



Proposal :: CA / EastsideCWDG

Application

Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program

Application Period: Nov 20, 2024 - Mar 15, 2025

Decision Date: Jun 1, 2025

Please review the proposal below. Once a proposal has been submitted only the CSS Admin may change it.

Grant proposals become part of the public record. They may be viewed by the public after the application period ends. Be sure to thoroughly review guidance and instruction documents to ensure eligibility and other requirements are met.

Ready to submit proposal

Submit Proposal

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FY 2024 - 2025 USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant Application	File Name		
	State: CA	Keyword:	EastsideCWDG
	Region:	Priority:	Id:
	Administration Information		
	Funds Requested:		\$4,649,865
	Match:		
Score:	Ranking:	Project Funding:	
		\$4,649,865	

1	Proposal Cooperator [CA]			
	Cooperator Organization:	Eastern Sierra Council of Governments		
	Contact Person:	Kristen Pfeiler		
	Address:	437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite #230		
	City:	Mammoth Lakes	State: CA	ZIP Code: 93546
	Phone:	760-878-8444	Email:	kristen.pfeiler@inyocounty.us

1	Applicant Information [CA]			
	Applicant:	Eastern Sierra Council of Governments		
	Contact Person:	Elaine Kabala		
	Address:	437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite #230		
	City:	Mammoth Lakes	State: CA	ZIP Code: 93546
	Phone (work/cell):	760-878-8800	Fax:	760-878-0465
	Email:	ekabala@escog.ca.gov		
Federal Tax ID:	87-1552126	UEI:	ZZWPNJNHUA15	

Is either the Applicant or Proposal Cooperator an Alaskan Native Corporation or an Indian Tribe (either federal or state recognized)?

Please answer either Yes or No

Is the Applicant an Alaskan Native Corporation or an Indian Tribe

No.

2

Provide the expiration date for your sam.gov Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number registration. Note: The UEI# and an active sam.gov registration are needed to apply for the grant.

UEI # and Sam.gov Expiration Date

UEI#: ZZWPNJNHUA15

3 CAGE/NCAGE97BE7

Expiration date: 01/06/2026

4	Project Information	
	Name of the Project:	Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program

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Community Name(s):	34 communities across the two counties
Counties:	Inyo and Mono Counties
Congressional District:	3

GIS Coordinates

Ref. Point Name: Eastern Sierra Region

Lat/Long: 37.363500, -118.395100

Description: Central point of region comprised of Inyo County and Mono County California

4

Area Name:

Boundary Lat/Longs:

Description:

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.

Brief Project Overview and Purpose

In response to escalating wildfire risks in Inyo and Mono Counties, this project establishes a sustainable, consistent, and streamlined approach to reducing fuels in 34 high-risk, low-income communities across 13,300 square miles of the Eastern Sierra. This project invests in workforce capacity, community engagement, education, and targeted hazardous fuel reduction in a multi-pronged strategy ensuring seamless wildfire risk reduction across private and public lands to increase resilience through planning and mitigation.

1. Establishing the Communities Wildfire Defense Program within ESCOG

This goal integrates 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.

The Program serves as an operational backbone, providing coordination and support for community wildfire mitigation projects through the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (ESWA), Fire Safe Councils, Firewise USA communities, and partners in water, recreation, and conservation initiatives. ESCOG staff funded by the Program will coordinate, arrange, and host 340 hazardous fuel reduction events throughout both counties over the grant period, manage contracts for home ignition zone assessments, and help lead a fire suppression water infrastructure inventory.

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2. Community Engagement & Education

Recognizing that lasting resilience requires an informed public, the Program implements a home assessment and resident outreach program using a wildfire mitigation application. This component leverages local experts to educate community members on wildfire risks and guide them in adopting prioritized mitigation measures in homes and neighborhoods.

