented placement of pit-vault toilet*

- **Towns-to-Trails Feasibility Analysis**

- \$370,000 Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant
- Finalizing a feasibility analysis for a route to connect Eastern Sierra community through Inyo, Mono and Alpine Counties

ESCOG Successes in the First Five Years

- **California Jobs First**
 - Ensured Eastern Sierra representative in data gathering and policy development
 - Organized regional agency and community input to inform regional data and economic strategies
 - Prepared grant applications with potential awards ~\$1 million to support regional economic development initiatives, provided technical assistant to partner organizations
- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**
 - Adopted first CEDS for Eastern Sierra region, providing ongoing administration and staff coordination
- Facilitated collaboration to initiate regional housing needs study to catalyze regional workforce housing solution
- Member agency contributions have remained at initial \$25,000 while ESCOG has expanded capacity and scope
 - Per the FY 2023-2024 Financial Report, ESCOG has ~\$80,000 fund balance to support operations in case of economic uncertainty

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT REPORT

Completed by the Institute for Local Government

February 2025



Priority Setting from Strategic Retreat

The Board affirmed the following priorities and authorized programs for the COG:

- Ecosystem Management and Sustainable Recreation Program
- Community Economic Resiliency Pilot Program
- Inyo Mono Broadband Coalition

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT REPORT

Completed by the Institute for Local Government

February 2025



Priority Setting from Strategic Retreat

Suggested following core functions to support programs of work

- Develop **legislative platform** based on member agency priorities
 - State advocacy for priority regional issues
- **Convene regional groups** to foster collaborations & improve efficient deploy resources
 - Economic development activities (activated by resolution)
 - Climate/ecosystem management (activated by resolution)
 - Wildfire (activated by resolution)
 - Sustainable recreation and tourism (activated by resolution)
 - *Housing*
 - *Agriculture and land tenure*
 - *Arts and culture*
- **Engage Federal and tribal partners**
- Engage in **transportation planning** conversations

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT REPORT

Completed by the Institute for Local Government

February 2025



The Board cautioned about the need to balance the action items from convenings with ESCOG's **capacity** and **authority** to implement these actions. **Funding remains a challenge.**

FINANCE

- Cash flow, financial capacity, and stability remain ongoing challenges for the organization. To address these financial issues, the Board suggested considering identifying additional partners to rely on for support.
- The **Board suggested** the following:
 - Explore potential partnerships with organizations that can provide additional financial support
 - Initiate conversations with regional managers about the extra capacity that member agencies can offer in response to unexpected challenges with pursued projects.
 - Explore opportunities to share staff in key roles between member agencies and ESCOG.
 - Share more information with the board to better understand financial capacity for reimbursement.
 - Engage in conversations with member agencies to determine if they can provide additional support – either financially or in-kind

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT REPORT

Completed by the Institute for Local Government

February 2025



EXPANDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The following ideas were proposed to help ESCOG increase its capacity:

- Leverage the staff, skill sets, and expertise of ESCOG's member agencies to enhance capacity.
- Leverage grant writing technical assistance.
- Explore the possibility of hiring grant writing consultants.
- Consider contractors who can assist with specific aspects of organizational management, such as communications, project implementation, convenings, and/or board administration.
- Explore additional discretionary funds available through member agencies.
- **Board members:** Communicate with their respective executives about the benefits of "sharing" staff when needed to expand ESCOG's capacity.
- **Board members:** Direct respective agencies to engage with ESCOG and support its initiatives.

COMMUNICATING VALUE

Improve branded communication and effectively convey COG's value:

- Develop a branded communication engage the public
- Provide quarterly updates to member agencies on ESCOG activities.
- Identify additional opportunities to communicate value to member agencies
- **Board members:** Report member agency boards to articulate ESCOG's value during meetings.
- **Board members:** Act as ambassadors to agencies, communities, and partner organizations by sharing opportunities with staff and leveraging unique leadership opportunities to change the narrative.

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT REPORT

Completed by the Institute for Local Government

February 2025



Key Recommendations

- Develop legislative platform based on member agency priorities.
- Build capacity by:
 - Leveraging member agency staff to enhance capacity in specific program areas
 - Leverage grant writing technical assistance.
 - Considering contractors who can assist with specific aspects of organizational management, such as communications, project implementation, convenings, and/or board administration.
 - Exploring additional discretionary funds available through member agencies.
- Spearhead collaboration efforts by:
 - Convening regional interest groups. Areas for convening include: climate/ecosystem management, wildfire, sustainable recreation and tourism, economic development activities, housing, agriculture and land tenure, and arts and culture.
 - Creating a space for member agencies to share best practices and address challenges that go beyond the capacity of individual organizations.
 - Bringing additional capacity for accessing funding and implementing projects that would be difficult for individual agencies to achieve alone (regional economic development initiatives, broadband, climate initiatives, opportunities for housing and transportation funding).
 - Amplifying the visibility of regional issues that impact all member agencies.
 - Sharing a common story and fostering a region of shared community.

Input from Regional Partners:

- Desire to increase Tribal Nation collaboration in regional discussions / convene collaborative
- Request to have collaborative conversations that provide better coordination on climate and recreation projects and priorities
 - Between federal agencies, NGO partners, and workforce development partners
- Staff roundtables on economic development and housing have been beneficial for information sharing, skill building and mutual project support (e.g. California Jobs First Catalyst projects)

2025-2026 Project Priorities:

Focus on existing programs of work & projects:

Program	Proposed Capacity
Sustainable Recreation & Ecosystem Management Program	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Towns-to-Trails Project 	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator Expansion 	Executive Director / Wildfire Coordinator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inyo National Forest Liaison Position 	Wildfire Coordinator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Wildfire Defense Program* 	Wildfire Coordinators
Community Economic Development Pilot Program	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEDS Administration 	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Jobs First Catalyst Phase 	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity Funding / Collaborative Support (secured) 	Executive Director / PMO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Resource Center Program Development* 	Executive Director / PMO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastern Sierra Regional Collaborative* 	Executive Director / PMO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chipmunk Canyon Existing Conditions Analysis* 	Executive Director / PMO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Regional Housing Needs Assessment 	Executive Director

2025-2026 Project Priorities:

- Areas to expand:

Program	Capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop legislative platform based on member agency priorities / regional advocacy 	Executive Director / PMO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene regional groups to foster collaborations & improve efficient deployment resources 	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide quarterly updates to member agencies on ESCOG activities 	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop regional project priorities and identify funding opportunities 	Executive Director / PMO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen communications 	Executive Director / PMO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regional data (housing, demographics, etc) 	Executive Director / Member Agency Staff / UC ANR



Improve Project Prioritization and Governance

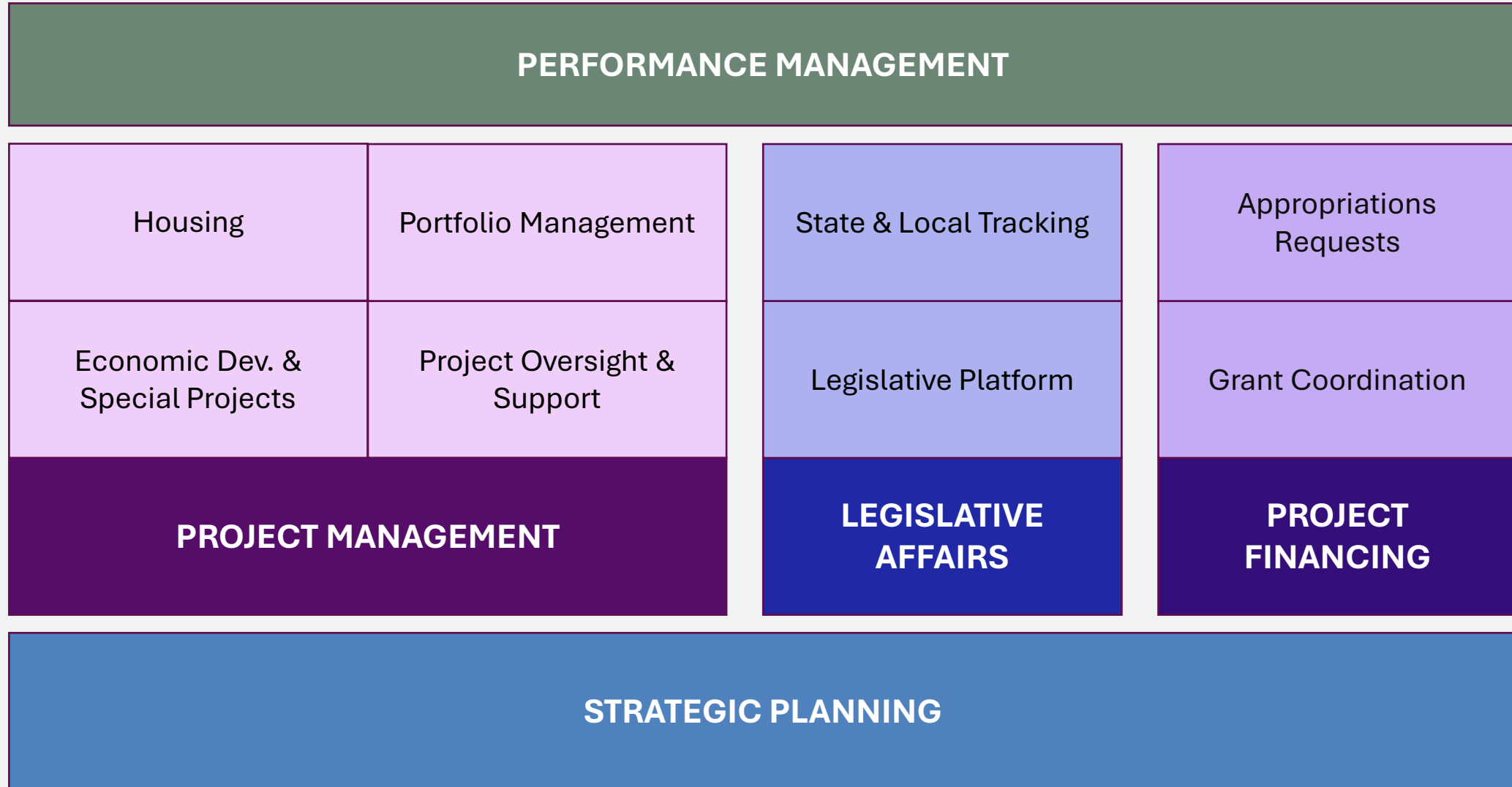
Support Countywide/Multi-Departmental/Special Projects

Lead Strategic Planning Efforts

Coordinate Legislative Affairs

Address Strategic Funding Needs

PMO CORE COMPETENCIES



2025-2026 Capacity Budget:

- There is sufficient revenue in the CDFW and INF Liaison grants to support a wildfire coordinator position for 12-18 mos
- There is sufficient funding in Catalyst funds to support administrative support through a collaboration with the Inyo County Project Management Office

Revenues				
	Projects			
		Member Agency Contributions	\$100,000	\$100,000
		SNC/ Towns-to-Trails	\$14,000	
		CA Dept of Fish & Wildlife Grant	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000
		Inyo National Forest Liaison Grant	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000
		CERF Funding (SBC)	\$ 100,000	\$100,000
	Sum		\$329,000	\$315,000
Expenditures				
	HR			
		Executive Director (fully loaded)	\$119,184	\$119,184
		Overhead @ 15 %	\$17,878	\$17,878
		Wildfire Coordinator (fully loaded)	\$105,959	\$105,959
		CAJF / COO / PMO	\$40,000	\$40,000
		HR Total	\$283,021	\$283,020
	Member Agency Services			
		Clerical	\$20,000	\$20,000
		Financial	\$5,000	\$5,000
		Legal	\$10,000	\$10,000
		Member Agency Totals	\$35,000	\$35,000
	Office + Management Costs			
		email, cyber security	\$2,500	\$2,500
		Website Design Services	\$1,000	\$1,000
		Professional Services (audit)	--	\$0
		Insurance	\$3,500	\$3,500
		Other Services		
		O+M Total	\$7,000	\$7,000
	Sum		\$325,021	\$325,020
	Net Income		\$3,979	-\$10,020

Staff Requests the Board provide feedback on:

1. 2025 – 2026 Project Priorities
2. 2025-2026 Areas to Expand ESCOG Programs
3. Increasing staff capacity leveraging member agency staff, specifically:
 1. Inyo County Wildfire Coordinator
 2. Inyo County Project Management Office

Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT REPORT

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February 2025





February 11, 2025

Elaine Kabala and ESCOG Board of Directors
c/o Town of Mammoth Lakes
P.O. Box 1609
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Dear ESCOG Team:

On behalf of ILG, we appreciate ESCOG's selection of ILG for your strategic planning session. We enjoyed meeting with your Board and staff team and facilitating the session. We thought the conversation was engaging and inspiring, and we are honored that you put your trust in ILG to help with the important step of refining the strategic plan for ESCOG's future.

Now that the session is complete, we have summarized key takeaways and resources for your consideration. The following report summarizes the retreat programming, our notes, and additional resources for your consideration. The report is organized as follows:

- *Retreat Session Notes*
- *Draft ESCOG Value Statements*
- *Survey Results Summary*
- *Resources List*
- *About ILG & Our Other Services*

We would welcome the opportunity to work with you again and have outlined some of our other specialty areas in case you have any additional training, facilitation or professional development needs. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Melissa Kuehne
Senior Program Manager

Background

ESCOG Region

- Inyo and Mono Counties
- City of Bishop and the Town of Mammoth Lakes
- Combined population of 34,000
- 8 Tribal Nations
- 13,400 square miles
- Estimated annual economy of \$2.667 billion
- Estimated number of annual visitors 4 million

Vision

The ESCOG coordinates regional planning and economic development efforts throughout the Eastern Sierra, working cooperatively with local, state and federal partners to support community development, economic diversification, sustainable recreation, ecosystem management and climate resiliency for a more prosperous, sustainable, and resilient region.

Mission

ESCOG provides a forum for local governments, Tribal, and other organizations to:

- Share information to members and the community
- Act collaboratively on projects in critical strategic issues
- Seek and provide resources and solutions
- Advocate for regional concerns

Values

- Professionalism
- Collaboration
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Equity
- Transparency
- Efficiency

Session Summary

Session Goals:

- Clarify ESCOG's strategic vision and priorities.
- Articulate and demonstrate the organization's value to its partners.
- Address gaps and build capacity for future success.

SURVEY RESULTS

The board shared their reactions to the survey results. Overall, the results resonated with the board, and there were no surprises. During the discussion, the board emphasized the following key points:

- The need to translate COG's work and initiatives to the public and effectively communicate its successes to member and partner agencies.
- Continued improvement of internal and external organizational processes.
- Identification of specific tactics to guide future actions.
- Capitalizing on opportunities created by California Jobs First.
- Pursuing collaborative opportunities and creating spaces to demonstrate the region's interdependencies, moving away from a zero-sum mindset towards joint agreements that maximize scarce resources for the greater public good.
- Identifying sustainable funding mechanisms for COG's operations.

Following the discussion, **the board requested additional information** on the following:

- Best practices and success stories of COGs growing from small to large organizations.
- The funding structures of other COGs—how they finance their operations.

Full survey results are attached.

Case Studies

Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG)

The WRCOG is a collaborative body that unifies Western Riverside County to address regional issues collectively. Its structure comprises representatives from 18 cities, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, the Eastern and Western Municipal Water Districts, and the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, with the Riverside County Superintendent of Schools serving as an ex-officio member. These representatives form the Executive Committee, which sets policy for the organization.

WRCOG's program areas include:

- **Energy:** WRCOG's HERO Program provides financing to property owners to implement a range of energy saving, renewable energy, and water conserving improvements to their homes and businesses.
- **Environment & Recycling:** WRCOG is committed to assisting Riverside County with reducing the waste stream going to landfills and to encouraging recycling that protects our environment.
- **Grant Writing Assistance:** WRCOG provides assistance with grant applications to its member jurisdictions.
- **Planning:** Western Riverside County's residents, businesses, organizations, and public agencies want to ensure expected growth produces a successful, sustainable, and resilient subregion that current and future generations will continue to enjoy.
- **Transportation:** Working together with its member jurisdictions, the Riverside Transit Agency, the Riverside County Transportation Commission, and other regional entities,

WRCOG conducts various transportation studies and develops plans to help address the transportation, transit, and active transportation issues in Western Riverside County.

- Water Task Force: WRCOG assists with the administration of the Riverside County Water Task Force, which is comprised of various public and private agencies working together to tackle water issues on a collaborative, regional basis.

The WRCOG convenes many Technical Advisory Committee's to inform coordinated regional planning and programming. WRCOG's committees include

- Executive Committee
- Administration & Finance Committee
- Technical Advisory Committee
- Finance Directors Committee
- Planning Directors Committee
- Public Works Committee
- General Assembly Committee
- Clean Cities Coalition Committee
- Solid Waste Committee
- Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee Zone Committee
- WRCOG Supporting Foundation (public benefit corporation)

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency/Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and the Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) are integrally connected entities responsible for guiding land use and transportation planning in the Lake Tahoe Region. TRPA serves as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the area, operating under the TMPO designation.

Structure and Membership

TRPA operates under the guidance of a 15-member Governing Board, which includes representatives from California and Nevada, local governments, and the public. This board sets policies and makes decisions to achieve the agency's mission. Supporting the Governing Board is the Advisory Planning Commission (APC), a 21-member body comprising local planners, community members, and experts who provide technical and scientific advice. TRPA's 15-member Governing Board, along with a representative from the U.S. Forest Service, functions as the board for TMPO. This unified structure ensures cohesive policy-making and planning across both land use and transportation sectors.

Programs

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) administers several key programs aimed at preserving and enhancing the Lake Tahoe Basin's environmental health and community well-being:

1. **Environmental Improvement Program (EIP):** A collaborative initiative involving local, state, federal agencies, private entities, scientists, and the Washoe Tribe, the EIP focuses on accelerating the attainment of Lake Tahoe's environmental threshold standards through the implementation of the Regional Plan.

2. **Climate Change and Sustainability:** This program provides a regional framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change within the Lake Tahoe Basin.
3. **Transportation:** TRPA develops and funds transportation plans and projects through various federal, regional, and state programs, aiming to improve mobility, reduce vehicle emissions, and promote sustainable transit solutions.
4. **Sustainable Recreation:** This initiative seeks to balance recreational use with environmental preservation, ensuring that Lake Tahoe remains a premier destination while protecting its natural resources.
5. **Housing:** TRPA addresses housing challenges by developing policies and programs that promote affordable and sustainable housing options within the region.

Funding

TRPA's funding sources include federal, regional, and state programs. These funds support various initiatives, such as capital projects, operations and maintenance, transit services, and local and regional transportation planning. The agency collaborates with communities and partners to invest in projects that enhance mobility, reduce emissions, stimulate local economies, improve recreation, and conserve the environment.

West Central Mountains Economic Development Council

The West Central Mountains Economic Development Council (WCMEDC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering economic growth and enhancing the quality of life in Idaho's West Central Mountains region, which includes the communities of Cascade, Donnelly, McCall, New Meadows, and Yellow Pine.

Members and Partnerships

WCMEDC operates through collaborations with various stakeholders, including:

- **Local Cities and Counties:** Engaging municipal and county governments within the region, including the incorporated communities of Cascade, New Meadows, Donnelly and McCall, Valley County,
- **Chambers of Commerce:** Partnering with local chambers to support business communities.
- **At-large members,** including representatives of the University of Idaho Extension

These partnerships enable WCMEDC to act as the primary regional voice on economic issues, ensuring cohesive efforts across different jurisdictions.

Funding

While specific funding sources are not detailed in the available information, as a nonprofit organization, WCMEDC secures funding through a combination of public and private sources, including government grants, partnerships, and contributions from member organizations.

Programs and Initiatives

WCMEDC undertakes various programs aimed at stimulating economic development:

- **Regional Housing Needs Assessment:** Conducted to evaluate and address housing challenges within the region.
- **Economic Summits:** Organizes events such as the annual Economic Summit to bring together stakeholders for discussions on regional economic strategies.
- **Workforce Development:** Collaborates with educational institutions to bridge gaps between student expectations and employer workforce needs.
- **Recreation and Trail Planning Coalition:** Collaborative focused on developing and maintaining trails and recreational infrastructure.

Through these initiatives, WCMEDC strives to create a vibrant and sustainable economic environment in the West Central Mountains region.

