

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:	

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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	Brief Project Overview and Purpose (3000 characters including spaces)
	<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>

	<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.

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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.

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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>

	<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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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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.

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