3. Hazardous Fuel Reduction

The CWDG grant funds acquiring equipment, including chippers, roll-off dumpsters, and a towable airburner, to efficiently remove combustible vegetation. ESCOG staff coordinates with contracted fuel reduction crews and County Solid Waste staff, who use this equipment to support hazardous fuel reduction events through curbside chipping and haul-away services. This integrated approach aligns priority projects from the Inyo and Mono Community Wildfire Protection Plans, supports key California Action Plan priorities, and advances the Cohesive Strategies goal of fire-adapted communities while laying the groundwork for long-term resilience across the Eastern Sierra.

The Program will 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.

Additionally, the Program creates a comprehensive water infrastructure inventory focused on identifying fire flow, storage, and access needs for local firefighting.

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. (See NOFO for CWPP alternative requirements such as Hazard Mitigation Plans)

Grant Component Type

2. Project described in a CWPP that is less than ten years old. This Program 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.

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Inyo CWPP: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/3tkr71o7s1mnjcm7gjql/2024_Inyo_CWPP.pdf?rlkey=6v7wm7v2cmhuja2b76r4damjf&e=1&st=3zcofd0d&dl=0

Mono CWPP: https://www.monocounty.ca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_division/page/10087/mono-toml_mjhmp_final_may_2019.pdf

Inyo County's CWPP was updated in 2024 with 25 high-priority projects. The Program advances the goals of the CWDG by implementing seven top priority wildfire mitigation strategies:

1. Enhancing green waste disposal (RL#10|p127);
2. Mapping and assessing water resources for fire suppression (FR#1|p145); and
3. Supporting defensible-space, home-hardening, and home assessments (FAC#5|p138) through
4. Strengthening fire department capacity (FR#4|p151),
5. Creating dedicated wildfire coordination positions (FR#5|p151), and
6. Deploying a wildfire mitigation application (FAC#9|p140).
7. These coalesce to form a comprehensive regional fire-adapted communities program serving both Inyo and Mono Counties (FAC#6|p139) to reduce wildfire risk to at-risk communities and strengthen regional resilience in alignment with the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

The Mono County CWPP was written in 2009, updated in 2019, and is currently being updated a second time 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 Table 5.2|p199); prioritizes protection of communities and residents from wildfire and education of residents (MJHMP Table 1|p199-202, MJHMP|p262-263); prioritizes protection of critical facilities from wildfire (MJHMP|p262-263); supports fuels treatment projects/ defensible space mitigation/home hardening efforts and training, (MJHMP|p329-330|Section 7.6); and prioritizes using education to train and equip residents to mitigate the impacts of wildfires (MJHMP|p261-264).

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 the California Forest Action Plans core tenets: Improving Forest Health and Resilience; Promoting Sustainable Biomass Utilization; Protecting Communities and Infrastructure; and Expanding Collaboration and Shared Stewardship.

For project implementations, an eligible CWPP or equivalent plan needs to be included.

Provide a link to the CWPP or if no link exists, please send a copy to the CWDG Forest Service email at SM.FS.usfs_cwdg@usda.gov. (Include the State/Island/Tribe, project name, and applicant information)

(Note: If the application is for a CWPP development or revision, a current CWPP is not required.)

Include an Eligible CWPP or Equivalent Plan

Inyo CWPP: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/3tkr71o7s1mnjcm7gjql/2024_Inyo_CWPP.pdf?rlkey=6v7wm7v2cmhuja2b76r4damjf&e=1&st=3zcofd0d&dl=0

Chapter 4

Table 4.1; p127; RL#10

Table 4.2; p138-140; FAC#5,#6,#9

Table 4.3; p145,151; FR#1,#4,#5

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Mono CWPP: https://www.monocounty.ca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_division/page/10087/mono-toml_mjhmp_final_may_2019.pdf

The Mono County CWPP was written in 2009, updated in 2019, and is currently being updated a second time 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 Table 5.2|p199); prioritizes protection of communities and residents from wildfire and education of residents (MJHMP Table 1|p199-202, MJHMP|p262-263); prioritizes protection of critical facilities from wildfire (MJHMP|p262-263); supports fuels treatment projects/ defensible space mitigation/home hardening efforts and training, (MJHMP|p329-330|Section 7.6); and prioritizes using education to train and equip residents to mitigate the impacts of wildfires (MJHMP|p261-264).