Verde Front

The Verde Front is a regional collaborative in the Sedona-Verde Valley that fosters proactive dialogue, coordination and collective action on stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

Members and Partners

The Verde Front comprises various stakeholders, including local City and County governments, non-profit organizations, community groups, and federal and state agencies. The Verde Front effort is comprised of a Leadership Council, Coordinating Team and several active working groups of diverse partners working to advance Verde Front priorities. The organization is structured include a leadership council, a coordinating team, and several working groups. The leadership council serves as a regional forum to enhance communication and coordination between communities and land management agencies and to foster identification of issues and opportunities of regional relevance. Working groups provide capacity to focus on community engagement, outdoor economic, trails planning, river recreation (including stewardship and education), management planning and NEPA,

Programs and Working Groups

The partners of the Verde Front collaborate to:

1. Enhance **regional connectivity** to the Verde River and across communities.
 - Continue to create linked trails and watchable wildlife opportunities across the Verde Valley
 - Improve accessibility to trails and the Verde River
 - Support consistent signage for recreation access across the Verde Valley
 - Support linked and safe transit across the Verde Valley
2. Strengthen **education about and support** of the Verde River and Verde Valley as important **community, natural, and economic** assets.
 - Provide clear and accessible information about the Verde River
 - Promote stewardship of the Verde River and surrounding public and private lands
 - Encourage responsible and safe recreation practices to provide a positive experience for both recreators and nearby residents
 - Analyze and develop economic and tourism benefits associated with sustainable outdoor recreation

3. Support the **conservation** of a flowing Verde River to sustain its ecological health and community benefits.
 - Promote sustainable recreation opportunities
 - Encourage water conservation and sustainable use practices
 - Support implementation of regulatory protections for the Verde River
4. Improve the **sustainability of outdoor recreation and tourism** in the Verde Valley.
 - Support collaborative, cross-jurisdictional recreation planning, implementation and monitoring
 - Align municipal general plans and county comprehensive plans with Verde Front priorities
 - Support more coordinated sustainable tourism marketing across the Verde Valley

These working groups convene regularly to plan and implement initiatives aligned with the Verde Front's mission.

Funding

Specific details regarding the Verde Front's funding sources are not provided in the available information. However, as a regional collaborative, it is likely that funding is obtained through a combination of grants, contributions from member organizations, and partnerships with governmental and non-governmental entities.

Through its collaborative structure and dedicated working groups, the Verde Front plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable stewardship of the Sedona-Verde Valley's natural and cultural resources.

ESCOG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

The Executive Director shared her perspective on the organization's needs, including the authority and internal decision-making processes required to pursue funding opportunities and projects. She highlighted the limited capacity to expand collaboration, the challenge of balancing staff capacity between pursuing funding and implementing work, and the need for clear goals and priorities to guide the executive director and the organization's efforts.

Following the discussion of the survey results, **the board made the following suggestions:**

- Explore the possibility of engaging with regional managers (town managers and county CAOs) regarding grant funding opportunities. This approach would allow regional managers to streamline grant applications.
- Pass agency resolutions to support COG's work. This would help strengthen relationships with boards, elected officials, and town and county executives, while increasing understanding of COG's work and its ability to offer additional capacity to benefit member agencies.
- Utilize the ESCOG Board and its partnerships to seek mutual and in-kind support. For example, Mono County could assist with rolling out initiatives on behalf of COG.
- Explore adopting a policy documenting the COG's priority work areas so that grants on these topics do not require individual jurisdiction approval.

FUTURE VISION – WHERE WE WANT TO GO. DISCUSSION: WHAT ARE ESCOG'S PRIORITIES?

The Board affirmed the following priorities and authorized programs for the COG:

- Broadband
- Economic Development
- Ecosystem Management and Sustainable Recreation

The **Board also requested the following:**

- Additional clarification on COG's authority regarding economic development.
- Focus efforts on the authorized programs.
- Minimize competition with local agencies for the same grants and promote joint applications.

Additional suggestions regarding priorities and authorized programs were shared, but after a brief discussion, these were not marked as priorities. Instead, many were considered potential core functions/activities of the COG. These topics included:

- Develop legislative platform based on member agency priorities.
- Convene regional interest groups to foster collaborations and priorities to improve efficient deployment of capital and other resources. Areas for convening include: climate/ecosystem management, wildfire, sustainable recreation and tourism, economic development activities, housing, agriculture and land tenure, and arts and culture.
- State advocacy on priority topics – core function
- Proactively engage Federal and tribal partners to advance ESCOG/member agency priorities, legislative priorities, and ongoing coordination.
- Convene conversations on art and culture to promote tourism and economic development.
- Engage in transportation planning conversations.
- Coordinate and support promotion of tourism efforts and events.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE - COG'S BENEFITS FOR THE REGION

As part of the exercise, board members helped to identify the following benefits that the COG brings to the region, community, and member agencies.

VALUE FOR THE REGION: Greater connection, collaboration, and a unified voice; increased political power and a clear regional vision; long-term sustainable resources that impact the region as a whole; vision and tangible representation of our efforts; community awareness of real buy-in from all four organizations, economy of scale for efficient resource use, community and regional understanding that COG brings value to all members; building capacity for regional values and interagency collaboration, a magnified voice in discussions and decision-making; strengthened regional identity.

In summary, the COG helps shape a strong regional identity, elevates regional needs, builds capacity for collaborative interagency solutions, and brings vital resources to address interconnected challenges across the region.

Specifically:

Unified Voice and Regional Representation: ESCOG strengthens regional collaboration by uniting member agencies under a shared vision. The collective voice helps to amplify the COG's regional representation on the state and federal levels, ensuring the region's needs are heard and addressed. This unified voice can assist with legislative advocacy, state and federal funding proposals, and tourism efforts.

Sustainable Growth and Economies of Scale: By pooling resources and aligning efforts, ESCOG helps to shape long-term, sustainable solutions that benefit the entire region. This collaborative approach enhances cost-efficiency, allowing ESCOG and member agencies to fundraise and implement complex projects with shared regional vision that would be beyond the reach of individual jurisdiction.

Regional Identity: Through interagency collaboration and a clear commitment from all members, ESCOG fosters a strong regional identity that resonates within and beyond our communities.

VALUE FOR INDIVIDUAL JURISDICTIONS: sharing best practices, addressing problems beyond individual agency capacity, collaboration and collective capacity, elevating the visibility of issues that all organizations share, understanding the constraints of each agency, making improvements in focus areas specific to each jurisdiction, monetary contributions, creating avenues for funding and collaboration with other entities, representation of each agency, a greater sense of belonging to a larger community, increased regional engagement

In summary, ESCOG builds regional engagement space for member agencies to share best practices, exchange ideas, collaborate and increase capacity to access funding and implement projects that benefits individual agencies and regions as a whole.

Specifically:

Strength in Collaboration: ESCOG creates a space for member agencies to share best practices and address challenges that go beyond the capacity of individual organizations. By working together, agencies can leverage each other's strengths to find solutions that benefit everyone. Current regional roundtables include economic development, housing, wildfire and recreation. Additional collaboratives could include agriculture, land use, transportation, or others.

Maximizing Resources and Opportunities: Through collective efforts, ESCOG brings additional capacity for accessing funding and implementing projects that would be difficult for individual agencies to achieve alone. For example, ESCOG has led and participated in funding efforts around California Jobs First, Broadband collaboratives, CEDS, Climate Collaborative funding and Prop 4, avenues for housing and transportation funding.

Elevating Shared Issues and Building Regional Community: ESCOG amplifies the visibility of regional issues that impact all member agencies, fostering a greater sense of belonging and engagement. This unified representation strengthens community ties and ensures that all voices are heard on a larger scale.

Building Relationships and Collaboratives with Tribal and Federal Partners. ESCOG identifies opportunities to advocate on land management / tenure issues, including LADWP.

VALUE TO RESIDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY: All of the above, plus sharing a common story and fostering a region of shared community; better services and improvements for the community; a sustainable and more resilient region (economically and socially); getting projects planned and "shovel-ready" that focus on multijurisdictional issues; greater benefits from collaborative work; relief from shared regional issues such as housing and natural disasters; efficient government; a vibrant and connected community; a strong regional identity; a safe and more prosperous future; and regional opportunities for small business growth.

In summary, ESCOG enhances the sustainability and resiliency of the region, allowing residents to receive greater benefits and services resulting from the collaborative efforts of ESCOG's member agencies. ESCOG fosters a more vibrant community with a strong regional identity.

Specifically:

Building a Stronger Community Together: ESCOG helps the region share a common story and build a regional identity that connects all. This unity fosters a vibrant and connected community where everyone feels they belong, making it easier to work together on local issues.

Identifying and Implementing Regional Priorities: ESCOG serves as a convener for regional conversations to identify ESCOG priorities and alignment with member agency priorities. Where appropriate (i.e. for topics related to the COG's core functions play a role in fundraising for and implementation of projects.

Improving Services and Preparing for the Future: By collaborating with various agencies, ESCOG helps residents receive better services tailored to their needs and identify solutions that provide relief to communities when they need it most. ESCOG can serve as a nimble interjurisdictional partner to incubate programs in anticipation of future funding opportunities (e.g. Climate collaborative, recreation planning, and coordination with federal partners).

Tackling Local Challenges Together: ESCOG focuses on getting projects ready that tackle shared problems, such as housing and wildfire resiliency, helping create a network of shared resources, best practices, collaboration, and efficiency of scale.

The Board acknowledged that as a region they struggle with telling the story and suggested exploring ways to increase community and tribal engagement.

STRATEGY: SETTING PARAMETERS AND PRIORITIES

CONVENINGS (AS A TACTIC)

The Board affirmed the value and strength of ESCOG as a regional convener, recognizing its ability to provide a space for regional information sharing, building a regional voice, fostering long-term collaboration, and engaging with tribal communities. The Board also cautioned about the need to balance the action items produced from convenings with ESCOG's capacity and authority to implement these actions. Funding for convenings remains a challenge.

Based on the discussion, **the Board suggested exploring the following action items:**

- Request increased allocations and line items in the budget for convenings from partners.
- Increase tribal engagement.
- Invest in and build additional capacity for convenings by identifying entities that can assist with this work and leveraging resources.
- Clarify ESCOG's convening role. Differentiate between convenings with action-oriented convenings' outcomes that would require additional capacity from ESCOG to implement actions (for example topics related to ESCOG's core functions around, Broadband, Economic Development, and Ecosystem Management and Sustainable Recreation) and convenings where ESCOG simply serves as a facilitator to hold regional space for information sharing (for example topics related to broader regional priorities like arts and culture).

FINANCE

Cash flow, financial capacity, and stability remain ongoing challenges for the organization. To address these financial issues, the Board suggested considering identifying additional partners to rely on for support.

The **Board suggested** the following:

- Explore potential partnerships with organizations that can provide additional financial support.
- Initiate conversations with regional managers about the extra capacity that member agencies can offer in response to unexpected challenges with pursued projects.
- Explore opportunities to share staff in key roles between member agencies and ESCOG.
- Share more information with the board to better understand financial capacity for reimbursement.
- Engage in conversations with member agencies to determine if they can provide additional support – either financially or in-kind.

ADVOCACY

The Board also discussed their role in advocacy. Without additional capacity, ESCOG cannot fully engage in advocacy efforts, but can forward letters, including letters of support, to prospective associations representing counties and cities. The board also suggested review of their policy platforms.

The **Board asks** COG's Executive Director to identify and flag issues related to authorized program areas that require additional advocacy efforts. In return, Board members can make phone calls and write or sign letters to provide support.

Action Item:

- Prepare legislative platform based on commonalities between member agencies.

IDENTIFYING GAPS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

EXPANDING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The following ideas were proposed to help ESCOG increase its capacity:

- Leverage the staff, skill sets, and expertise of ESCOG's member agencies to enhance capacity. Board members can work with executive staff at their agencies to engage in this effort.
- Utilize CSAC's grant writing technical assistance.
- Explore the possibility of hiring grant writing consultants.
- Consider contractors who can assist with specific aspects of organizational management, such as communications, project implementation, convenings, and/or board administration.
- Explore additional discretionary funds available through member agencies.

The **Board** had additional **requests**:

- Provide a roadmap that identifies capacity needs, outlines steps to address these issues, and details how partner agencies can potentially assist.
- Hold the Board accountable for directing their respective agencies to engage with ESCOG and support its initiatives.
- Develop a tactical plan for the board that operates at a high level.

Action Items for the Board:

- Communicate with their respective executives about the benefits of "sharing" staff when needed to expand ESCOG's capacity.

COMMUNICATING VALUE

The board acknowledged the importance of branded communication and the need to effectively convey COG's value while promoting its good work to the public.

The Board proposed the following ideas:

- Develop a branded communication engage the public effectively and generate support.
- Identify additional communication opportunities where ESCOG can partner with member agencies to articulate value.
- Provide quarterly updates to member agencies on ESCOG activities.

Action Items for the Board:

- Report back to their boards and articulate ESCOG's value during meetings. Consult with Elaine individually on key communication points.
- Act as ambassadors to agencies, communities, and partner organizations by sharing opportunities with Elaine and leveraging unique leadership opportunities to change the narrative.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop legislative platform based on member agency priorities.
- Build capacity by:

- Leveraging the staff, skill sets, and expertise of ESCOG's member agencies to enhance capacity. Board members can work with executive staff at their agencies to engage in this effort.
- Utilizing CSAC's grant writing technical assistance.
- Exploring the possibility of hiring grant writing consultants.
- Considering contractors who can assist with specific aspects of organizational management, such as communications, project implementation, convenings, and/or board administration.
- Exploring additional discretionary funds available through member agencies.
- Spearhead collaboration efforts by:
 - Convening regional interest groups to foster collaborations and priorities to improve efficient deployment of capital and other resources. Areas for convening include: climate/ecosystem management, wildfire, sustainable recreation and tourism, economic development activities, housing, agriculture and land tenure, and arts and culture.
 - Creating a space for member agencies to share best practices and address challenges that go beyond the capacity of individual organizations. By working together, agencies can leverage each other's strengths to find solutions that benefit everyone.
 - Bringing additional capacity for accessing funding and implementing projects that would be difficult for individual agencies to achieve alone. For example, ESCOG has led and participated in funding efforts around California Jobs First, Broadband collaboratives, CEDS, Climate Collaborative funding and Prop 4, avenues for housing and transportation funding.
 - Amplifying the visibility of regional issues that impact all member agencies, fostering a greater sense of belonging and engagement. This unified representation strengthens community ties and ensures that all voices are heard on a larger scale.
 - Sharing a common story and fostering a region of shared community; better services and improvements for the community; a sustainable and more resilient region (economically and socially); getting projects planned and "shovel-ready" that focus on multijurisdictional issues; greater benefits from collaborative work; relief from shared regional issues such as housing and natural disasters;
- Establish a list of economic development priorities and opportunities in collaboration with member agencies, federal and other land management agencies, non-profit partners, Chambers of Commerce, and business owners.

Survey Results

See attached.

Resources List

CALCOG

Institute for Local Government

- [Leadership Resources for Elected Officials](#)
- [Ethics & Transparency Resources](#)
- [Public Engagement Resources](#)
- [Sample Codes of Conduct, Civility & Governance Handbooks](#)
- [On-Demand Webinars & Training for Local Governments](#)

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

- [Leadership Resources](#)

About ILG's Other Services

The Institute for Local Government (ILG) is a nonprofit organization that has served and supported California's local government leaders for over 65 years. We are committed to empowering and educating public servants by delivering real-world expertise that helps them navigate complex issues, increase their capacity, and build trust in their communities. Together, we work hand-in-hand with local agency staff and elected officials to build a strong foundation of good government at the local level, centered on trust, accountability, responsiveness, and transparency.

In addition to our Leadership & Governance work, we have three additional pillars of work including Public Engagement, Sustainability & Resilient Communities, and Workforce Development & Civics Education.

For Public Engagement, ILG can help build the capacity of your agency to advance equity and public engagement through peer learning and collaboration, training, coaching, technical assistance, and facilitation. ILG's public engagement services include:

- TIERS Workshops (Virtual & In-Person for Individuals and Teams)
- Customized Public Engagement Training
- Meeting & Committee Facilitation
- Convenings & Stakeholder Engagement

Work done through ILG's Sustainable & Resilient Communities pillar provides local leaders with capacity building services, technical support, partnership development, and educational resources to make informed policies, plans, and decisions around climate planning, land use, housing, infrastructure, and engagement that results in more equitable, sustainable, and resilient communities. Engage in ILG's Beacon Program. COGs are eligible to become [Beacon Program Champions](#). Beacon Champions help to promote and/or support the activities of local

agencies participating in the Beacon Program or is actively working to encourage local agencies to participate on their way to being more sustainable and resilient.

Finally, ILG's Workforce Development & Civics Education pillar demystifies what local government is, why it matters, and how to effectively serve or lead in cities, counties, and special districts. In addition to educating students and the general public on the purpose of local government and how to get involved through civic engagement and robust youth workforce programs, ILG also assists agencies with filling the workforce pipeline with diverse and qualified applicants.

ILG can support your local agency's workforce and civic education goals through a wide range of virtual and in-person services. ILG maintains an online suite of materials and resources and offers in-person trainings and project-support to grow your workforce development program through apprenticeships, youth engagement, partnership development, and next generation outreach.

For more information, visit www.ca-ilg.org or email Melissa Kuehne at mkuehne@ca-ilg.org.



**Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority Agenda**

STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority

From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director

Subject: Approve Agreement Regarding Wildfire Preparedness Services to be Provided by Inyo County to the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority

Meeting date: February 26, 2025

Prepared on: February 19, 2025

Attachments: A) Agreement Regarding Wildfire Preparedness Services to be Provided by Inyo County to the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority

ANALYSIS:

Per the Board's direction, staff has been working to identify sustainable capacity to meet current grant deliverables, as well as the long-term strategic objectives of the ESCOG, and the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator in particular. As provided by your Board during the September strategic retreat, the staff strategy presented for your consideration includes leveraging staff of member agencies with specific expertise and/or capacity.

Inyo County and Mono County currently each employ a Calfire funded Wildfire Coordinator position with expertise in regional wildfire resiliency agencies and programs. Due to the expiration of Calfire funding for the position in Inyo County, ESCOG has an opportunity to utilize some of its grant funding to hire Inyo County's Wildfire Coordinator as a consultant. This will be very beneficial to ESCOG because ESCOG needs additional capacity to support its grant deliverables, and hiring an already-established, local Wildfire Coordinator will allow ESCOG to leverage the institutional knowledge established by the Wildfire Coordinator to strengthen regional collaboration and partnerships with federal partners. This capacity would support ESCOG's Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program and would be funded by the CDFW Proposition 1 grant and Inyo National Forest Liaison grant.

To fulfill this goal, Inyo County has provided the attached agreement, which would allow Inyo County staff to provide Wildfire Preparedness services to the ESCOG.

The agreement includes the specific qualifications of the staff to provide Wildfire Preparedness services, specific duties to be performed, reporting structure, and payment terms.

Specifically, Inyo County will invoice the ESCOG on a quarterly basis for the costs of salary, benefits, actual travel, actual costs fixed or variable costs, and a fixed 15% administration fee. The agreement also provides for an annual not-to-exceed amount as a way to protect ESCOG against any large, unanticipated fluctuations in these costs. The not-to-exceed amount will automatically increase by 10% every year to allow for anticipated increases, such as merit or COLA increases in the position's salary. The contract can be terminated with 30 days' written notice.

The agreement distinguishes the powers and authorities of Inyo County and ESCOG such that no organization may make binding obligations on behalf of the other, that no Inyo County employee is considered an employee of the ESCOG and that the agreement does not in any way constitute or authorize a joint-venture.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

None.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board review the Agreement Regarding Wildfire Preparedness Services to be Provided by Inyo County to the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority and provide feedback to staff for modification, if desired. If no modifications are desired, staff requests the Board authorized the Chair to execute the Agreement Regarding Executive Director Services to be Provided by Inyo County to the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority.

**AGREEMENT REGARDING WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS SERVICES TO BE
PROVIDED BY INYO COUNTY TO THE
EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY**

This Agreement is entered into by and between the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments Joint Powers Authority (“ESCOG”) and the County of Inyo, a political subdivision of the State of California (“the County”).

Recitals:

A. Section 3.03 of the Joint Powers Agreement Establishing the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments provides that ESCOG may “contract for any services judged by the ESCOG to be necessary or convenient for carrying out its purposes and to pay the costs of such services.” Section 3.03 further provides that ESCOG may contract with an ESCOG member to obtain such services.

B. ESCOG and the County wish to enter into a contract to permit an employee or employees of the County to provide wildfire preparedness services to ESCOG as spelled out below. ESCOG and the County further wish to set out the compensation to be provided to the County in return for the provision of wildfire preparedness services.

Terms and Conditions:

The parties hereto agree as follows:

1. The County shall provide an employee or employees who can perform the wildfire preparedness services for ESCOG that are outlined in the Scope of Work, which is attached hereto as Exhibit A. Requests by ESCOG to the County to perform under the Agreement will be made by the ESCOG Board of Directors, and shall be directed to Nate Greenberg, County Administrative Officer (or such other individual as may be designated by the County).

2. Any employee assigned by the County to provide the services outlined in Exhibit A shall meet the following minimum qualifications:

- a. At least two (2) years of progressively responsible full-time experience actively working in wildfire resiliency, fire prevention and/or the emergency management/preparedness field, whether through local or county-wide Fire Safe Councils, Resource Conservation Districts, or with a county/state/federal level department or agency or the private sector.
- b. A degree in a field related to the experience in Section 2(a).

3. As compensation for the provision of the services spelled out in Exhibit A, ESCOG shall pay the County as follows:

- a. ESCOG shall make recurring payments for the life of the contract to the County based on a detailed billing provided by Inyo County on January 1, March 1, June 1, and September 1 of each year in the amount equal to all of the following:
 - i. The cost incurred by Inyo County for the salary and benefits provided to the Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator during the preceding quarter; and
 - ii. Actual travel expenses incurred by the Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator during the preceding quarter; and
 - iii. Actual fixed or variable costs associated with this position, including but not limited to technology, space utilization, or other related expenses; and
 - iv. A fixed contract administration fee in the amount of 15% of item 3(a)(i) to cover “overhead” expenses related to this position being paid via Inyo County payroll.
- b. It is understood by and between the parties that the Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator may spend time on tasks that are not related to ESCOG. In anticipation of this, the Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator will accurately track time in a County system such that the actual time spent on ESCOG activities may be billed within a given quarter.
- c. ESCOG and the County recognize that, as a member of ESCOG, the County is obligated to make an annual payment to ESCOG pursuant to section 5.01 of the ESCOG JPA Agreement. The County and ESCOG agree that ESCOG may offset any money due to the County pursuant to this contract by the amount of the County’s annual contribution to ESCOG under the JPA Agreement.
- d. The total sum of all payments made by ESCOG to the County for services and work performed under this Agreement shall not exceed \$150,000 for the first year of the contract (the “not-to-exceed amount”). For each subsequent year of the contract, the not-to-exceed amount shall be calculated as the previous year’s not-to-exceed amount, plus 10%.

4. The Parties understand and agree that the costs that the County incurs to employ a Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator—and therefore the costs that ESCOG is obligated to pay the County—will fluctuate over time. By way of example only, the Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator may receive merit or cost of living wage increases over the life of the contract, or the County may employ different individuals whose different experience merits different base salaries over the life of the contract. While the County shall have the sole authority to set the compensation and benefits and dictate the terms and conditions of employment for the Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator, the County shall endeavor to inform ESCOG’s fiscal staff of any anticipated changes to the costs associated with the County’s employment of a Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator as soon as the County becomes aware of anticipated changes.

5. The County shall send invoices for services to ESCOG in care of its fiscal staff or such other individual as ESCOG may designate, on the dates listed in section 3(b). Invoices shall be itemized to describe the costs incurred by the County. ESCOG shall pay invoices within 30 days of receipt.

6. This Agreement shall remain in full force and effect until terminated by any party,

without cause, by supplying 120 days' written notice of termination to the other party. Either party may also terminate this agreement at any time due to the other party's failure to perform its obligations under the contract, through oral or written notice to the other party (effective immediately).

7. All acts of the County, its agents, officers, and employees relating to the performance of this Agreement shall be performed as independent contractors, and not as agents, officers, or employees of ESCOG. The County, by virtue of this Agreement, has no authority to bind or incur any obligation on behalf of ESCOG. Except as provided expressly in Exhibit A, the County has no authority or responsibility to exercise any rights or power vested in ESCOG. No agent, officer, or employee of the County is to be considered an employee of ESCOG. It is understood by both the County and ESCOG that this Agreement shall not under any circumstances be construed or considered to create an employer-employee relationship or a joint venture.

8. This Agreement contains the entire agreement of the parties, and no representations, inducements, promises, or agreements otherwise between the parties not embodied herein or incorporated herein by reference, shall be of any force or effect. Further, no term or provision hereof may be changed, waived, discharged, or terminated, unless the same be in writing executed by the parties hereto.

Execution:

This Agreement shall be deemed entered into as of March 1, 2025 regardless of when actually approved or executed by the parties hereto.

<p>EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, a joint powers authority</p> <p>By: _____ Stephen Muchovej, Chair ESCOG Board of Directors</p> <p>APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____ ESCOG Counsel</p>	<p>INYO COUNTY, a political subdivision of the State of California</p> <p>By: _____ Scott Marcellin, Chairperson Inyo County Board of Supervisors</p> <p>APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____ County Counsel</p>
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Exhibit A
Scope of Work

Wildfire Preparedness Coordinator Services

- Support regional interagency coordination to understand and communicate operational procedures for inter-jurisdictional project implementation between the Inyo National Forest, ESCOG, and other partners, including but not limited to:
 - Financial procedures, in particular identifying potential obstacles presented by using different funding sources
 - Project approval requirements
 - Appropriate contracting mechanisms for project implementation.
- Assists in the coordination of Inyo National Forest Liaison and California Department of Fish and Wildlife Proposition 1 grant activities – Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator grant implementation.
- Partner with representatives from Inyo and Mono Counties, established wildfire mitigation groups (fire safe councils) within the region, the California Fire Safe Council Regional Coordinators, local volunteer fire departments, local tribal entities and landowner/management agencies to build a coordinated, region-wide wildfire mitigation strategy.
- Educate, encourage, and develop region-wide collaboration and coordination among wildfire mitigation groups, improving overall wildfire resiliency strategies and community preparedness.
- Build relationships between existing wildfire mitigation groups, connecting these groups with region-wide emergency management officials, collaborating on fire mitigation projects, sourcing, and assisting with region-wide wildfire grant applications, and performing outreach and communication across the region.
- Develop a census of all active wildfire mitigation groups, community stakeholders, landowner/management agencies, local tribes, contact points, and current collaboration efforts and projects.
- Build a system to track these groups and efforts, including researching and implementing software and project management tools, and integrate this information into a regional database.
- Develop relationships with these groups and host regular communications/meetings between existing wildfire mitigation groups and region-wide officials
- Assist with the development and implementation of agency communications, including website posts and updates, email marketing, newsletters and brochures for relevant project updates and inter-jurisdictional collaboration. Analyze gaps in region-wide wildfire resiliency and emergency preparedness and develop recommendations on how to fill those gaps
- Schedule meetings with wildfire mitigation groups to coordinate and connect their existing and planned wildfire mitigation projects
- Build a system to track groups/projects
- Become a stakeholder in the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program to assure

- local projects are integrated into the regional database
- Assist with grant sourcing and provide technical support with region-wide wildfire grant applications.
 - Attend monthly check-ins with the California Fire Safe Council Regional staff.



**Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG)
Joint Powers Authority Agenda**

STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority

From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director

Subject: Approve Submission of the U.S. Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant to the United State Department of Agriculture

Meeting date: February 26, 2025

Prepared on: February 19, 2025

Attachments: A) Draft U.S. Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant to the United State Department of Agriculture

ANALYSIS:

ESCOG staff has been collaborating with the Wildfire Coordinators for Mono and Inyo Counties to prepare an application for the U.S. Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant to the United State Department of Agriculture. Grant managers have indicated the proposal is strengthened by regional coordination. If awarded, the program would establish the Community Wildfire Defense Program under the ESCOG, with funding to reduce hazardous fuels in 32 high-risk, low-income communities throughout Inyo and Mono Counties by expanding grassroots community resiliency efforts of regional Fire Safe Councils (FSCs) and Firewise USA communities (FWCs). The proposed actions are informed by the Inyo County and Mono County Wildfire Protection Plans. Finally, this funding will support sustainable inter-jurisdictional community wildfire resilience efforts established by the ESCOG Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program, the Inyo and Mono County Wildfire Coordinators, the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance, and other partners working jointly to build wildfire mitigation capacity across jurisdictional boundaries.

The project aims to enhance wildfire resilience in Inyo and Mono Counties through three key goals: establishing a Regional Hazardous Fuel Removal System, developing a Communities Wildfire Defense Program, and empowering residents to mitigate wildfire risks. Over five years, the initiative aims to remove community level hazardous fuels through 320 cleanup events, process biomass into compost, and deploy specialized equipment such as chippers and an airburner for efficient disposal (heavy equipment will be operated by qualified County public works staff compensated by grant funds). It will also establish dedicated wildfire defense capacity within ESCOG, supporting inter-agency coordination, home ignition assessments, and GIS mapping for risk reduction. Additionally, the project emphasizes community engagement through educational events, volunteer training, and targeted fuel

reduction for high-risk homes. The total project cost is \$5.5 million, covering equipment, personnel, waste disposal, and contractual services, ensuring a sustainable, long-term wildfire mitigation strategy for the region. Grant funds will be used over 5 years to reduce wildfire risk through hazardous fuel removal.

This will be achieved through a combination of Defensible Space Home Assessments performed by local Fire Department and CalFIRE staff, community outreach and education, strategic contracting for fuels treatments, and working with local County solid waste agencies to support 96 local fuel mitigation events in high-risk communities throughout the 2 counties by offering chipping and haul-away services during fuel mitigation events.

The Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program is a project designed to bridge the gap between ongoing/proposed landscape-scale hazardous fuels reduction work on federal, state and Tribal lands and, the limited to non-existent efforts to remove excess hazardous fuels from within local communities in Inyo and Mono counties. Although there are several multi-agency, collaborative public lands' fuels reduction projects in various stages of development/implementation in the region, including but not limited to the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Project (ESCCRP) and various hazardous fuels reduction projects on BLM, Inyo National Forest, Tribal, state and private/non-profit lands, there has been limited, coordinated and consistent to-scale efforts to remove hazardous fuels from within local communities. Although there has been progress (eight new Firewise Communities have been recognized and 15 more are under development at the time of this writing), the existing FSC and Firewise communities capacity to do at-scale fuels reduction work is limited, due to a lack of regional, county and community capacity and funding.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

If awarded, the ESCOG would administer the \$5.5 million grant over 5 years, which includes \$946,400 for (2) FTE Wildfire Coordinator positions, \$722,541 for indirect costs including ESCOG administration, \$2.1 million for contractual services for implementation, including compensation for County Public Works staff participation.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board approve submittal of a grant application to the US Forest Service for their Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWPG) Grant Application, and if awarded with the requested match waiver, authorize the Chairperson's signature on all pertinent documents, subject to legal review. The Total Project Cost is not to exceed \$5,539,481.

FY 2024 Community Wildfire Defense Grant

Roofing Ordinance (Y/N):	
Keyword:	
Dollar Amount Requested:	\$ 4,931,507.00
Matching Share:	\$ 0.00

This document is for proposal development only and does not include every question required for the application. Applicants must contact their state or federal contact to get a unique link to enter this information into the online submission system at CWDG.Forestrygrants.org.

1	Proposal Cooperator (Community Contact)	
	Cooperator Organization:	Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
	Contact Person:	Kristen Pfeiler
	Address:	
	City/State/Zip Code:	
	Phone (Work/Cell):	
	Email:	
1	Applicant Information (Implementer of Project)	
	Applicant:	Eastern Sierra Council of Governments
	Contact Person:	Kristen Pfeiler
	Address:	
	City/Zip Code:	
	Phone (Work/Cell):	
	Email:	
	Fax:	
	Federal Tax ID\DUNS\UEI #:	ZZWPNJNHUA15 CAGE/NCAGE97BE7

2	Project Information	
	Name of Project:	Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program
	Community Name(s):	Coleville, Topaz, Walker, Mono City, Lee Vining, June Lake, Mammoth, Benton, White Mountain Estates, Chalfant, Hammil Valley, Crowley Lake, Swall Meadows, Sunny Slopes, Paradise, Mustang Mesa, Bishop, Big Pine, Cartago, Charleston View, Darwin, Dixon Lane-Meadow Creek, Furnace Creek, Homewood Canyon, Independence, Keeler, Lone Pine, Olancho, Pearsonville, Round Valley, Shoshone, Tecopa, Trona, Valley Wells, West Bishop, Wilkerson, Alabama Hills, Aspendell, Coso Junction, Deep Springs, Laws, Rovana, Sandy Valley
	County(ies):	Inyo and Mono Counties
	Congressional District:	3
	GIS Coordinates (choose one)	
	Reference Point Name:	Eastern Sierra Region
	Lat/Long:	37.3635, -118.3951
	Description:	Inyo County and Mono County California

	Area Name:	
	Boundary Lat/Longs:	
	Description:	

DRAFT

Brief Project Overview and Purpose (0 points):

Provide a brief overview and purpose statement for the project, addressing the overall intent of this program to assist communities with planning and mitigating their risk against wildfire.

3	<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Project Overview and Purpose (3000 characters including spaces)</p> <p>In response to escalating wildfire risks in Inyo and Mono Counties, this project establishes a sustainable, consistent, and streamlined approach to reducing fuels in 32 high - risk, low - income communities spread over the 13,300 square miles of the Eastern Sierra. This project invests in workforce capacity, community engagement and education, and targeted hazardous fuel reduction in a multi-pronged strategy that ensures private land, community areas, and public lands work seamlessly in their mitigation efforts to protect our communities from catastrophic wildfire.</p> <p>1. Establishing the Communities Wildfire Defense Program within ESCOG</p> <p>This goal focuses on integrating existing County-specific wildfire workforce to form a regional Wildfire Defense Program (the Program) under the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG). The Program unites Inyo and Mono County Public Works, the Whitebark Institute, local fire departments (Bishop and Mammoth Lakes), and Tribal fuels reduction crews (Bishop Paiute and Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribes) into one cohesive program.</p> <p>The Program will serve as an operational backbone, providing coordination and support for community-by-community wildfire mitigation projects that will be operationalized through the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (ESWA), Fire Safe Councils and Firewise USA communities, as well as with partners in water, recreation, and conservation initiatives. ESCOG staff funded by the Program plan to coordinate, arrange, and host 320 hazardous fuel reduction events throughout the two counties over the length of the grant period, as well as manage contracts for home ignition zone assessments across the service area and help to lead a comprehensive fire suppression water infrastructure inventory.</p> <p>2. Community Engagement & Education</p> <p>Recognizing that lasting resilience requires an informed public, the Program will implement a home assessment and resident outreach program using the FireAside software. This component uses local experts to educate community members about wildfire risks and guides them in adopting prioritized mitigation measures on their homes and neighborhoods.</p> <p>3. Hazardous Fuel Reduction</p> <p>The CWDG grant will fund the acquisition of equipment including chippers, roll-off dumpsters, and a towable airburner to efficiently remove combustible vegetation from the communities. Using this equipment and coordinated through ESCOG staff, contracted fuel reduction crews and local County solid waste staff will support hazardous fuel reduction events by providing curbside chipping and haul-away services.</p> <p>This integrated approach aligns top priority projects from the Inyo and Mono Community Wildfire Protection Plans, supports key California Action Plan priorities, and advances the Cohesive Strategy’s goal of fire - adapted communities, while laying the groundwork for long - term resilience across the</p>
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	<p>Eastern Sierra.</p> <p>remove 9,500 tons of hazardous fuel; complete 1,250 home ignition zone assessments; and treat at least 200 high-risk homes with fuel reduction services.</p> <p>Additionally, the Project will create a comprehensive water infrastructure inventory with a focus on identifying needs for fire flows, water storage, and access needs to address local firefighting needs.</p>
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Grant Component (0 points)

Respond with the grant component type that applies to the application: (please select only one per application)

- 1.) Creating or Updating a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) that is more than five (5) years old.
- 2.) Project described in a CWPP that is less than ten (10) years old.

Grant Component Type (3000 characters including spaces)	
4	<p>This Project pulls together many of the top-priority Inyo and Mono CWPP projects to create a comprehensive program to reduce community hazardous fuels across high-risk, low-income, rural communities in Inyo and Mono County.</p> <p>Inyo County’s CWPP was updated in 2024 with 11 high-priority projects. The proposed Program funded by this grant primarily implements the following Inyo County CWPP projects: enhancing green waste disposal (RL#10 p123), supporting defensible-space, home-hardening, and home assessments (FAC#5 p134), mapping and assessing water resources for fire suppression (FR#1 p145), and forming a regional fire-adapted communities program serving both Inyo and Mono Counties (FAC#6 p135) to enhance wildfire preparedness and safety.</p> <p>Please see Inyo County’s CWPP <u>(INCLUDE LINK TO CWPP)</u> for a complete list of projects.</p> <p>The Mono County CWPP was written in 2009, updated in 2019, and is currently being updated again as part of the Mono County and Town of Mammoth Multi Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The proposed Program funded by this grant primarily implements the following Mono County CWPP projects: sustains the County Wildfire Coordinator (MJHMP p. 200 Table 5.1); prioritizes protection of communities and residents from wildfire (MJHMP p 262-263/CWPP 7.2.1); prioritizes protection of critical facilities (MJHMP p 262-263/CWPP 7.2.2); support fuels treatment projects/defensible space mitigation work and training (MJHMP p 329-330/CWPP 7-69 to 7.70, Section 7.6); and prioritizes using education to train and equip residents to mitigate the impacts of wildfires (MJHMP p 261-264/CWPP 7-3 to 7-4).</p>

Both CWPPs and the program align with the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy's three tenets of (1) Resilient Landscapes – Reducing hazardous fuels and utilizing biomass sustainably; (2) Fire-Adapted Communities – Expanding community education, home assessments, and defensible space programs; and (3) Effective Wildfire Response – Improving water resource mapping and fire suppression infrastructure.

The program also supports the California Forest Action Plan's core tenets, particularly Improving Forest Health and Resilience; Promoting Sustainable Biomass Utilization; Protecting Communities and Infrastructure; and Expanding Collaboration and Shared Stewardship.

DRAFT

Is your community considered at-risk? (0 points)

Please respond yes or no if the community is considered "at-risk" (please refer to the definition within the NOFO). Provide a link to the verification source.

	At-Risk Community (3000 characters including spaces)
5	<p>Yes. Both Mono and Inyo County, CA are considered "at risk" with a Wildfire Hazard Potential higher than 95.2% and 73.5% of counties in the nation respectively. (Source: Wildfire Risk to Communities, Version 2. 2024 as reported by the CWDG Data Tool).</p> <p>Recent wildfires in the region have underscored the serious risk facing both Counties. The Round Fire (2015) started in Inyo County then crossed into Mono County where it burned 7,000 acres, destroying 40 homes and forcing evacuations in two communities. The Mountain View Fire (2021) started in the community of Walker in Mono County and burned 96 homes in a matter of a few hours, claiming one life along the way. These two fires alone took out almost ten percent of the Mono County permanent resident housing base.</p> <p>These fires highlight how quickly flames can spread from rugged public lands into residential areas, driven by steep terrain and high winds. Multiple other fires have burned nearly half of the Eastern Sierra foothills west of the US. 395 corridor since 2013. These fires have profoundly changed the vegetation regime of the Eastern Sierra, sparking a widespread conversion from sage and juniper landscapes to cheatgrass and other invasive species.</p> <p>In addition, the Lions Fire (2018) Creek Fire (2020), burned thousands of acres of federal land to the west of our Counties, resulting in weeks of 1000+ AQI ratings in the region and, shutting down the Inyo National Forest for over a month. These events, and several others like them over the years, decimated the recreation-based economy for these time periods (and beyond).</p> <p>The region's demographics and infrastructure limitations compound this risk. Nearly 22% of residents in Inyo County and 14% in Mono County are over the age of 65, making evacuations particularly challenging. Many residents live in remote areas with limited road access, unreliable communication infrastructure, and no formal emergency water systems, increasing their vulnerability during fast-moving wildfires. Low-income households face additional barriers, with fewer resources to invest in home hardening and mitigation.</p> <p>Mono and Inyo Counties have made significant strides to improve wildfire preparedness. Fire Safe Councils (FSCs) have expanded, and 26 Firewise USA communities are forming to engage neighborhoods in wildfire mitigation. Dedicated wildfire coordinators stabilized local FSCs in recent years, providing crucial administrative support for grant writing, project coordination, and community engagement. However, funding for these positions ended in October 2024, leaving a critical gap in preparedness efforts. Despite these challenges, regional collaboration through the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (ESWA) has strengthened, bringing together local, Tribal, state, and federal partners. Programs like the Citizens Wildfire Academy and the Eastern Sierra Climate and Community Resilience Project (ESCCRP) offer practical education and long-term resilience planning.</p>

Roofing Code/Ordinance (0 points)

Do you currently have, or will you adopt prior to grant award, an ordinance or regulation that requires that roofs for new building construction, as well as the reroofing or replacement of a roof on existing buildings, adheres to standards that are similar to, or more stringent than, the roof construction standards established by the National Fire Protection Association or applicable model building code established by the International Code Council (this is not a requirement for eligibility but determines source of funds).