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

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education, home assessments, and defensible space programs; and (3) Effective Wildfire Response: Improving water resource mapping and fire suppression infrastructure. The program also the California Forest Action Plans core tenets: Improving Forest Health and Resilience; Promoting Sustainable Biomass Utilization; Protecting Communities and Infrastructure; and Expanding Collaboration and Shared Stewardship.

Please respond yes or no if the community is considered "at-risk" (please refer to the definition within the NOFO). Provide a web link to the verification source. (Note: At-Risk is a basic eligibility requirement of this grant opportunity. If the answer to this question is "no," do not proceed with the application process.)

Is Your Community Considered "At-Risk"

Yes. Both Mono and Inyo County, CA face extreme wildfire risk, ranking among the most at-risk counties in the nation. According to the Wildfire Risk to Communities (Version 2, 2024, as reported by the CWDG Data Tool), Mono County's Wildfire Hazard Potential is higher than 95.2% of all U.S. counties, while Inyo County exceeds 73.5% nationwide.

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, burning 7,000 acres, destroying 40 homes, and forcing evacuations in two communities. The Mountain View Fire (2021) started in Walker, Mono County, and burned 96 homes in hours, claiming one life. These two fires alone took out nearly ten percent of Mono County's permanent housing base.

These fires highlight how quickly flames 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 regions vegetation, sparking widespread conversion from sage and juniper landscapes to highly flammable cheatgrass and other invasive species.

8 In addition, the Lions Fire (2018) and Creek Fire (2020) burned thousands of acres of federal land west of our counties, resulting in weeks of 1000+ Air Quality Index ratings and the closure of Inyo National Forest for over a month. These events, and several others over the years, decimated the recreation-based economy for these periods (and beyond).

The regions 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 live in remote areas with limited road access, unreliable communication, and no formal emergency water systems, increasing their susceptibility and exposure during fast-moving wildfires. Low-income households face additional barriers, with fewer resources for home hardening and mitigation.

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 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 December 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.

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 the source of funds).

Roofing Code/Ordinance

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).

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).

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.

9 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/43217Zx>).

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).

In response to these challenges, the Mono and Inyo County Offices of Emergency Management have launched Fire Insurance Consultation Resource webpages to assist residents facing non-renewals or cancellations. These resources offer guidance on

Cancellation Resources webpages to assist residents in the event of 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)

Are you planning on applying for a grant match waiver based on the project serving an underserved community? Please respond yes or no. If yes, include sufficient supporting documentation in your waiver request to demonstrate that the community meets the Low-Income criteria. In addition, Indian Tribes, Alaskan Native Corporations, Pacific Island Territories, and the US Virgin Islands.

Grant Waiver

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>)

These two counties are among the most rural and isolated regions in California, spanning over 13,000 sq mi, with population densities of 1.8 persons per mi in Inyo County and 4.2 in Mono County (US Census). Mostly public land (98% and 93% respectively), a limited tax base funds services like wildfire mitigation (Inyo County General Fund revenue of \$73.8M, and Mono County of \$50.1M (Inyo Budget, Mono Budget)). Furthermore, with recent reductions in federal land management and firefighting positions, the region faces increased challenges in maintaining fire readiness.

1 Economic constraints further impact wildfire preparedness. Inyo County's poverty rate is 11.8%, and Mono's is 7.8%, while **0** median household incomes remain well below the state median of \$84,097 (U.S. Census). Nearly 22% of Inyo's population is over 65, making wildfire evacuations especially challenging. Many residents live in remote areas with limited road access and unreliable communications. Those on fixed incomes often struggle to afford home-hardening measures, leaving them particularly exposed.

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 difficulty affording basic mitigation measures.

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.

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 provides practical wildfire preparedness training.

Without external funding, the region will struggle to implement essential CWPP projects, leaving communities unprotected. This Program is vital for addressing key gaps, empowering residents, and strengthening wildfire resilience.