Roofing Code/Ordinance (3000 characters including spaces)	
6	<p>Yes, both Inyo and Mono Counties have adopted the California Building Code (CBC) Chapter 7A, which mandates that roofing materials for new constructions, as well as reroofing or roof replacements, comply with Class A fire-rated standards. These standards are consistent with, or more stringent than, those established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the International Code Council (ICC).</p> <p>Chapter 7A of the CBC specifies that roofing assemblies in Fire Hazard Severity Zones must be tested in accordance with ASTM E108 or UL 790 and achieve a Class A fire classification. This requirement applies to areas designated as Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) zones, which include significant portions of Inyo and Mono Counties (codes.iccsafe.org).</p> <p>By adhering to these regulations, both Counties ensure that roofing constructions meet or exceed the fire safety standards set by the NFPA and ICC, thereby enhancing the resilience of structures against wildfires.</p> <p>As noted in the Inyo CWPP, all the communities within the County are designated as WUIs. Under the Inyo County Building Code, all new construction must comply with chapters of California Building Code applicable to WUI fire areas. All properties shall be maintained in accordance with defensible space requirements of the state (https://bit.ly/432l7Zx).</p> <p>While specific data for the Counties is limited, the broader trends in California provide some context. Statewide, between 2018 and 2023, nearly 354,000 homeowners experienced non-renewals of their insurance policies, representing approximately 1.17% of California homeowners. The number of non-renewals increased annually during this period, from fewer than 46,000 in 2018 to over 87,000 in 2023 (sfchronicle.com).</p> <p>In response to these challenges, the Mono and Inyo County Offices of Emergency Management have launched Fire Insurance Cancellation Resources webpages to assist residents facing non-renewals or cancellations. These resources offer guidance on steps to take if your insurance is not renewed and provides tips on making homes more resistant to wildfire threats, which can help in maintaining insurance coverage. (monocounty.ca.gov; ready.inyocounty.us)</p>

Grant Waiver (0 points)

Are you planning on applying for a grant match waiver based on the project serving an underserved community? Please respond yes or no.

Grant Waiver (3000 characters including spaces)	
7	<p>Yes. Inyo and Mono Counties are both considered underserved and “disadvantaged” counties based on the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool and eligible to apply for a cost-share waiver. (Source: https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6027).</p> <p>These two counties are among the most rural and isolated regions in California, spanning over 13,000mi², with population densities of 1.8 persons per mi² in Inyo County and 4.2 in Mono County (US Census Bureau). The counties are predominately public land (98% and 93% respectively), leaving limited local tax base to fund services like wildfire mitigation (note Inyo County’s General Fund revenue is \$73.8M, and Mono County’s is \$50.1M (<u>Inyo Budget</u>, <u>Mono Budget</u>)). Furthermore, the recent actions taken by the Federal Government to reduce federal jobs in these agencies, the region is facing significant risk with respect to land management and fire fighting capability.</p> <p>Poverty and economic instability increase vulnerability. Inyo County’s poverty rate is 11.8%, and Mono’s is 7.8%, while median household incomes remain well below the state median of \$84,097 (<u>U.S. Census: Inyo</u>, <u>U.S. Census: Mono</u>). Nearly 22% of Inyo’s population is over 65, making wildfire evacuations especially challenging. Many live in remote areas with limited road access and unreliable communications. Low-income seniors, who often lack funds for home hardening, are particularly at risk.</p> <p>The Counties’ limited resources leave critical wildfire projects underfunded. Without adequate support, hazardous fuel removal, defensible space inspections, and water infrastructure improvements remain out of reach. Residents face rising insurance cancellations and can’t afford basic home-hardening measures.</p> <p>In recent years, grant-funded wildfire coordinators helped stabilize Fire Safe Councils (FSCs), providing essential administrative support for grant writing and community engagement. These positions led to the formation of new councils, but funding ended in December 2024, leaving a significant gap.</p> <p>Despite these challenges, the Counties have made progress through regional collaboration and engagement. The Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (ESWA) strengthens coordination among local, Tribal, state, and federal partners, while the Citizens Wildfire Academy and Eastern Sierra Climate and Community Resilience Project provide avenues for practical wildfire preparedness.</p> <p>Without continued external funding, Inyo and Mono Counties will struggle to implement essential CWPP projects, leaving vulnerable communities unprotected. This program is vital for addressing key gaps, empowering residents, and building long-term resilience across the Eastern Sierra.</p>

Project Description (10 points)

Provide a comprehensive but succinct overview of the proposed project that includes basic details of who is doing what, where, and why this is important. Explain how the project is described in a CWPP (if applicable). Provide linkages to the tenets of the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and the State Forest Action

Plan. Specify if benefits to traditionally underserved or marginalized audiences are a component of the work.

Project Description (7500 characters including spaces)

All communities in the Eastern Sierra are rural and isolated, located in the Wildland Urban Interface or Intermix, with population densities as low as 1.8 persons per mi² in Inyo County and 4.2 in Mono County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Spanning 13,257 square miles, 98% of which is publicly managed, these communities are characterized by aging populations, limited infrastructure, and tight-knit networks that rely heavily on volunteers for wildfire mitigation. Rugged terrain and high winds drive unique fire behavior, rapidly spreading from public lands into residential areas. Unlike the contractor-supported western slopes of the Sierra, the Eastside, separated by a formidable mountain range, depends almost entirely on volunteers. Although strides have been made to expand Firewise USA and Fire Safe Council programs, build capacity on Tribal lands, and boost neighborhood engagement, the volunteer model is reaching its limits. These small, remote communities need external support to combat wildfire risk. With few hands, a limited tax base, and vast open land to manage, they cannot address this challenge alone.

The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) proposes the Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program; a three-part investment for the region that will strategically capitalize on the growing grassroots efforts of Fire Safe Councils (FSCs) and Firewise USA communities (FWCs) and connect them with government and Tribal resources, working in alignment to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires in Inyo and Mono Counties. The program’s specific goals are to

1. Develop a Regional Communities Wildfire Defense Program within ESCOG
2. Empower residents to mitigate wildfire risks on their properties and across their neighborhoods
3. Establish a Regional Hazardous Fuel Removal System

Funding is sought to purchase equipment, build administrative capacity, contract with existing local workforces, implement high-priority projects from Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), and expand education and outreach programs that promote fire adaptation and community resilience.

Years 1–2: Building the Foundation and Scaling Services

The Communities Wildfire Defense Program at ESCOG will launch in Year 1, with two key staff. One position will focus on developing collaboration systems and aligning cross-sector partnerships and projects, while the other will unite communities through education and support volunteer-driven wildfire preparedness efforts. Using GIS as well as the Fire Aside program, both staff will be involved in assessing water infrastructure and improving emergency planning in partnership with Fire Safe Councils, Firewise USA communities, volunteer Fire Departments, and Tribal governments.

Education and Community Engagement will begin with quarterly educational events and two annual cornerstone programs: Wildfire Resilience Week and the Last Chance Survival Simulation Workshop, helping residents adopt low-cost mitigation strategies and prepare for late-stage wildfire evacuations. Volunteer training programs for home ignition zone assessments will also launch in Year 1. Home ignition zone assessments will be supported through deployment of FireAside software, utilized by ESCOG staff and local Fire Department volunteers.

Hazardous Fuel Removal events will begin in year one upon the procurement of six roll-off dumpsters and two towable chippers, which will be procured, maintained, scheduled, and deployed by the two ESCOG staff in partnership with local County solid waste operations. Collected biomass will be

converted into compost in collaboration with Bishop Community Garden, Bishop Paiute Tribe, and Eastern Sierra Farm Fresh. By Year 2, fuel removal events will be scheduled on a regular basis with a minimum of 320 events planned throughout the life of the grant.

Years 3–4: Optimization and Regional Integration

Fuel removal services will be fully integrated into County solid waste operations to ensure long-term sustainability. Water infrastructure mapping will be completed and incorporated into emergency planning. Administrative support will expand to 30 Firewise USA communities, and wildfire mitigation planning will align with regional water and recreation initiatives.

Educational efforts will include quarterly events and cornerstone programs providing residents with ongoing resources and training in addition to strengthening information sharing and cross-sector collaboration.

Year 5: Evaluation and Sustainability

The final year will focus on evaluating outcomes, securing funding, and embedding the program into long-term County services. A transition plan will be developed to ensure long-term sustainability through grants, cost-share agreements, and a fee-for-service model. The program will culminate in a regional summit, showcasing outcomes and celebrating community contributions.

By Year 5, the program will remove 9,500 tons of hazardous fuel, equivalent to 633-792 acres of treated land; complete 1,250 home ignition zone assessments; treat 200 high-risk homes with fuel reduction services; conduct 320 community cleanup events across 32 high-risk, low-income communities; create a comprehensive water infrastructure inventory; and establish a Communities Wildfire Defense Program within ESCOG for long-term coordination and resilience.

Sustainability will be achieved by embedding hazardous fuel reduction practices into county operations, including integration with solid waste services for ongoing biomass processing. Contracting with local vegetation management crews will ensure a steady pipeline of skilled professionals, and cost-sharing agreements, additional federal and state grants, and private partnerships will provide ongoing financial support. Once created, continued use of technology and GIS mapping will support data-driven decision-making and performance monitoring in the long term, and the Regional Wildfire Defense Program will continue to coordinate wildfire mitigation efforts and adapt to future challenges.

By the end of the five-year grant period, the program will leave behind a stronger, more resilient region—one with the capacity, infrastructure, and leadership needed to safeguard its communities from wildfire for generations to come.

This project directly addresses multiple CWPP priorities, including enhancing green waste disposal capacity, supporting defensible space, home hardening, and home assessments, mapping and assessing water resources for fire suppression, supporting fuels treatment projects/defensible space mitigation work and training; prioritizes using education to train and equip residents to mitigate the impacts of wildfires; and forms a regional fire-adapted communities program serving both Inyo and Mono Counties to enhance wildfire preparedness and safety.

Both CWPPs and the program align with the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy's three tenets of (1) Resilient Landscapes – Reducing hazardous fuels and utilizing biomass sustainably; (2) Fire-Adapted Communities – Expanding community education, home assessments, and defensible space programs; and (3) Effective Wildfire Response – Improving water resource mapping and fire

suppression infrastructure.

The program also supports the California Forest Action Plan’s core tenets, particularly Improving Forest Health and Resilience; Promoting Sustainable Biomass Utilization; Protecting Communities and Infrastructure; and Expanding Collaboration and Shared Stewardship.

Applicant Budget				
	Grant Funds Requested	Match		Total Project Cost
		Applicant	Non-Federal Contributors	
Personnel/Labor:	\$ 946,400			\$ 946,400
Fringe Benefits:	\$ 283,920			\$ 283,920
Travel:	\$ 50,000.00			\$ 50,000.00
Equipment:	\$ 668,000.00			\$ 668,000.00
Supplies:	\$ 119,400			\$ 119,400
Contractual:	\$ 2,100,360			\$ 2,100,360
Other: Biomass disposal	\$ 1,316,860			\$ 1,316,860
Indirect Costs:	\$ 722,541			\$ 722,541
TOTAL:	\$ 5,539,481	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 5,539,481

Project Budget Explanation (10 points)

Provide any additional remarks needed to clarify your budget request. Clearly explain how the budget will be spent by line item, sources of match, and how expenditures are applicable and relevant to the goals and objectives of the project.

Project Budget Explanation (5000 characters including spaces)

10

***Goal 1: Develop a Regional Communities Wildfire Defense Program**

This goal is to establish a fully operational Communities Wildfire Defense Program under ESCOG to coordinate regional wildfire mitigation efforts, manage the hazardous fuels program, support home assessments, manage water infrastructure assessment, and ensure long-term program sustainability.

Personnel/Labor - \$946,400

-Salaries for two full-time staff (Regional Wildfire, Climate & Economic Resilience Manager and Regional Wildfire Preparedness & Community Engagement Coordinator) for 5 years.

Fringe Benefits - \$283,920

- Estimated 30% of salary

Travel – rounded down to \$50,000

Two FTE ESCOG Program staff estimated to perform 120 site visits, 30 regional and state meetings, 20 volunteer training workshops and community education events, and 10 statewide wildfire mitigation conferences (total 180 trips) over 5 years.

- Estimated approx. 300 miles round trip \$196.50 each - \$35,370
- Estimated lodging for 50% of trips - \$150 each - \$13,500
- Estimated per diem for 75% of trips - \$59 each - \$7,965

Travel total is approximately \$56,835, rounded down to \$50,000

***Goal 2: Empower Residents to Mitigate Wildfire Risks**

This goal promotes community engagement, volunteer training, and homeowner education to build a culture of wildfire preparedness and resilience. ESCOG staff will host quarterly educational events (20 total over five years) and two cornerstone programs: Wildfire Resilience Week and the Last Chance Survival Simulation Workshop. In addition, ESCOG will deploy and implement the FireAside software in partnership with local Fire Departments to train residents to conduct home ignition zone assessments (250 annually) and adopt low-cost wildfire mitigation strategies.

Supplies - \$119,400

-Community Engagement & Training, including educational materials, audio/visual equipment, marketing, venue rentals for regional workshops (2 annually), and community education events (4 annually) to promote fire adaptation and preparedness. Total \$50,000

- FireAside Home Assessment Software – Purchase and deploy software that will be used to conduct a minimum of 1,250 home ignition zone assessments across Inyo and Mono Counties and support scheduling 320 community fuel reduction events. \$5,000 startup fee in year 1 for software, then annual cost of \$10,000 for maintenance, support, and data storage. Total \$55,000

- Tablets for home assessments that will be used for real-time data collection on vegetation density, roof material, and defensible space compliance. The platform will generate automated reports for property owners with customized recommendations and prioritize high-risk, low-income households for vegetation crew assistance – 4 tablets at \$600 each - \$2,400; plus cellular service for tablets @

\$50/each per month for cellular service - \$12,000. Total \$14,400

***Goal 3: Establish a Regional Hazardous Fuel Removal System**

This goal focuses on creating the necessary infrastructure for regular hazardous fuel removal and sustainable biomass management in Inyo and Mono Counties. Conduct a minimum of 64 hazardous fuel removal events annually (38 in Inyo County and 26 in Mono County) for a total of at least 320 events. Remove and process 400 tons of hazardous fuel annually in Inyo County and 1,500 tons annually in Mono County for a total of 9,000 tons over 5 years. Convert biomass into compost in collaboration with local partners at landfill-based composting sites.

Equipment – \$668,000

- Towable 15” Chippers (2 units) – \$168,000 (Initial purchase + \$10,000/year maintenance)
- Rolloff Dumpsters (6 units) – \$100,000
- Towable Airburner – \$80,000
- Commercial Chipper Rental Fees – \$320,000 (two weeks/year to be used at solid waste facilities for chipping large-diameter material >15 inches)

Contractual - \$2,100,360

- Local Vegetation Crews to reduce hazardous fuels on 200 high-risk homes over five years (50 homes per year at \$5,000 per home). These crews will also assist at community cleanup events, focusing on creating defensible space around homes and mitigating wildfire risk - \$1,021,000
- County Chipping & Hauling Services for 320 hazardous fuel removal events over five years. This covers 2 crew members at \$72/hr for 16 hours across 19 communities twice per year in Inyo County. In Mono County it covers 3 crew members at \$90/hr for 16 hours across 13 communities twice per year - \$1,079,360

Other – Biomass Disposal Infrastructure – \$1,316,860

- Compost Containment Pads at 2 landfills, one in Inyo & one in Mono - \$1,079,360
- Waste Disposal fees for 9500 tons of hazardous fuels collected during 320 cleanup events @ \$25 per ton - \$237,500

Indirect Costs – \$722,541

(15% of the total program costs, excluding equipment and chipper rentals) Covers essential administrative overhead, including office space, utilities, and staff to support grant compliance, documentation, and reporting. ESCOG doesn't have a NICRA. The standard de minimis rate is 15%.

Measurable Outcomes Table

Use this table as a reference to complete the ‘Accomplishment’ section.

This table will not be in the online application and will only be a narrative question

	Number of Activities	Cost
	Planned	Planned
<u>CWPP</u>		
Development of New CWPPs		
Updates of CWPPs		
<u>Planning</u>		
Training in mitigation practices	1	
Tabletop or functional exercises, testing or evaluating plan effectiveness		
Planning development, including building codes, zoning ordinances, land use planning, public health and safety, mitigation, prescribed fire and smoke ready efforts		
Creating local/regional mitigation partnership or collaborative groups	1	
<u>Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Education/Outreach</u>		
Firewise or similar programs outreach to communities and property owners	1	
Fire education presentations	1	
Property inspections and/or assessments	1	
Training to conduct property inspections and/or assessments	1	
Implementation of WUI Structure/Parcel/Community Fire Hazard Mitigation Methodology (HMM) for community hazard reduction.	1	
<u>Reduce Hazardous Fuels / Restore Fire-adapted Ecosystems</u>		
Hazardous Fuels Reduction or Mitigation Projects, including maintenance	1	
Total # of acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels (direct grant only)	1	
Monitoring components of projects for effectiveness	1	
Prescribed fire training, including smoke management		
Design and installation of dry hydrants and cisterns		
Purchase and maintenance of equipment	1	

Accomplishments (10 points)

Clearly define how the project will be accomplished, including at least one of the quantitative accomplishment measures provided in the measurable outcomes table. Identify measurable outcomes and timelines (are the proposed activities clear and achievable, goals defined, outcomes measurable, # of acres treated, # of education/outreach programs, planning/assessment efforts clearly described, etc.). Describe any applicable less quantifiable return on investments.

Accomplishments (7500 characters including spaces)	
11	<p>The Communities Wildfire Defense Program reduces wildfire risk through fuel reduction, education, training, and collaboration. This workplan details activities, outcomes, and impacts tied to program goals and key metrics.</p> <p>Goal 1: Develop a Regional Communities Wildfire Defense Program</p> <p>*Objective: Build a coordinated regional framework for wildfire preparedness, integrating advanced technology, collaborative partnerships, and risk assessment tools to improve emergency response and resource allocation.</p> <p>*Program Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Regional Coordination: ESCOG will serve as the central coordinating body, facilitating regular meetings with Fire Safe Councils, Firewise USA Communities, and agency partners. Staff will track progress and align projects with CAL FIRE and county risk assessments.-Home Assessment and GIS Mapping: Use home assessment software to schedule assessments, collect real-time data, generate customized mitigation reports, and prioritize high-risk households for vegetation assistance. Integrate GIS mapping to monitor water infrastructure and community risk.-Data Sharing and Progress Monitoring: Collaborate with CAL FIRE and local agencies to share assessment data and track program effectiveness annual reports. <p>*Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Regional Partnerships: Attend 30 regional and state-level meetings to strengthen Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance efforts and resource alignment.-Risk Tracking: Use software to track progress and align assessments with regional risk management plans.-Monitoring: Produce annual progress reports and maps to track risk reduction and defensible space compliance. <p>*Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Improved Decision-Making: Data-driven planning will ensure strategic allocation of resources to the most vulnerable areas.-Increased Preparedness: GIS mapping and data sharing enhance regional response capabilities. <p>Goal 2: Empower Residents to Mitigate Wildfire Risks</p> <p>*Objective: Provide residents with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to reduce wildfire risk at the individual and community level through education and direct support.</p> <p>*Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Community Training and Outreach: Conduct 20 training workshops over five years (4 annually), targeting northern Mono, southern Mono, northern Inyo, and southern Inyo. Workshops will focus on home hardening, defensible space creation, and emergency preparedness.-Firewise USA Community Expansion: Assist communities in becoming Firewise-certified and expand

participation across the region.

-Home Ignition Zone Assessments: Conduct 250 assessments annually (1,250 total) with customized mitigation recommendations. Use assessment software to schedule and prioritize high-risk, low-income households for assistance.

-Volunteer Training: Offer one annual training for local volunteers, Fire Safe Councils, and fire department staff on defensible space assessments and mitigation.

***Outcomes**

-Training in Mitigation Practices: Conduct 20 training workshops over five years.

-Firewise Outreach: Support at least 30 active Firewise USA Communities by Year 5.

-Education: Deliver quarterly community-specific wildfire education presentations and 10 regional workshops (Wildfire Resilience Week and Last Chance Survival Simulation Workshop).

-Property Assessments: Complete 1,250 home ignition zone assessments and provide mitigation recommendations.

-Capacity-Building: Conduct annual volunteer training for defensible space assessments.

***Impact**

-Preparedness and Engagement: Residents gain practical wildfire mitigation skills, fostering a culture of self-reliance.

-Targeted Risk Reduction: High-risk households receive tailored support, ensuring resources are directed effectively.

-Workforce Development: A key component of this program is its connection to workforce development initiatives in the region. Cerro Coso Community College has developed a Wildland Fire and Forestry curriculum, which requires students to complete work experience internships. Sustaining the local vegetation crews and providing support to fire safe councils through this program will provide a natural opportunity for students to earn work experience credits while augmenting the program's capacity. These crews will support long-term workforce development and fill critical gaps in regional vegetation management, community preparedness, and fire response.

Goal 3: Establish a Regional Hazardous Fuel Removal System

***Objective:** Create and operate an infrastructure for hazardous fuel removal that supports safe and sustainable biomass management while reducing fire hazards across Inyo and Mono Counties.

***Activities**

-Hazardous Fuel Cleanup Events: Conduct 320 community cleanup events over five years (64 per year). Events will focus on hazardous fuel collection, chipping, and disposal in 32 high-risk communities, coordinated with local Fire Safe Councils, county public works teams, and Tribal vegetation crews.

-Chipping and Biomass Management: Deploy two towable 15" chippers, six rolloff dumpsters, and a towable airburner to manage biomass at community sites. A commercial chipper will be rented twice annually to process large-diameter materials (>15") at landfill chipping operations.

-Composting and Waste Disposal: Collaborate with county solid waste departments to convert biomass into compost, reducing landfill dependency and promoting sustainable biomass utilization.

***Outcomes**

-Hazardous Fuels Reduction: Conduct 320 cleanup events, removing 9,500 tons of biomass.

-Total # of Acres Treated: Treat approximately 633–792 acres of land, depending on vegetation density.

-Equipment: Procure and maintain two chippers, six dumpsters, and an airburner to support cleanup operations.

***Impact**

-Community Resilience: 100% of participating communities will have reliable green waste disposal services.

-Sustainability and Innovation: Biomass converted to compost will support local agriculture and

conservation efforts.

Implementation Timeline

*Year 1: Hire staff, purchase equipment, establish program logistics, and begin cleanup events and training. Conduct initial home ignition zone assessments and outreach workshops.

*Years 2–4: Scale up full operations, expand Firewise USA participation, continue cleanup events, and deliver ongoing education and training.

*Year 5: Evaluate program effectiveness, refine best practices, and secure long-term sustainability through continued funding and partnerships.

Cumulative Program Impact

*Quantitative Impact:

9,500 tons of hazardous fuels removed, treating 633–792 acres.

1,250 home ignition zone assessments completed.

200 high-risk homes treated with hazardous fuel reduction services.

20 training workshops, 30 regional/state-level meetings, and 10 regional workshops engaging over 1,000 residents.

*Less Quantifiable Return:

-Increased Community Resilience: Expanded Fire Safe Councils and Firewise USA Communities will create lasting local engagement. Local vegetation crews assist elderly, disabled, and low-income residents who cannot maintain defensible space on their own, ensuring equitable access to fire protection.

-Workforce Development: Integrating the local vegetation crews with the recently developed Cerro Coso Community College Wildland Fire curriculum and through work experience credits will address staffing shortages while building the next generation of wildland fire professionals.

-Sustainable Biomass Utilization: Collaborations with small-scale local composters and the planned bioenergy facility in Mono County will provide long-term solutions for biomass management.

Collaboration(10 points)

- 1.) Identify partners that have demonstrated a commitment and add value towards planning and carrying out the project.
- 2.) Describe what these partners and collaborators contribute.
- 3.) Demonstrate residual positive benefits, as a result of collaboration, related to capacity, skills, knowledge, infrastructure, or a replicable approach, among others.

Collaboration may be qualitative in nature, and the contribution of the partners may be more important than the number of partners involved.

12	<p>Collaboration (7500 characters including spaces)</p> <p>The Communities Wildfire Defense Program is a model of regional collaboration, bringing together key partners with specialized expertise to reduce wildfire risk and enhance community resilience. The Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) serves as the lead agency, coordinating regional mitigation efforts, managing grant administration, and ensuring alignment with county, state, and federal wildfire resilience initiatives. Recognizing wildfire mitigation as a regional priority, ESCOG plays a crucial role in cross-jurisdictional cooperation, empowering communities to sustain these efforts beyond the grant period. As part of its Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program, ESCOG’s leadership in the Pace and Scale Accelerator Project focuses on addressing capacity gaps in workforce development and biomass utilization—both key aspects of this program.</p> <p>Over the past two years, the Inyo and Mono County wildfire coordinators have been instrumental in supporting Fire Safe Councils (FSCs) and integrating them with agency partners, funding opportunities, and critical resources. They collaborated to form 26 new Firewise USA Communities (FWC) (prior to this time, there were no Firewise Communities within the region) and reform the Inyo-Mono Resource Conservation District (RCD), which aims to become a long-term home for a regional vegetation management crew and equipment lending library. With the funding for these county wildfire coordinator positions ending in December 2024, this project offers the opportunity to transition them into ESCOG, allowing them to more effectively leverage regional resources and enhance wildfire mitigation efforts across jurisdictions.</p> <p>FSCs/FWCs are vital community-level partners, engaging residents in education, organizing volunteer mitigation efforts, and guiding local defensible space work. By building community leadership capacity, these groups increase public awareness and participation in wildfire preparedness programs, empowering communities to take ownership of mitigation efforts. As part of this program, FSC/Firewise volunteers play an essential role in conducting Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) assessments, rallying neighbors for cleanup events, and assisting residents with hazardous fuel removal. While FSCs have been doing this work for years, the volunteer-driven nature of their efforts has limited sustainability. This project provides the resources and coordination needed to ensure these critical mitigation efforts can continue and expand, creating a more sustainable model for wildfire preparedness.</p> <p>Partnering with Inyo and Mono Counties is a major step toward addressing the persistent challenge of removing hazardous fuels from remote communities, where long travel distances often prevent timely and cost-effective disposal. The counties have hosted quarterly free green waste days, which have consistently demonstrated strong community participation. Expanding on this success, this program will help streamline hazardous fuel removal by integrating these county programs with community cleanup events and green waste disposal services. Through collaboration with local composters, Bishop Community Garden and Bishop Paiute Tribe, the counties will manage composting operations at the landfill, transforming biomass into valuable compost for local agriculture. This project will also support</p>
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the planned Mono County bioenergy facility, which will convert hazardous fuels into renewable energy, offering a scalable biomass solution.

The Whitebark Institute, a pivotal partner, is the lead organization for the Eastern Sierra Climate and Community Resilience Project (ESCCRP), a 60,000+ acre landscape-scale fuel reduction initiative. They also facilitate the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance, helping to plan and implement landscape-scale fuel reduction projects while leading outreach, workforce development, and biomass solutions.

CAL FIRE, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) contribute critical technical expertise, educational resources, and coordination between public and private landowners. These partners help ensure that mitigation efforts are strategic and well-coordinated across jurisdictions. They also provide defensible space education to residents in collaboration with the county wildfire coordinators, strengthening community knowledge and participation in wildfire preparedness.

Local vegetation crews are integral to this program's workforce capacity. The Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe is partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement a large-scale fuel reduction project on the reservation, although they are restricted from working within 100 feet of homes. The Whitebark Institute and Sierra Nevada Institute provided funding to help the Lone Pine Tribe clear hazardous fuel from around three homes, integrating with the larger project. This program will help sustain and expand those efforts. The Bishop Paiute Tribe manages two vegetation crews: one that works on the Eastern Sierra Climate and Community Resilience Project during the summer and seeks winter work, and another that removes hazardous fuels around homes. The Bishop Fire Department, which recently started a wildland fire program, faces challenges maintaining firefighter interest due to its volunteer-based structure. This project will create steady work for a small crew to conduct Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) assessments and fuel reduction, helping to build the program. Mammoth Lakes Fire Department serves as a successful model for this approach, inspiring other volunteer fire departments to adopt similar programs.

The biomass solution component is vital for long-term sustainability. Mono County's planned bioenergy facility will process biomass from the Eastern Sierra Climate and Community Resilience Project, converting hazardous fuels into renewable energy. Additionally, the Bishop Community Garden and Bishop Paiute Tribe Food Sovereignty Program will partner with the counties to manage small-scale composting operations at the landfill, turning biomass into valuable compost for local agriculture while reducing landfill dependency.

Workforce development is central to the program's sustainability. Cerro Coso Community College's Wildland Fire and Forestry curriculum offers a built-in work experience requirement that aligns seamlessly with the program's vegetation management activities. Students will gain hands-on experience while helping to address regional staffing shortages, building the next generation of wildland fire professionals. Additionally, the workforce partnership with the college offers a pathway to sustainability by creating a pipeline of trained students who can support tribes, volunteer fire departments, and FSCs, helping to bolster long-term capacity for community wildfire preparedness and response.

These collaborations significantly expand the program's capacity for wildfire mitigation and community preparedness while creating replicable solutions for other rural regions. The coordination between federal agencies, local governments, Tribal entities, educational institutions, and community-based organizations ensures that efforts are strategic, efficient, and community-driven. Together, these partners are not just reducing wildfire risk, they are building lasting infrastructure for resilience,

workforce development, and sustainable resource management in the Eastern Sierra.

Landscape Impacts (10 points)

Clearly define the scale of the project, including relationships with past, present, or future projects that, when combined, offer more benefits than when taken individually. Describe overall landscape that the project influences.

Landscape Impacts (7500 characters including spaces)

13 **The Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program** is designed to bridge the gap between several ongoing/proposed landscape-scale hazardous fuels reduction work on federal, state, and Tribal lands (such as the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Project (ESCCRP)) and the currently limited/non-existent efforts to remove excess hazardous fuels from communities in Inyo and Mono Counties.

Eight new Firewise Communities have been recognized, and 15 more are under development at the time of this application. However, the existing FSC and Firewise Communities have limited capacity to execute fuels reduction work at-scale due to a lack of regional, county, and community infrastructure. Further, most Eastern Sierra communities have only recently started this kind of work because large-scale property-damaging wildfires were uncommon in the region until the past decade (during which two of the most destructive wildfires in the region’s history have occurred, burning 140 homes).

Despite challenges, several communities have implemented chipper days and other fuels reduction projects within their communities, augmenting fuels reduction work done by local fire departments, Fire Safe Councils, and local government, such as Town Cleanup days in Mammoth.

As climate change accelerates, triggering extreme drought followed by extremely wet winters, excessive vegetation growth becomes hazardous fuels within and around communities at a pace which exceeds capacity for management. This is further complicated by the landownership pattern through which all communities are surrounded by public lands creating significant WUI issues. Reducing the impact and spread of wildfire within communities is not only critical to safety of residents, but also to protect local public lands which serve as the backbone of a tourism-driven economy.

The Project will build upon the work being done outside of communities and close the fuels reduction gap by educating and empowering community residents to protect their homes, property, the surrounding landscapes and as such the economy that drives the region.

The project will require intensive management by staff during its first two to three years as a wildfire resilient culture begins to slowly emerge, but to ensure sustainability into the future, the Project will strengthen the area’s Fire Safe Councils, which will have the goal of providing administrative and fiscal support for these volunteer-driven wildfire resilient communities.

The Project will contribute to the local forest, Great Basin and Mojave ecosystems that the Project spans by preventing or mitigating the effects of wildfire within a community and as such, protecting the public lands surrounding all Eastern Sierra communities. The project strives to further mitigate vegetative conversion along the lower elevation Eastern Sierra foothills (to cheatgrass and other

invasives) as well as address challenging vegetative conditions along our rare riparian corridors, in order to prevent the spread of catastrophic wildfires from within communities. These efforts will also help with soil moisture retention, revegetation efforts, as well as benefit sensitive species such as the Bi State Sage Grouse. Additionally, Project efforts will increase safety for first responders and firefighters to effectively suppress fires, should the need arise.

The Project aligns with the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, the State Forest Action Plan, and both Mono and Inyo counties CWPPs because all three of these documents emphasize the protection of private and/or residential property, public health and ecosystems from high intensity wildfires and as such, the protection of the region's economy.

DRAFT

Project Sustainability (10 points)

Clearly define how, or if, the project will sustain itself after the grant period is over. Describe any plans or steps that will be taken to continue the project benefits beyond the life of the grant.

Project Sustainability (7500 characters including spaces)	
14	<p>The Community Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program is designed to create a long-term, self-sustaining wildfire mitigation service for Inyo and Mono Counties. The initial five-year grant period provides critical startup funding, but the program is structured to transition into a sustainable model that ensures continued benefits well beyond the grant’s duration.</p> <p>To sustain this effort, the program will integrate into existing county and municipal services, leveraging the resources of Public Works and Solid Waste Divisions to offer chipping services and green waste disposal as part of regular operations. Inyo and Mono Counties have committed the landfill space and infrastructure to institutionalize these services and provide a cost-effective mechanism for ongoing fuel reduction efforts.</p> <p>Financial sustainability will be supported through cost-share agreements with Fire Safe Councils (FSCs) and Firewise USA Communities (FWCs), encouraging local investment in hazard reduction efforts. Additional funding streams such as local sponsorships, membership fees, and donation programs will be explored to offset operational costs and ensure community engagement.</p> <p>The Regional Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program under ESCOG will oversee program implementation, secure additional funding, and provide long-term coordination with local Fire Safe Councils. This Program will build upon existing regional wildfire resilience initiatives, including the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP), which has laid a foundation for landscape-scale wildfire mitigation efforts and addresses some of the challenges in fuel management on public lands, nearby communities that are addressed under this grant. By leveraging ESCCRP’s work, this program will integrate best practices and strategic planning already established for large-scale fuels management.</p> <p>Ongoing funding sources will include federal and state grants, such as those from CAL FIRE, FEMA, and the USDA, as well as Good Neighbor Authority and Stewardship Agreements with USFS and BLM. Developing long-term contracts with Tribal vegetation management crews and expanding cross-jurisdictional collaboration will further enhance sustainability.</p> <p>In the spirit of collaboration and problem solving that will benefit this project and the stakeholders it serves, there is a current bioenergy development project underway in Mono County. Mono County was awarded a Wood Innovations grant from the USFS in 2023. The grant funds a ‘pre-engineering/pre-development contract to begin the process to cite a bioenergy facility within the county. The proposed project is a 2.5 MW project that could take more than 30,000 BDT per year. This bioenergy project will support the fuels reduction work planned by this Project for local communities by giving accumulated wood chips a sustainable, carbon-friendly disposal site. In addition, the proposed bioenergy facility will use a technology compatible with the existing Ormat Technologies geothermal plant, the facility will be able to sell excess steam energy to Ormat for additional sustainability potential.</p> <p>Workforce development is another key pillar of the sustainability plan. The program will partner with</p>

Cerro Coso Community College's Wildland Fire, Forestry, and Outdoor Recreation Program to provide volunteer opportunities or even internships that give students practical experience in fuels reduction, defensible space inspections, and program administration. Additionally, local workforce development initiatives will be engaged to establish a dedicated vegetation management crew that can sustain long-term fuels reduction work. ESCOG is a regional convener for the Eastern Sierra Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, as well as the California Jobs First initiative, both of which identify workforce development for wildfire resiliency and community hardening as key industry opportunity for the region. This project will support workforce development needed to accomplish regional wildfire mitigation goals.

Technology and efficiency improvements will be achieved through the expansion of software, which will automate scheduling, track mitigation progress, and enhance program transparency. GIS mapping tools will also be used to assess fuel reduction impacts and support funding applications by demonstrating measurable program success.

Public-private partnerships will be developed to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach. Collaborations with biomass and composting industries will create viable pathways for processing wood waste, reducing long-term disposal costs, and aligning with broader sustainability initiatives. Partnerships with private landowners, utilities, and insurers will further diversify funding sources for ongoing mitigation efforts.

Responsibility for the program post-grant will be distributed among several key entities. ESCOG will lead regional coordination, funding acquisition, and program oversight, while county Public Works and Solid Waste Divisions will integrate chipping, hauling, and composting services into their operational workflows. Fire Safe Councils and Firewise Communities will continue to play an essential role in local outreach and community engagement. Tribal governments will be supported in expanding their vegetation management programs, with the potential to develop a regional hazardous fuels reduction crew. Additionally, the establishment of the Inyo-Mono Resource Conservation District (RCD) could provide a permanent home for a vegetation management workforce and an equipment lending library, further ensuring program longevity.

By leveraging a combination of government integration, cost-sharing models, workforce development, external funding, and private sector partnerships, this program will transition from a grant-funded initiative to a regionally coordinated wildfire mitigation effort. The outcome will be a scalable, sustainable solution for hazardous fuels reduction that strengthens community resilience and fire preparedness across Inyo and Mono Counties.

Does this project benefit a low-income community? (10 points)

Does this project benefit a low-income community as defined in the NOFO?

Please respond yes or no. Provide a link to the verification source.

Low-Income Community (3000 characters including spaces)

15

Yes. Inyo County, CA, meets the "low income" criteria. The Census Bureau estimates its median household income is between \$57,964 and \$68,870. To qualify in California, the low-end of the estimate must be less than \$73,302. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey. Washington, DC. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, <https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6027>)

Yes. Mono County, CA, meets the "low income" criteria. The Census Bureau estimates its median household income is between \$66,650 and \$97,426. To qualify in California, the low-end of the estimate must be less than \$73,302. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey. Washington, DC. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, <https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6051>)

https://monocounty.ca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_division/page/9617/mono_county_mjhmp_final_052919_w-appdx.pdf: "Social Vulnerability: A number of community members considered to have higher vulnerability in a hazard event reside within the high and very high hazard severity zones of both the county and town. Reflective of the overall area, a large number of individuals in Mammoth Lakes, nearly 2,130, and 798 households are in the high fire severity zone, and another 132 households are in the very high severity zone.

With the growth of climate-change fueled wildfires in the region, some low-income communities may face higher home insurance costs or policy cancellations due to wildfire risk. Many residents have lost homeowners' insurance due to rising wildfire risk, further limiting their ability to recover from a disaster. Many homeowners in Inyo and Mono Counties struggle to afford the \$5,000-\$10,000 cost of home hardening and defensible space work, leaving them highly vulnerable to wildfires. Due to landownership constraints in the region, communities are widespread but densely packed; this speaks to the critical importance of a neighborhood-wide community mitigation approach that recognizes the interdependence of neighbors in combating fire loss.

Has this community been impacted by a severe disaster? (10 points)

Has this community been impacted by a severe disaster within the previous 10 years?

Please respond yes or no. If yes, provide a link to the verification source and demonstrate how it has impacted the location. Note: This is a two part question so read the directions carefully.

	Severe Disaster Impact (3000 characters including spaces)
16	<p>YES. Inyo County has experienced multiple severe natural disasters classified as Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, And Mudslides - twice in 2017 (FEMA ID#s DR-4305 & DR-4301) and twice in 2023 (+Landslides, FEMA ID#s DR-4683 & DR-4699). The storms substantially damaged and, in some cases, completely destroyed many roads that are critical infrastructure for, among other things, responding to or evacuating from potential wildfires. Communities were isolated, with no access or egress, for several days after these storms. Maintenance on these roads is substantial and is projected to continue over the course of many years. Due to the remote and rural nature of Inyo County, many of these roads are dirt and gravel to begin with, now partially and completely washed out, and will be impassable for quite some time. If the County experiences fire, access to and egress from some areas will be nearly impossible.</p> <p>The impact these storms had on vegetation has been extreme, leaving in their wake tremendous new growth and downed fuels. The unusual precipitation has caused an explosion of vegetation throughout the county including an exponential increase in various thistle brush that are already starting the transformation into tumbleweeds. Widespread avalanches, flooding, and high river flows have resulted in a large number of trees being uprooted or blown down, leaving a large volume of woody debris in riparian areas that act as a wick for wildfire in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).</p> <p>YES. Mono County has experienced several severe disasters (Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2024). Disaster Declarations Summary. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6051) including several in 2023: “Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, Landslides and Mudslides” including EM-3591-CA, EM-3592-CA, DR-4699-CA and several in 2017; DR-4308-CA, DR-4305-CA and DR-4301-CA. All of these resulted in a higher wildfire risk to the region following the events.</p> <p>Mono County’s Disasters of 2023 were due to a set of record-breaking winter storms which buried much of the county in deep snow. The storms of 2023 created multiple hazards, from buried propane tanks exploding and burning homes and injuring people to landslides, avalanches and later in the spring, snow runoff that triggered floods, landslides and more. In addition, the excessive snow triggered avalanches which closed roads in and out of the outdoor recreation dependent economy for up to a month at a time. Following the spring melt, desert vegetation grew back at an extremely high rate due, producing three-foot high grasses, even in sage brush ecosystems. The grass fuel load has since dried out.</p> <p>Similar storms in 2017 had a similar effect on potential wildfire intensity. Following 2017, Mono experienced the Mountain View Fire, the Slinkard Valley Fire, the Bootleg Fire and others totaling about 22,000 acres.</p> <p>Two extreme winter wildfires in Mono County in the past decade have burned almost ten percent of</p>

the permanent housing available in the region; the Round Fire of 2015 (7,000 acres) which burned 41 homes and the Mountain View Fire of 2021 (20,879 acres) which burned 98 homes. Both of these fires occurred during winter windstorms that triggered electric line sparks to ignite vegetation.

Prior to 2015, Mono County had never had a wildfire that burned more than one or two residences at a time; after 2015, there have been two. Prior to 2015 and the extreme storms of 2017 and 2023, most of the county's wildfires were limited to under 7,000 acres and relatively easy to fight due to the sparse, Great Basin or high alpine ecosystems; since 2015, that catastrophic wildfire "buffer" has all but disappeared due to extreme weather events triggered by climate change.

Does the project location have wildfire hazard potential? (20 points)

Please respond yes or no, if this project is located within an area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential as defined by a state, regional, tribal, territorial or national wildfire hazard potential assessment? Provide a link to the verification source.

Wildfire Hazard Potential (3000 characters including spaces)	
17	<p>MONO COUNTY: YES: https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6051 Mono County, CA, meets the "wildfire hazard potential" criteria and has a higher wildfire hazard potential than 95.2% of counties in the nation.(Source: Wildfire Risk to Communities, Version 2. 2024. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6051)</p> <p>INYO COUNTY: YES: https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6027 Inyo County, CA, is considered "at risk." It has a higher Wildfire Risk to Homes than 73.5% of counties in the nation.(Source: Wildfire Risk to Communities, Version 2. 2024. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6027)</p> <p>Explanation: The Eastern Sierra is a landscape of extremes, ranging from the highest mountain in the Lower 48, Mt Whitney at 14, 505 to Death Valley at minus 282 feet. This extreme topography creates extreme weather, including winter snow depths as deep as 60 feet on Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and the drought years of 2013-2015, which were recorded as the driest three years in 1,200 years by Dr. Daniel Swain, a research fellow at the NSF National Center for Atmospheric Research. The area is also considered to be arid overall, dominated by Great Basin/Mojave Desert lowlands which include some of the driest, hottest landscapes on Earth, Death Valley National Park. A pattern of extreme weather events has now been turbo charged by climate change, which has made the wet years and storms wetter, and the dry years even drier, especially over the past ten years, which include the ten years in the region's history where significant numbers of homes were burned; the only time in history when homes burned, in fact. These turbo-charged weather patterns have resulted in many changes, most of which make wildfire more likely and more extreme. That is because an increasing pattern of extreme rain/snow events triggers extreme vegetation growth in a landscape once dominated by</p>

sparsely vegetated sage and desert ecologies. Because the landscape is not adapted to such vegetation growth, most of the growth is invasive species such as cheatgrass. When an extreme wet event, be it a winter storm or a summer monsoon event, is followed by months or years of extreme heat and/or drought events, the wildfire danger grows exponentially. Downslope and upslope winds in the Sierra Nevada range, along with rising temperatures, dry fuels in the spring and summer, allowing conditions to deteriorate rapidly, creating an environment that is susceptible to wildland fire. Fine fuels (grass and leaf litter) can cure rapidly, making them highly flammable in as little as 1 hour following changes in relative humidity. Low live fuel moistures of shrubs and trees can significantly contribute to fire behavior in the form of crowning and torching. With high wind, grass and shrub fires can spread rapidly, engulfing communities, often with limited warning for evacuation. The area also has a wildfire winter season due to extreme topography added to climate change impacts.

DRAFT



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Executive Director
Subject: Accept the State of California's "Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience"

Meeting date: February 26, 2024

Prepared on: February 15, 2025

Attachments: A) Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

The Eastern Sierra has an economic model centered around recreation, tourism and the natural environment, most of which is managed by the federal government. These vital natural resources are under pressure from both overutilization and the threat of catastrophic wildfires. The principal economic driver in our Eastern Sierra region is our recreation-based tourism economy and without the natural resources for these activities, the region would realize economic impacts. To rebuild from a natural disaster like a wildfire would take many years and require dependence on outside resources to recover. In light of the current and anticipated wildfire risk environment in California, the recovery may not even be economically feasible.

The goal of adopting "California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience" is to engage on a state and federal level with programs that can provide funding to mitigate our exposure to these catastrophic events before they happen.

Adopting this plan should enhance our eligibility to receive state-level and federal funding for programs that will be generated from the recent passing of Proposition 4 and the reauthorization of the Great American Outdoors Act, which provide funding for wildfire prevention, recreation infrastructure and programming, and the protection of communities and natural lands from climate risks. By adopting this plan, the Town would become the first in the state to recognize this strategy, and the implementation of its key actions that will address our unique concerns.

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION:

The joint strategy consists of four goals with a number of specific key actions to address the effects of climate change and the threat of wildfire on sustainable outdoor recreation infrastructure and programs that drive economic activity. The Sustainable Recreation/CALREC Vision Key Working Group, which developed the joint strategy, was awarded Partnership of the Year from the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region in recognition of their efforts. The joint strategy is intended to integrate and augment existing efforts at the federal, state and local level. The four stated goals as presented in the joint strategy document are as follows:

#1 Integrate Forest Health and Sustainable Outdoor Recreation - Integrate the provision of high-quality, sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities with forest health and resilience and wildfire and climate mitigation efforts so that all people can connect to the benefits and wonders of the natural world.

#2 Advance Inclusion and Access for All Throughout California - Plan for and provide a diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities to foster inclusive and equitable access for all Californians.

#3 Promote the Health and Wellbeing of All Californians through Outdoor Recreation - Provide health information, training, and alternative recreation opportunities that promote the health and well-being of all peoples, with consideration of people's needs before, during, and after wildfires and other natural disasters.

#4 Support Economies that Enhance Sustainable Outdoor Recreation - Foster and support robust and diversified economies that enhance sustainable outdoor recreation while investing in the resilience necessary to withstand the impact of climate change, wildfires, and other disasters.

The attached joint strategy includes a number of key actions under each of these stated goals, and provides a comprehensive program effort to address these impacts across the state. As these strategies are implemented by other municipalities, there will be opportunities to combine efforts, across jurisdictions where our areas of interest intersect. Staff will look to integrate these strategies into planning efforts and grant funding opportunities.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

The financial implications of this adoption should provide better access to state and federal level grants to further our initiatives. There may be additional costs associated with the implementation, but the benefits should far outweigh the additional costs.

LEGAL REVIEW:

ESCOG Counsel Grace Chuchla has reviewed this item and found that it complies with the law.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board review and accept “California’s Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience,” as published by The California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force in March of 2023, as a guiding document for resource protection.



CALIFORNIA
WILDFIRE
& FOREST
RESILIENCE
TASK FORCE

CALIFORNIA'S JOINT STRATEGY
FOR SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR
RECREATION & WILDFIRE RESILIENCE



PREPARED FOR THE CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE
AND FOREST RESILIENCE TASK FORCE
DECEMBER 12, 2022



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

California is home to some of the most beautiful and celebrated landscapes on Earth. More than 100 Native American tribes have stewarded and protected California's lands and waters from time immemorial through the present day. Often, places valued as recreation sites today hold significant cultural and ecological importance for Indigenous peoples. Acknowledging California as the homeland of Native American tribes is just a small step to take in the spirit of truth and healing. This Joint Strategy attempts to elevate California Native governments, communities, peoples, and priorities into the collective thinking about sustainable outdoor recreation, inclusive access to the outdoors, and wildfire resilience. Realizing the privilege of those who recreate outside, this Joint Strategy hopes to contribute to further discussions of appropriate and respectful public access to valued and significant places.



Birdwatching at the Stout Memorial Grove in Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, CA. Credit: John Chao, Redwood National and State Parks



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ER
RD

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Joe Tyler – CAL FIRE

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TRIBAL:

Don Hankins – Indigenous Stewardship Network

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Kiersten Puusemp, Creative Director

Kristy Williams, Project Management Specialist

Thank you to the more than 130 representatives from federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, tribal entities, nongovernmental organizations, business interests, community groups, and stakeholders who participated in public input sessions or otherwise contributed to this plan.

This strategic plan is located on the California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force website at:
www.wildfiretaskforce.org/about/action-areas/sustainable-accessible-recreation



BACKGROUND



THE CHALLENGE

A STRATEGIC CHANGE IN CALIFORNIA'S APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION AND WILDFIRE RESILIENCE



The Mount Hough Trail System, near Quincy, CA, before and after the Dixie Fire in 2021. Credit: Ken Etzel

California has faced an unprecedented wildfire crisis during the past decade that has resulted in billions of dollars in damage to local economies and infrastructure, including outdoor recreation facilities and trail systems across California. Moreover, climate change has dramatically increased the length and intensity of California's fire seasons. The 2020 fire season broke records: Five of California's six largest fires in modern history burned at the same time. More than 4 million acres burned across the state, doubling the previous record. The following year, 2021, saw some of the most severe megafires in history, including the Dixie Fire, which became the largest single wildfire in state history and the first wildfire to burn across the width of the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

In August 2020, the state of California and the U.S. Forest Service announced the historic Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California's Forest and Rangelands to improve the health of California's forests and rangelands and reduce wildfire risk across the state. The following January, the state released California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan (Action Plan), which detailed specific actions to address the wildfire crisis, and convened the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force to implement the Action Plan.



CALIFORNIA'S WILDFIRE AND FOREST RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan contains four goals and 99 specific actions to address the wildfire crisis across California. Goal 3 contains Key Actions 3.13 and 3.14, which address the relationship between forest health and sustainable outdoor recreation:

- **Key Action 3.13 – Update Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP):** In 2021, CNRA, in coordination with State Parks, will update the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP will provide a comprehensive framework and investment strategy, emphasizing equitable access to underserved communities and rural recreation-dependent communities.
- **Key Action 3.14 – Develop Joint Strategy to Improve Access to Sustainable Recreation:** In accordance with the Shared Stewardship Agreement, the USFS will coordinate the development of a joint strategy to improve access to sustainable recreation.

The California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force assigned Key Actions 3.13 and 3.14 of the Action Plan to the Sustainable Recreation/CALREC Vision Key Working Group (Key Working Group). Key Action 3.13 was completed by the Key Working Group through consultations with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks). Please see additional discussion of Key Action 3.13 on page 13. Key Action 3.14 is the more immediate subject of this Joint Strategy document.



Firefighters and natural resource specialists apply a protective fire-shelter wrap to the General Sherman Tree in Sequoia National Park, CA, during the KNP Complex Fire in 2021. Credit: Elizabeth Wu, National Park Service



THE CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND FOREST RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN WAS DEVELOPED RECOGNIZING THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- Climate change increases the frequency and severity of catastrophic wildfires.
- California’s diverse landscapes and communities require regionally tailored strategies and actions.
- Resilience to catastrophic wildfires requires restoring the health of our forests and diverse landscapes across the state and strengthening wildfire preparation within our communities.
- Frequent, low-intensity fire can be a positive force in improving forest health and biodiversity and forested communities’ safety.
- Strengthening the linkages between the ecological health of forests and the economic and social health of rural communities is needed.
- Strong partnerships among federal, state, local, and tribal entities and private organizations are needed to address the threat of wildfire.



Visitors enjoy California’s Kings Canyon National Park.
Credit: National Park Service



THE KEY WORKING GROUP AND THE JOINT STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION AND WILDFIRE RESILIENCE

The Key Working Group developed the Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience (Joint Strategy) to provide a road map for improved access to sustainable outdoor recreation in an era when wildfires are having tremendous impacts on outdoor recreation opportunities throughout California. The Joint Strategy recognizes that our recreation system exists within a vast network of watersheds that stretches all the way from the headwaters in the mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Our recreation system is affected by wildfires and natural disasters in profound ways both upstream and downstream from where people recreate. The Key Working Group consisted of staff from federal and state agencies, regional and local agencies, industry, and nongovernmental organizations. The Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA) convened the Key Working Group. The Consensus and Collaboration Program of the College of Continuing Education at Sacramento State University provided facilitation. Climate Equity Solutions Inc. contributed drafting and editing services, under contract to MLTPA.



Children record observations on a clipboard at California's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary as part of the Ocean Guardian program.
Credit: Nick Zachar, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The Joint Strategy presents Goals and Key Actions that highlight the most important considerations for providing sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that meet the needs of all Californians, including our most underserved and underrepresented communities, in this era of risk from wildfires. The Key Working Group engaged with tribes, experts, and stakeholders who have been affected by wildfires, smoke, and natural disasters, or who are actively engaged in providing sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities. These groups and individuals verified that the Joint Strategy sets timely, essential, and implementable goals. Participants in the Key Working Group generously shared their time, perspective, and advice on topics through a series of facilitated virtual meetings from November 2021 through November 2022.



IMPLEMENTATION

The Key Working Group will seek to create a structure to guide the implementation of the Joint Strategy under the general auspices of the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force). The Key Working Group intends to provide regular progress reports to the Task Force and establish a program of accountability for implementing the Joint Strategy.

The Goals and Key Actions of the Joint Strategy also aim to fully integrate outdoor recreation considerations and opportunities into federal, state, local, and partner programs of work already underway. Some actions call on specific groups to act, while others present opportunities for ground-up integration of outdoor recreation into wildfire risk reduction and recovery efforts. Many of the actions are already underway at all levels of government and in local communities. The Joint Strategy was inspired by these ongoing efforts and hopes to inspire other communities and all levels of government to continue progress on such efforts. Sustained realization of the Goals and Key Actions will require time, resources, and capacity investments from the USFS, the state of California, and their partners.



Mandy Beatty cuts a section of trail in the Mount Hough Trail System near Quincy, CA, with her dog, Scout, by her side. Credit: Ken Etzel

As with other Task Force working group strategies, the Joint Strategy will be incorporated and integrated into the Task Force’s Million-Acre Strategy, which serves as the Task Force’s primary implementation program for the four Task Force goals. Funding needs to be secured to support the Key Working Group’s continued efforts to oversee implementation of the Joint Strategy including facilitation of Key Working Group meetings, coordination with lead implementing agencies and entities, preparation of regular progress updates, participation in Task Force meetings, and general guidance of implementation activities. It is anticipated that full implementation of the Joint Strategy’s Goals and Key Actions will create a sustainable outdoor recreation system in California that is resilient to wildfire and natural disasters and will lead to additional key actions needed to equitably provide the diverse and accessible recreational opportunities desired by all Californians.



CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND FOREST RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN KEY ACTION 3.13

Key Action 3.13 of California’s Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan directs the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and State Parks to update the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan in 2021. The SCORP provides a comprehensive framework and investment strategy, emphasizing equitable access to underserved communities and rural recreation-dependent communities.

The SCORP is a five-year plan that establishes grant priorities to address unmet needs for public outdoor recreation land throughout California. By completing an update to the SCORP every five years, California maintains eligibility for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants.

Due to a variety of factors, the release of the 2021–2025 SCORP occurred in early 2022, as the Key Working Group convened to begin its work on the development of the Joint Strategy. As a result of this timing, representatives from the Key Working Group were able to meet with staff from the California Department of Parks and Recreation to discuss opportunities to recommend priorities and help to inform the vision of the 2026–2030 SCORP update, set to begin in 2023. During these discussions, it was acknowledged that the next update to the SCORP might be enhanced to capture the broadened scope and landscapes of outdoor recreation in California.



Enjoying a meal while camping at Bothe-Napa Valley State Park, CA. Credit: courtesy of California State Parks, 2019

It is anticipated that key actions from the Joint Strategy may be integrated into the SCORP update process and that the SCORP may become a more comprehensive framework for the next five years of outdoor recreation development, planning, and management in California.





GOALS & KEY ACTIONS



INTRODUCTION

Californians today recreate outside more than ever before, finding experiences of a lifetime in California’s protected lands and waters. Statewide demand for outdoor recreation opportunities exploded during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in pressure to maximize or expand federal, state, and local park systems. This recent surge in outdoor recreation has led land managers and stewardship groups to renew their focus on natural resource protection and wildfire risk reduction, while providing needed recreation opportunities.



Mountain biking before and after the Dixie Fire in 2021, near Quincy, CA. Credit: Ken Etzel

The purpose of this Joint Strategy is to provide the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force with a road map for how to protect and improve sustainable outdoor recreation assets and access in the context of wildfire and natural disaster planning and response. The audience of this Joint Strategy includes the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the state of California, land managers, and the extended outdoor recreation community. This Joint Strategy emphasizes the fact that sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities must be high-quality and resilient to meet the needs of a diverse and growing population and changing climate.

The Joint Strategy satisfies Key Action 3.14 of the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan: “Develop Joint Strategy to Improve Access to Sustainable Recreation.” The Joint Strategy contains Goals and Key Actions that will:

- 1.** Strengthen our sustainable outdoor recreation system, forest health, and resilience
- 2.** Advance inclusion and access for all Californians
- 3.** Promote the health and safety of all Californians
- 4.** Support the local economies that enhance sustainable outdoor recreation

The Key Working Group developed a set of guiding principles to serve as a foundation for the Joint Strategy and to guide agencies, organizations, and communities tasked with implementing the Goals and Key Actions.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles provide a foundation for all of the Goals and Key Actions of the Joint Strategy, ensuring that the Joint Strategy is achieved broadly and equitably across California.



Two backpackers and a ranger look at a map at Cronan Ranch Regional Trails Park in Pilot Hill, CA. Credit: Bob Wick, Bureau of Land Management

Engage in Proactive Communication – Communication is key to implementing the Joint Strategy effectively and comprehensively across California. Communication and engagement will occur at all levels, with a particular focus on ensuring that underserved and underrepresented communities, including multilingual communities, receive information and have opportunities to engage with implementation of the Joint Strategy in a timely manner and through channels that effectively reach their communities.

Prioritize Community Recovery – Implementation of the Joint Strategy will prioritize recovery for communities that have been impacted by wildfire. Multiple communities across California have been devastated by wildfire, and implementation of this Joint Strategy will support holistic recovery of the environmental, economic, and social elements of these communities.

Utilize Cross-Sector Integration – The intent of the Joint Strategy is to integrate efforts at all levels to address sustainable recreation and wildfire risk, including governmental organizations, the nonprofit and business sectors, and community organizations. Integrating the Key Actions in this plan with forest health and community-development work being done locally is the most effective way to achieve broad success.

Emphasize Transparency – Entities implementing Key Actions will be responsible for reporting on and communicating their work to the public and groups working on similar efforts across the state, using methods that ensure all interested parties are informed of their work.

Engage in Partnerships and Collaboration – Effective implementation of the Joint Strategy will require that Key Actions are implemented through ongoing and supported partnerships and collaborations between government, the nonprofit sector, business interests, and community-based organizations.

Leverage Funds – Adequate funding will be required to achieve full implementation of the Joint Strategy. Implementation will require significant commitments of resources and funding from federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, nonprofits, and business entities. In addition, all funding will be leveraged to the maximum extent to ensure that implementation occurs at a high level across California.

Engage with Tribes and Indigenous Communities – During implementation, agencies and organizations will engage with tribes and Indigenous communities to inform work on all Key Actions. Implementing agencies and organizations will work with tribes to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into outdoor recreation and forest health projects where appropriate.

Engage with Underserved and Underrepresented Communities – Engagement with underserved and underrepresented communities is critical to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion in implementing the Joint Strategy. Agencies and organizations responsible for implementing Key Actions will conduct comprehensive outreach using community-specific outreach methods to ensure that affected communities are aware of, and have the opportunity to participate in and influence, the work being done under this Joint Strategy.

Use the Best Available Science and Information – Agencies and organizations responsible for implementation of the Joint Strategy are committed to using the best available science and information and sharing the results of their work within peer learning networks.

Prioritize Equity and Inclusivity – Ensuring equity and inclusion is paramount to all participants in this Joint Strategy. All agencies and organizations implementing Key Actions are committed to equity and inclusion and will engage locally and across the state to ensure that all peoples are considered during implementation of Key Actions.

Promote Wildfire and Natural Disaster Resiliency – Resilience to wildfires and natural disasters is a primary purpose of this Joint Strategy. All Key Actions are focused on ensuring that California and its residents are prepared for wildfire and natural disaster events and have the resources to achieve long-term resiliency, especially in light of climate change.





GOAL 1:

Integrate Forest Health and Sustainable Outdoor Recreation



INTEGRATE FOREST HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Our aim is to promote forest health and resiliency alongside sustainable outdoor recreation for all throughout California. We recognize that forest health and outdoor recreation mutually depend on one another and that our management of them needs to be integrated. This goal promotes public access and enjoyment of our forests and public lands and all the benefits that come with that while at the same time addressing the impacts and mitigating factors of outdoor recreation from catastrophic wildfires and climate effects. By ensuring healthy lands and waters, outdoor recreation users feel connected to nature in places and communities that are socially, economically, and environmentally rich and resilient.



A hiker looks at smoke from the 2021 Caldor Fire in the distance. Credit: James Townsend



GOAL 1:

Integrate the provision of high-quality, sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities with forest health and resilience and wildfire and climate mitigation efforts so that all people can connect to the benefits and wonders of the natural world.

KEY ACTIONS

1. **Maintain Public Access as the Climate Changes:** Develop climate-smart best practices toolkits and resources to be used by land-management organizations for programs and projects associated with forest and wildland health, vegetation management, transportation, and visitor use that enhance public access to outdoor recreation on public lands and waters as the climate changes.
2. **Develop Educational Materials Targeted at Reducing the Human Causes of Ignition:** Create and distribute educational materials in multiple languages targeting human causes of ignition of wildfires.
3. **Develop Integrated Communications Systems:** Establish integrated and standardized communication systems to provide consistent information to the public about forest health projects, and wildfires and other natural disasters, across jurisdictional boundaries and among federal, state, regional, and local organizations. Partner with Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), chambers of commerce, fire safe councils, cultural groups, outdoor recreation and stewardship groups, and local media to communicate in multiple languages and with digital media about closures, restrictions, smoke, and alternative facilities.
4. **Incorporate Sustainable Outdoor Recreation into the State Department of Conservation's Regional Forest Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program:** Incorporate the Key Actions from California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience into the RFFC Program, Regional Forums, and Regional Priority Plans being developed by RFFC Program Regional Block Grantees.
5. **Add Public Education to Forest Health Projects:** Forest health projects on public lands under state and federal funding programs will include a component to educate the public about the project's purpose, techniques, and impact on outdoor recreation opportunities. Education efforts will serve to promote public safety, minimize impacts to recreation user groups, and develop public support for the value of forest health projects, including prescribed fire.



GOAL 1: Integrate Forest Health and Sustainable Outdoor Recreation

6. **Strengthen Partnerships Between Resource Conservation Districts or Other Appropriate Partners and Land Managers:** Where feasible, recreation land managers will enter into partnerships with Resource Conservation Districts and other appropriate land-management partner entities or authorities to support work including design, permitting, and construction for outdoor recreation facilities and trails and fuel reduction around communities (including fencing, water sources, etc.).
7. **Implement Multi-Benefit Projects in or Adjacent to the Wildland Urban Interface:** Implement projects in or adjacent to Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas that have joint wildfire risk reduction and outdoor recreation benefits, such as trails and campgrounds that can be used during fires as personnel and equipment staging areas. Where appropriate, conduct thinning, prescribed burns, and vegetation clearing around outdoor recreation infrastructure to make it more resilient to wildfire and to create defensible space for fire suppression. Within these project areas, create demonstration and interpretive areas incorporating TEK practices where people can recreate and learn about the benefits of prescribed fire and vegetation management.
8. **Design and Build Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure That Is Resilient to Climate Change and Wildfire:** Consider nature-based solutions to address climate change and wildfire risk considerations when designing, constructing, maintaining, and renovating outdoor recreation facilities. Where appropriate, relocate facilities away from floodplains, landslide areas, avalanche paths, or high-risk fire areas. Install multilingual signage identifying emergency egress and shelter-in-place protocols, and, where needed, develop additional access and evacuation points. Design and harden roads, trails, bridges, and outdoor recreation infrastructure to be fire resistant and resilient to natural disasters. When available, cross-train fire crews in sustainable trail construction to help in recovery of trails post-fire.
9. **Establish Permanent Fuel Breaks Proximate to Recreation Trails:** Where feasible and appropriate, develop permanent fuel breaks that cut across jurisdictional boundaries along or adjacent to recreation trails and infrastructure to achieve multiple wildfire risk reduction and response benefits. Locate fuel breaks near trails to provide access for prescribed fires and fire suppression. In wilderness areas, consider non-permanent fuel breaks to protect resources.
10. **Use Data to Prioritize Wildfire Risk Reduction Treatments in Outdoor Recreation Areas:** Assess community and outdoor recreation asset vulnerability through the use of data developed by the Task Force, such as Planscape, and the Key Working Group (California Recreation Opportunities GIS Map) to develop priorities for treatment around outdoor recreation areas based on likelihood of ignition and vulnerability to the impact of wildfire. In particular, focus prioritization of treatments adjacent to campgrounds, trails, and trailheads.



GOAL 1: Integrate Forest Health and Sustainable Outdoor Recreation

11. **Create Wildfire Evacuation Plans for At-Risk Outdoor Recreation Areas:** In coordination with local government and using specific evacuation planning tools (e.g., Zonehaven and CAL FIRE’s Evacuation Guide), outdoor recreation providers including park agencies, private resorts, and other entities will create, regularly update, and implement and maintain evacuation plans that identify assets and areas most at risk, and safe evacuation routes and staging areas for shelter-in-place.

12. **Create California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Programmatic Exemptions/Exclusions for Recreation Trails Located Within Treatment Areas:** Create Categorical Exclusion(s) under NEPA, and Categorical Exemption(s) under CEQA, for recreation trails located within treatment areas that have already undergone previous environmental review.



*John Rice, general manager of California’s Sierra-at-Tahoe Resort, looks out from a burnt lift shack at ski runs burned by the Caldor Fire in 2021.
Credit: Katie Hunter, Sierra-at-Tahoe Resort*



Leadership from the U.S. Forest Service, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and CAL FIRE discuss the effect of vegetation treatment on burn severity during the Caldor Fire in 2021. Credit: John Wentworth



GOAL 2:

**Advance Inclusion and Access
For All Throughout California**



ADVANCE INCLUSION AND ACCESS FOR ALL THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA

California and its partners must build upon and expand an inclusionary culture of sustainable outdoor recreation, promoting equitable access across California’s public lands and waters that reflects the diversity of all peoples and the legacy of our Native American history, culture, and use. Inspired by the California Natural Resources Agency’s Outdoors for All initiative, our work will strive to address long-standing environmental, social, and economic inequities in our society that have resulted in physical and societal barriers to outdoor recreation access for underserved and underrepresented residents. Improvements to outdoor recreation access, including planning, programming, and infrastructure, will be co-created with communities, forest health, and wildfire response partners and designed around community values to be resilient to increasingly frequent wildfires and natural disasters. Advancing equitable access will require a high level of engagement with underserved and underrepresented populations to prioritize and implement integrated outdoor recreation access and wildfire risk reduction, resiliency, and recovery actions that provide respite for these communities year-round and especially during times of disaster.



Posing on a bridge along the Trillium Falls Trail in Redwood National and State Parks, CA. Credit: John Chao, Redwood National and State Parks



GOAL 2:

Plan for and provide a diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities to foster inclusive and equitable access for all Californians.

KEY ACTIONS

1. **Create Statewide School Programming:** Federal, state, and local agencies will engage and collaborate with the California Department of Education to develop place-based virtual and in-person programming that educates students about the value of outdoor recreation and natural resources, including topics such as Traditional Ecological Knowledge, responsible recreation, fire-prone landscapes, safety, and how to participate in stewardship projects.
2. **Create Interpretive, Historical, and Stewardship Educational Opportunities at Key Recreation Facilities:** Where feasible, create interpretive, historical, and stewardship education to educate the public at key outdoor recreation facilities across the state.
3. **Minimize Impact of Wildfire-Related Area and Facility Closures to Public Access and Recreational Use:** Target outdoor recreation site and area closures to the minimum area and time periods deemed appropriate to mitigate threats and minimize impact to the recreating public and commercial providers. Land managers should engage with relevant public and commercial recreation interests and DMOs on reopening plans, with a particular focus on addressing access concerns of underserved and underrepresented communities.
4. **Engage with Local Communities During Post-Fire Recovery Planning to Expedite the Resumption of Outdoor Recreation Access:** After fires, coordinate and engage with local communities on post-fire recovery plans, including activities aimed at expediting the return of public access. Within burned areas, prioritize forest health, hazard tree and vegetation removal near trails, slope stabilization around trails, and restoration of park and outdoor recreation facilities lost in wildfires. Where appropriate, utilize local workers, volunteers, conservation corps, or tribal capacity such as the Tiüvac'a'ai Tribal Conservation Corps to assist in post-fire restoration of outdoor recreation infrastructure and trails.
5. **Explore Creating an Online Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Resource:** Explore creating a one-stop online outdoor recreation resource for visitors to research local, regional, and state recreation opportunities based on interest and location. The online resource may contain information on how to prepare for visits to outdoor recreation areas, including information on responsible recreation, how to obtain permits, and what recreational uses are allowed. The resource may also serve as a multilingual communication tool to identify outdoor recreation facilities that are closed due to natural



disasters or emergencies. Where possible, coordinate with existing information platforms that provide similar services. Alternatively, agencies may maintain a multi-jurisdictional, centralized map of outdoor recreation assets (campgrounds, trailheads, etc.) and link out to existing agency platforms for additional information from the land-management agency.

6. **Conduct a Multi-Agency Social Science Survey to Gauge the Current Needs of Outdoor Recreation Users:** State and federal land-management agencies will develop a simple methodology and conduct a joint statewide survey to identify current and emerging use and demand, barriers to outdoor access, and the desired critical outdoor recreation needs and uses of our communities, with a particular emphasis on underserved and underrepresented communities. The survey will be shared broadly with California’s public-land managers and private outdoor recreation lands operators at all scales well in advance of survey implementation to encourage broad data collection across California’s lands and communities. The survey will be designed to be repeatable over time and at different geographic scales.

7. **Develop Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Across the State That Provides for a Diversity of Recreation Experiences:** Where a local community has identified a need for more outdoor recreation opportunities and uses, land-management agencies will look to collaborate and partner with the local community (counties, cities, towns, special districts) to plan for, fund, build, and maintain climate-resilient outdoor recreation infrastructure, facilities, and trail systems that will increase the diversity of recreation opportunities in that local community.



GOAL 3:

Promote The Health and Well-Being of All Californians Through Outdoor Recreation



PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALL CALIFORNIANS THROUGH OUTDOOR RECREATION

California and its partners are committed to providing outdoor recreation opportunities that nurture the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional health and safety of all people while protecting our natural resources. Wildfires and other natural disasters can impede access to outdoor recreation at a time when people need it most for their well-being. To address this need for outdoor recreation opportunities before, during, and after natural disasters, we will communicate proactively with residents and visitors to promote the healthy enjoyment of outdoor recreation, inform people of where facilities are available, and apprise people of how to avoid smoke exposure and other risk factors. We will prioritize the development of resilient recreation opportunities that can function as alternative sites when other facilities are closed or inaccessible. The development of safe places to recreate is vitally important in ensuring safe access for all.



Children play in the snow near California's Sierra-at-Tahoe. Credit: Brian Walker, Sierra-at-Tahoe



GOAL 3:

Provide health information, training, and alternative recreation opportunities that promote the health and well-being of all peoples, with consideration of people's needs before, during, and after wildfires and other natural disasters.

KEY ACTIONS

1. **Improve Air Quality Advisory Communication:** Refine existing air quality communication tools, such as the California Smoke Spotter Application (app) and EPA AirNow, so that more users are aware of the tools, information is available in multiple languages, and users are advised of preventative measures to reduce their exposure. Focus the awareness campaign and information on those who are more likely to be exposed to air quality impacts including smoke, such as outdoor recreation workers.



Smoke from the Woolsey Fire in 2018, seen from Topanga, CA. Credit: Peter Buschmann, U.S. Forest Service

2. **Train First Responders, Community Planners, and Outdoor Recreation Staff in Mental Health First Aid and Utilize Medical Reserve Corps and Similar Volunteer Groups to Provide Psychological Support During Disasters:** Create a state program to train all first responders, community planners, and outdoor recreation field staff in mental health first aid to support communities during and after wildfires and other natural disasters. Share models and best practices for how to utilize medically trained volunteers to provide psychological support during and after disasters.
3. **Build Partnerships Between the Health and Outdoor Recreation Sectors:** Pursue the environmental elements of the Health in All Policies approaches of the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by creating and maintaining partnerships

between public health entities and the outdoor recreation sector. Partnerships will identify and seek to implement projects with co-benefits for health and outdoor recreation, such as prescriptions to spend time outdoors, smoke safety and extreme heat guidance, community-based planning of desirable park features and programs, or research to document the beneficial health impacts of local outdoor recreation projects. Partnerships will share best practices and lessons learned with public health and outdoor recreation professional forums.

4. **Increase Opportunities for Indoor Recreation:** Develop public, multi-use indoor recreation spaces that can offer recreation when smoke and wildfire affect the safety of outdoor recreation. These spaces can also be used as information hubs, libraries, cooling centers, Local Assistance Centers, shelters, or staging areas during emergencies.



Kayaking in an indoor pool can serve as a recreation opportunity during wildfire smoke events. Credit: County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation





GOAL 4:

Support Economies That Enhance Sustainable Outdoor Recreation



SUPPORT ECONOMIES THAT ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Communities and their sustainable outdoor recreation economies enhance the physical, social, and economic vitality of California and, by nature of their dependence on public lands and waters, often play a critical role in ensuring that public lands and waters are maintained and resilient to climate change and wildfires. These communities are well positioned to provide safe, equitable, and inclusive access to outdoor recreation opportunities. Direct recreation spending, jobs, and tourism revenue contribute prominently to these forest and gateway communities. As has been increasingly demonstrated during the past decade, climate change and massive wildfires are having a devastating impact on our communities and their recreation economies. While wildfire risk reduction is key, more should be done to ensure that our recreation-based communities can respond and recover after wildfires and other natural disasters to support community resilience, economic vitality, and local jobs.



Downtown Mariposa, CA, in close proximity to Yosemite National Park. Credit: Sylvia Matzkowiak, courtesy of the Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

GOAL 4:

Foster and support robust and diversified economies that enhance sustainable outdoor recreation while investing in the resilience necessary to withstand the impact of climate change, wildfires, and other disasters.

KEY ACTIONS

1. **Build Sustainable Outdoor-Recreation-Based Economies:** Engage the regions of the state’s Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF), the Department of Conservation’s Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program, and other relevant programs to help communities transition to or enhance sustainable outdoor-recreation-based economies. Develop programs, projects, and stewardship opportunities to connect communities through recreation infrastructure and trail systems. Support the establishment of workforces for resource management, conservation, and outdoor recreation that support the economies of local connected communities.
2. **Support Fundamental Community Infrastructure:** Support planning and implementation of the fundamental infrastructure and services needed for outdoor-recreation-based economies, such as resilient and affordable housing and multi-modal transportation systems. Planning efforts may include regional baseline economic assessments to describe the businesses, industries, and workforce involved in outdoor recreation activities, and identify the strengths and deficiencies of outdoor recreation economies for rural development.
3. **Engage Communities Regarding Emergency Response and Land-Management Planning:** Engage chambers of commerce, fire safe councils, DMOs, counties, special districts, and cities and towns with land managers in emergency response planning and the creation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. Engage with outdoor recreation groups to identify outdoor recreation assets and integrate them into emergency plans to increase the likelihood that these facilities will be protected and/or restored during a wildfire event. When possible, pre-plan roles and partnerships for communication and essential services for emergency responders (staging areas, food, lodging, etc.) that can be readily activated during disasters. Provide these plans to federal and state emergency responders during and post-fire.
4. **Create Post-Fire Educational and Marketing Materials:** Create and distribute multilingual educational materials and destination guides to encourage residents and visitors to return to outdoor recreation when it is safe. These materials will advise recreationists on allowable and responsible recreation activities and locations during active wildfire restoration and recovery. In addition, the materials will provide interpretive information on fire-adaptive ecosystems to educate the public on the impacts of fire.



GOAL 4: Support Economies That Enhance Sustainable Recreation

5. **Provide Technical Assistance to Local Businesses:** To help navigate and access disaster assistance programs, provide technical assistance to local businesses following wildfire and other natural disasters in rural and low-income outdoor recreation economies.
6. **Conduct Post-Fire Economic Studies:** Conduct economic studies in communities that have experienced wildfire, including analyses of lost revenue and tourism-related income based on data gathered before, during, and after wildfire events.
7. **Develop Post-Fire Insurance Program for the Outdoor Recreation Economy:** Include outdoor-recreation-based businesses and events in the development and administration of post-wildfire insurance programs that are both attainable and affordable.
8. **Evaluate Existing Telecommunications Infrastructure and Perform Upgrades:** Conduct a review of existing telecommunications infrastructure on public lands and prioritize upgrades and/or replacements to ensure that communications in affected communities remain active and accessible during a wildfire.



UTVs compete at the King of Hammers event in California's Johnson Valley OHV Area. ATVing and recreational motorcycling generated \$8 billion in GDP nationally in 2021, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Credit: Bureau of Land Management





POLICY & CONTEXT



STATE & FEDERAL POLICIES



The Annual Pheasant Hunt at the Sacramento River Bend Outstanding Natural Area, CA, where youth and women can learn safe hunting techniques and traditional practices. Credit: Eric Coulter, Bureau of Land Management



Fisheries and recreation employees teach local third-graders to fish on Kids Fishing Day at Shasta Lake, CA. Credit: U.S. Forest Service

The following section describes the state and federal policies that authorized, inspired, and guided the creation of this Joint Strategy.

In 2018, the Governor’s California Forest Management Task Force, comprising key agencies, stakeholders, and partners, was established to introduce a more holistic, integrated approach toward effective forest management. The California Forest Management Task Force’s purpose was to develop a framework for establishing healthy and resilient forests that can withstand and adapt to wildfire, drought, and a changing climate.

In 2020, the state of California and the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region entered into the Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California’s Forest and Rangelands (Shared Stewardship Agreement). The California Forest Management Task Force, since renamed the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force), released the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan (Action Plan) in 2021 to serve as a road map for implementing the Shared Stewardship Agreement and for aligning the state’s efforts with other federal, regional, local, tribal, and private organizations. The reconstituted Task Force convened in the spring of 2021 to develop strategies to implement the Action Plan.



Also in 2020, the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA) convened an advisory committee of governmental and nongovernmental organizations (including the state of California and the U.S. Forest Service) to develop objectives for sustainable outdoor recreation as part of the white paper CALREC Vision: Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration to Advance Sustainable Outdoor Recreation in California, which was published in January 2021. The map later in this section shows MLTPA’s analysis of outdoor recreation lands identified by land-management agency throughout the state.

In 2022, the Pacific Southwest Region of the U.S. Forest Service named “Visitor Experiences and Public Access” as one of three strategic priorities. The Pacific Southwest Region aims to “[ensure] that all those who set foot on National Forest System lands feel welcomed and have broad opportunities to recreate in sustainable ways.”

Within both the Shared Stewardship Agreement and the Action Plan, there are action items that describe the need to integrate sustainable outdoor recreation and enhanced access to recreation resources into forest resilience and wildfire planning efforts across California. To address this need, the Task Force tapped the USFS, the state of California, and MLTPA to form the Sustainable Recreation/CALREC Vision Leadership Team. The Leadership Team subsequently convened and facilitated the Sustainable Recreation/CALREC Vision Key Working Group to begin work on these action items.

Consistent with Action 7 of the Shared Stewardship Agreement, the Key Working Group has worked under Goal 3 of the Action Plan (“Manage Forests to Achieve the State’s Economic and Environmental Goals”), specifically focusing on Key Actions 3.13 and 3.14. These Key Actions are as follows:

Key Action 3.13 – Update Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP): In 2021, CNRA, in coordination with State Parks, will update the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP will provide a comprehensive framework and investment strategy, emphasizing equitable access to underserved communities and rural recreation-dependent communities.

Key Action 3.14 – Develop Joint Strategy to Improve Access to Sustainable Recreation: In accordance with the Shared Stewardship Agreement, the USFS will coordinate the development of a joint strategy to improve access to sustainable recreation.



“Land-management agencies and their outdoor recreation partners work with the knowledge that increased resource impacts, uncertain public funding, and rising recreation demand are becoming ‘the new normal’ for California. With this in mind, collaboration by willing partners across jurisdictions to achieve the environmental, economic, and social benefits of sustainable outdoor recreation in California is essential.”

- CALREC Vision: Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration to Advance Sustainable Outdoor Recreation in California” MLTPA, 2020



Outdoor recreation lands in California per federal and state land-management and relevant state agencies. Credit: “CALREC Vision: Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration to Advance Sustainable Outdoor Recreation in California” MLTPA, 2020



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

While not exhaustive, the following documents, along with brief summaries of each, were identified by the Leadership Team as foundational to the Joint Strategy.

Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California’s Forest and Rangelands between the State of California and the USDA, Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (2020, page 7) In Action 7 of the Shared Stewardship Agreement, the state and USFS commit to improving access to sustainable recreation by fostering opportunities that better serve California’s diverse populations.

CALREC Vision: Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration to Advance Sustainable Outdoor Recreation in California (MLTPA, 2021) The CALREC Vision white paper emphasizes the importance of developing a common vision for sustainable outdoor recreation among multi-jurisdictional partners through cross-jurisdictional collaboration. Local, state, and federal agencies have the opportunity to coordinate goals, resources, and messaging around sustainable outdoor recreation to reduce operational inefficiencies and benefit the public.



Before and after photos of an outdoor amphitheater at California’s Big Basin Redwoods State Park, which burned during the CZU Complex Fire in 2020.
Before photo credit: Allie Caulfield. After photo credit: Cal OES

Executive Department, State of California, Executive Order N-82-20 (2020, pages 2–3) This executive order, signed in 2020, directs the California Natural Resources Agency and other relevant state agencies to develop methods to conserve 30% of state lands and waters by 2030 while expanding equitable outdoor access and recreation for all Californians. The order directs state agencies to engage with diverse recreation communities, establish the Biodiversity Collaborative, support efforts to conserve 30% of the state’s land and coastal waters by 2030, and expand equitable access and recreation for all Californians.

U.S. Forest Service, USDA, Connecting People with America’s Great Outdoors: A Framework for Sustainable Recreation (2010) The Framework outlines the opportunities and challenges in providing sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities for the public. The USFS sets goals of: (a) offering diverse outdoor recreation opportunities in partnership with local communities and providers, (b) protecting natural, cultural, and scenic resources, and (c) strengthening sound and sustainable processes. The Framework provides guiding principles that connect people with natural and cultural heritage, promote a healthy lifestyle, embody sustainability in all programs, prioritize community engagement, recognize National Forests and Grasslands as part of a larger interconnected landscape that includes communities, and integrate recreation into the larger agency mission.

Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful (2021) This report responds to the 2021 Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, recommending steps that the United States should take in partnership to achieve the goal of conserving at least 30% of lands and waters by 2030. The report recommends conserving lands and waters for the benefit of all people and expanding access to sustainable outdoor recreation.



Enjoying redwood trees at Big Basin Redwoods State Park, CA. Credit: Allie Caulfield

CURRENT TRENDS & NEEDS

Outdoor recreation connects people with nature while improving their overall health and quality of life. Following years of steady increases in the number of outdoor recreationists, COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns resulted in a surge of outdoor recreational use of public lands and waters. The increased demand for outdoor recreation benefits local economies that depend on recreation for jobs, economic output, sense of place, and quality of life. However, the increased number of outdoor recreationists necessitates more resources for user support, natural resource management, and wildfire risk reduction. The following section summarizes findings of recent studies that focus on trends in outdoor recreation and its social, economic, and environmental effects on communities.

OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION

Demand for outdoor recreation is at an all-time high. As of 2021, approximately half of all adults across the United States participate in outdoor recreation on at least a monthly basis. About 20% of participants may be new to outdoor recreation since the start of the pandemic (Taff et al., 2021). The number of outdoor recreationists is expected to hold steady in the near term, as people who tried outdoor recreation for the first time in 2020 have continued to participate in 2021 (Outdoor Foundation, 2022). In national surveys, nine in 10 people express support for outdoor recreation and local parks, agreeing that outdoor recreation access is a very important factor when choosing a place to live and that outdoor recreation is an important service provided by their local government (National Recreation and Park Association, 2022).



*Admiring wildflowers along California's Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.
Credit: Bob Wick, Bureau of Land Management*

Wildfires can have a range of effects on participation in outdoor recreation activities, depending on the location and severity of the fire and smoke. Recreationists may avoid areas with active fires, instead choosing to visit nearby areas with lower wildfire and smoke impacts. However, some people may visit areas that have experienced recent low-severity fires or prescribed burns, perhaps out of habit or curiosity (Miller et al., 2022). Popular recreation areas can experience the return of near-typical demand for recreation soon after a wildfire (White et al., 2020). The cross-jurisdictional nature of wildfire, along with increasing demand for outdoor recreation, emphasizes the need for collaborative adaptation and management strategies such as those outlined in the Key Actions of this Joint Strategy.



OUTDOOR RECREATION AND THE ECONOMY

Outdoor recreation provides significant benefits to California's economy. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, outdoor recreation provided \$54.7 billion to California's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021, making California the state with the largest outdoor recreation economy in the nation. In addition, California ranked first in the nation for outdoor recreation jobs and compensation in 2021, with 517,238 jobs and \$28.3 billion in compensation (Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2022). Outdoor recreation in the USFS Pacific Southwest Region provided people with \$1.8 billion in well-being value (adapted from Rosenberger et al., 2017).



The Woolsey Fire burns near the coast in 2018 in Los Angeles and Ventura counties, prompting smoke advisories in Los Angeles, Ventura, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties. Credit: Peter Buschmann, U.S. Forest Service

Outdoor recreation businesses and amenities have a positive effect on rural economies. Research shows that rural counties with outdoor recreation amenities have gained population, while those without recreation amenities have lost population (Headwaters Economics, 2019). Outdoor recreation often bolsters entire economies of rural places by attracting entrepreneurs, new businesses, health care professionals, construction workers, and retail employees (Headwaters Economics, 2018).

Despite the economic benefits of recreation across California, including the rapid rise in recreation use that has benefitted the state's overall economy, there are many communities affected by wildfires that have yet to recover economically to pre-fire recreation levels. While there is sparse data in California regarding the economic impact of wildfires on these communities, a 2019 study in Utah estimated that wildfires caused \$2.7 to \$4.5 million in regional economic loss from visitation per year at national parks in Utah. The losses were greatest in rural, tourism-dependent counties (Kim & Jakus, 2019). California gateway community economies may be similarly affected by wildfires. The need to quantify the economic impacts of wildfires on communities in California is identified as a Key Action in this Joint Strategy.



OUTDOOR RECREATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ENVIRONMENT

Children and adults who spend more time outside feel more connected to nature and demonstrate greater pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors (DeVillie et al., 2021). More specifically, people who engage in nature-based outdoor recreation activities report greater recognition of the threat of climate change and greater support for climate policies (Knight & Hao, 2022). Thus, access to sustainable outdoor recreation, and to places and programs to connect with nature, are critical to promoting concern for environmental resilience in the face of climate change and other human-related environmental stressors. Outdoor recreation is a primary setting where people can foster a love of the environment and a desire to protect it.



Planting seedlings on the beach at California's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Credit: Nick Zachar, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

However, outdoor recreation can pose wildfire risks. From 1992 to 2012, humans ignited the majority of wildfires in the state, creating more fires, extending the length of the typical fire season, and burning more acres than naturally occurring fires (Balch et al., 2017). While it is not known how many of these wildfires were recreation related, the need to create a system of sustainable recreation that mitigates the increasing risk of wildfires has never been more apparent.

CASE STUDIES



CASE STUDIES

SIERRA BUTTES TRAIL STEWARDSHIP: CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

The goal of Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship is to revitalize the communities of the Lost Sierra by building and maintaining a trail system that connects the communities to each other.

The economy of the Lost Sierra region was built over the last century around mining and logging operations in Plumas, Sierra, Butte, Lassen, and Nevada counties. With those industries largely gone from the region, Greg Williams, executive director of Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship, recognized the opportunity to create a resilient recreation and tourism economy by restoring and adding to historic mining and logging routes to form a sustainable trail system. In 2003, Williams founded Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission of developing and maintaining trails, creating sustainable-wage local jobs, and providing community members and visitors with access to world-class sustainable outdoor recreation.

Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship's current focus is the Connected Communities Project, which includes the Lost Sierra Route proposal, a 600-mile multi-use trail network linking 15 mountain community downtowns with the surrounding public lands. This ambitious trail planning and construction effort is taking place across California's Plumas, Sierra, Butte, Lassen, and Nevada counties, as well as Washoe County in Nevada. To date, the organization has succeeded in building 125 miles of new trails and maintaining an additional 1,600 miles of existing trails. Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship employed 72 people in 2021 and has contributed 102,993 trail volunteer hours in total, mostly on federal public land. Their success would not be possible without robust partnerships with the Tahoe, Plumas, Humboldt-Toiyabe, and Lassen national forests and all of the counties, cities, and citizen-led nongovernmental groups in the region.

On July 13, 2021, the Dixie Fire broke out, tearing through Butte, Plumas, Lassen, Shasta, and Tehama counties over 103 days. The fire grew to be the second largest wildfire in California history, at nearly 1 million acres. By the time it was contained, the Dixie Fire had destroyed the town of Greenville and burned two-thirds of the national forestland in the Lost Sierra.



Since the fire, Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship has seen its role in the region as providing the reason people will want to stay in, rebuild, and visit the communities of the Lost Sierra. The organization is back at work restoring and building trails and hosting festivals for residents and visitors. They realized that the trails they build may help reduce the risk of future catastrophic wildfire by serving as fire breaks and access points for vegetation management. Sustainable outdoor recreation will be the keystone in the recovery of these communities. Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship is leading the way.

Learn more about Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship at sierratrails.org

FIRE FOUNDRY

The FIRE Foundry’s mission is to recruit, train, and deploy a local firefighting and civic service workforce that increases diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the fire prevention and firefighting field in Marin County. Launched in 2022, the FIRE Foundry applies a learning-while-earning model that allows participants to explore career interests, learn from a tailored college curriculum, and apply emerging fire technologies while providing financial stability for its participants. FIRE Foundry crews train in firefighting, fire prevention, and vegetation management in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas of Marin County. Their work protects open spaces, parklands, recreation facilities, water supply and energy infrastructure, homes, and businesses.

The FIRE Foundry is a collaboration between community colleges, leading universities, community organizations, and Marin County Fire to tackle the fundamental challenges of developing a diverse workforce that will work to protect communities from catastrophic wildfire and conserve the environment. The FIRE Foundry collaborates with community partners to recruit young adults from underserved communities and backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in fire-related careers.

The FIRE Foundry offers sustainable wages and wraparound services to participants, including childcare, mental health and wellness support, food, housing, mentorship, peer-to-peer community engagement, and coaching. These wraparound services are incorporated to ensure that systemic barriers are not a factor in firefighting career paths and the upward economic mobility of FIRE Foundry participants, their families, and their communities. FIRE Foundry’s ultimate goal is to provide new career pathways to fire and conservation service and dismantle barriers that perpetuate poverty in local communities.

The FIRE Foundry organization is comprised of three programs: an education program, a work experience program, and a support services program. Recruits are onboarded into FIRE Foundry based on whether they are entry-level participants (not currently EMT certified) or advanced-level participants (have already



completed EMT certification). For the work experience program, Conservation Corps North Bay (CCNB) is the primary employment partner for FIRE Foundry and employs roughly 180 corps members on vegetation management and clearance crews each year. CCNB crews are representative of the communities they are serving, and thus have greater insight into the community-specific fire prevention, education, and response needs. Of CCNB's FIRE Foundry recruits, 73% were unemployed on entry to their program, and 99% lived in low-income households. In addition, over 80% identify as races and ethnicities traditionally underrepresented in fire services in Marin County and California. If recruits meet the advanced-level qualification, they are eligible to apply for other work experience options such as Marin County dispatch, defensible space, and others. For the education program, the College of Marin (COM) is the primary partner for the FIRE Foundry and provides classes specifically catered to FIRE Foundry participants as they prepare for prerequisites for Fire Academy. COM not only caters its curriculum for the community served in the program, but also provides educational services such as counseling, tutoring, and other wraparound support for the participants to be successful.

With the opportunity of paid internships, different phases of recruits (entry level and advanced), and wraparound services, FIRE Foundry participants can navigate different phases of their career path into fire service. Each program within the Foundry is built as a year-long program. However, if individuals need more time to complete classes, transition to the next phase, or navigate other hurdles, they can apply for extensions to foster smoother transitions to their next steps.

All FIRE Foundry participants are supported through a financial aid application process to provide educational assistance, financial wellness workshops, and living wages during the program. Cohorts start in January and applications open in September. Positions will be filled on an as-need basis after January.

Learn more about FIRE Foundry by visiting firefoundry.org



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION: OVERNIGHT FAMILY CAMPING PROGRAM

In the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, more people than ever before looked to the outdoors as a safe place to relax, exercise, and spend time with family. There was a surge of interest in camping at a time when many state and federal campgrounds limited their capacity or shut down entirely to minimize staff and visitors' exposure to the virus or to mitigate wildfire risk.

In 2021, realizing that residents needed more access to camping, the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (the Department) launched a supervised Overnight Family Camping program. Initially run as a pilot, the program has proven to be immensely popular. In the summer of 2022, more than 16,000 participants spent nights under the stars at Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park, Castaic Lake State Recreation Area, Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area, and Whittier Narrows Recreation Area. The Department selected these locations to be geographically dispersed throughout Los Angeles County, making camping accessible close to home. In addition to camping access, the program offers family-friendly activities including fishing, night hikes, live animal ambassadors, kayaking, and biking. There are program staff available on site to help first-time campers learn basic camping skills. Recreation staff and security personnel interact with participants throughout the entire experience, ensuring the program is fun and safe.

The Overnight Camping Program provides an excellent opportunity for families to enjoy outdoor fun and learn new skills close to home.

To learn more about the program, please visit parks.lacounty.gov



APPENDIX & BIBLIOGRAPHY



APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS

Multi-benefit project: The Joint Strategy effort shares the definition of “multi-benefit project” from the Department of Conservation’s Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFC): “A project or activity which, by virtue of integrated design and planning, provides direct benefits to multiple local, regional, state, and federal strategic objectives. Multi-benefit wildfire and forest resilience projects can impact social, economic, and ecological outcomes, including social and cultural well-being, protecting and restoring tribal resources and practices, enhancing water security, forest resilience, biodiversity, workforce development, outdoor recreation and access, and carbon sequestration” (State of California Department of Conservation, 2022).

Sustainable outdoor recreation: The Joint Strategy effort shares the definition of “sustainable outdoor recreation” from the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Collaborative: “Outdoor recreational opportunities and activities that are practiced responsibly such that impacts are minimized, manageable, and mitigable over time, and meet the evolving needs of present and future generations.”

Wildfire and forest resilience: The Joint Strategy effort shares the definition of “wildfire and forest resilience” from the Department of Conservation’s Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP): “Wildfire and forest resilience refers broadly to social and ecological resilience of landscapes, communities, and resources to wildfire and related disturbances and stresses exacerbated by climate change. Social and ecological dynamics are connected and inherent to forests and communities, including but not limited to biodiversity, water quality, cultural resources, recreation, and forest related economies” (State of California Department of Conservation, 2022).



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**CALIFORNIA'S JOINT STRATEGY
FOR SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR
RECREATION & WILDFIRE RESILIENCE**

DECEMBER 2022



Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

February 26, 2025

The Honorable Representative Kevin Kiley
United States House of Representatives
2445 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Federal Funding for Critical Wildfire Projects

Dear Congressman Kiley,

On behalf of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG), I am writing to express our deep concerns regarding the uncertainties surrounding federal funding for wildfire resiliency projects. As we know from the fires in Los Angeles, fire resiliency is critical. These uncertainties significantly hinder our ability to plan and implement critical initiatives designed to protect our communities, forests, and local economies from the growing threat of catastrophic wildfires.

Wildfire mitigation and resiliency are central programs within ESCOG, and our regional partners rely on funding from federal agencies such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to carry out our work. The ESCOG has worked diligently to expand local capacity to support necessary wildfire mitigation treatments on federal Forest Service lands over the past five years. The unpredictable nature of these funding sources creates challenges for long-term planning, workforce retention, and the timely execution of vital projects. Without stable and consistent funding, we face delays in implementing forest thinning, prescribed burns, and other critical land management strategies that reduce wildfire risk.

Federal investment in wildfire resiliency is essential not only for environmental conservation but also for the economic well-being of our region. The Eastern Sierra's tourism, outdoor recreation, and agricultural sectors all depend on healthy landscapes and functioning ecosystems. When wildfire mitigation efforts are underfunded or delayed, our communities bear the economic and ecological consequences of more frequent and severe wildfires.

We urge you to advocate for stable and sustained funding streams for wildfire resiliency efforts in the Eastern Sierra. Specifically, we request your support in

securing already awarded grant funds that directly impact our ability to protect our region. Additionally, we encourage the exploration of legislative measures that would provide multi-year funding commitments, reducing uncertainty and enhancing our capacity to plan for long-term wildfire resilience.

We appreciate your leadership and commitment to addressing the wildfire crisis in California. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and explore ways to ensure that federal resources effectively support our local wildfire resiliency efforts. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide additional information or collaborate on solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your support in safeguarding the Eastern Sierra from the increasing threat of wildfires.

Sincerely,

Stephen Muchovej
Chair, Eastern Sierra Council of Governments



STAFF REPORT

To: ESCOG Joint Powers Authority
From: Elaine Kabala, ESCOG Staff
Subject: Executive Director Report
Meeting date: February 26, 2025
Prepared on: February 20, 2025
Attachments: None

Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program:

Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator:

- Staff executed an amendment to the agreement with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to extend the term of the agreement and scope of work to continue work under the grant through December 31, 2026 to expand environmental review to the Mono Basin.
- Staff is working to build capacity to support the Eastern Sierra Pace and Scale Accelerator and strengthen relationships with federal and NGO partners leveraging Inyo National Forest Liaison Funding.
- Staff attended Wildfire Resiliency Action Finance Team meetings
- Staff attend the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance meeting
- Staff met with Steve Nelson to discuss conversations with LADWP leasees surrounding the Bishop community to inform wildfire mitigation pre-planning.

Towns-to-Trails:

- Staff met with multiple agency and local jurisdiction partners to confirm appropriate route connections through communities and areas with infrastructure gaps, including: Inyo County Transportation Planning, Mono County Community Development, City of Bishop Planning, Town of Mammoth Lakes Recreation and Community development, Supervisor McFarland, Alpine County Economic Development, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory, Bureau of Land Management, and others.
- Next steps:
 - Alta Planning and Design will prepare a planning document that includes a project description, a proposed alignment, reference to other regional trail planning efforts, and identification of gaps and next steps.
 - The planning team will develop an online platform ("storymap") to improve communication with the public about the project and the proposed alignment.

- Staff will hold final public report-out meeting. This meeting will be held virtually to reach all three counties.

California Jobs First Initiative:

- Staff prepared three applications for Catalyst Funding:
 - Eastern Sierra Business Resource Programming
 - Eastern Sierra Collaboratives
 - Chipmunk Canyon Feasibility Analysis
- California Jobs First awards will be announced March 21, 2025

ESCOG Administration:

- ESCOG's has been meeting with interested parties to build a sustainable capacity model to support the INF Liaison position, Catalyst scope and establishing improved ESCOG administration and operations.
- Staff has been participating the Regional Housing Needs Assessment planning process.
- A draft RFP for a consultant to prepare a regional housing needs assessment has been prepared and is being circulated by Mono County's contractors.
- Ongoing grant administration and reporting for the CDFW Proposition 1 grant, Sierra Nevada Conservancy Vibrant Tourism grant, and California Jobs First Initiative.
- Staff continues to work with the Institute for Local Government to refine the ESCOG strategic plan.