10 points. 7500 characters including spaces.

Clearly define the scope of the project, what the project proposes to accomplish, why it is important, and how it supports the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and relevant State Forest Action Plan (or equivalent Tribal plan).

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 (or acceptable alternative as described in the NOFO). Specify if benefits to traditionally underserved or marginalized audiences are a component of the work.

Project Description

The Eastern Sierra faces an escalating wildfire crisis. In this vast and rugged region, wildfire risk is amplified by extreme terrain, high winds, increasingly flammable fuel types, and a volunteer-dependent mitigation system, leaving communities exposed. With some of the lowest population densities in California, 1.8 persons per square mile in Inyo County and 4.2 in Mono County, these isolated communities lack the workforce and resources needed to manage wildfire risk. The Eastside, spanning 13,257 square miles, 98% of it publicly managed, cut off by the Sierra Nevada Mountains, relies almost entirely on volunteers, unlike the contractor-supported western slopes of the Sierra. While grassroots efforts through Firewise USA Communities (FWCs) and Fire Safe Councils (FSCs) have expanded, volunteer capacity has reached its limit. Without external support, these communities cannot build the resilience needed to withstand future wildfires.

To address this urgent need, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) proposes the Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program (the Program), a strategic initiative designed to strengthen local capacity, integrate community efforts with Tribal and government resources, and implement high-priority wildfire mitigation projects. The Program will:

1. Establish a Regional Communities Wildfire Defense Program within ESCOG to create a coordinated wildfire resilience program for long-term mitigation support.
2. Empower residents to mitigate wildfire risks by training and equipping them to assess and reduce hazards on their properties and within their communities.

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3. Develop a Regional Hazardous Fuel Removal System to implement a sustainable approach to large-scale vegetation management and debris removal.

Funding is sought to invest in essential wildfire mitigation infrastructure, enhance administrative capacity, contract with local hazardous fuel reduction crews, execute high-priority projects from Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), and expand education and outreach programs to improve community resilience.

Years 1 and 2: Building the Foundation and Scaling Services

ESCOG will launch the Program in Year 1, staffed by two full-time personnel. The Resilience Manager will establish collaboration systems and align cross-sector partnerships, while the Community Coordinator will lead community engagement, supporting volunteer-driven wildfire preparedness. Both staff will leverage GIS and mitigation software such as FireAside to assess water infrastructure and enhance emergency planning in partnership with FSCs, FWCs, volunteer fire departments, Tribes, and government agencies.

ESCOG Resilience Manager partners with CALFIRE, USFS, BLM, Tribal governments, and community organizations to set a yearly wildfire mitigation schedule. The ESCOG Community Coordinator organizes quarterly cleanup and education events, including Wildfire Resilience Week and the Last Chance Survival Simulation Workshop, equipping residents with cost-effective mitigation strategies and late-stage wildfire evacuation preparedness. Residents receive home ignition zone assessments, conducted by trained ESCOG staff, volunteers, and fire crews using mitigation software.

FSCs/FWCs help neighbors remove fuels, with contracted crews assisting those unable to do the work themselves. County Solid Waste teams begin hazardous fuel removal in Year 1, with six roll-off dumpsters and two towable chippers. Chipping services occur twice per year across 34 communities, converting biomass into compost through partnerships with Bishop Community Garden, Bishop Paiute Tribe, and Eastern Sierra Farm Fresh. Larger materials are chipped at the landfill once per year.

- 1 By Year 2, the program scales to 340 fuel removal events, ensuring a sustained, regional wildfire mitigation approach. ESCOG tracks progress and updates CWPPs to refine strategies and strengthen long-term wildfire resilience.

Years 3 and 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 FWCs. Education and outreach programs will continue with quarterly events and cornerstone programs providing residents with ongoing resources and training. Regional wildfire mitigation planning will align with broader water and recreation initiatives, leveraging cross-sector collaboration to strengthen information sharing and community resilience.

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 the end of the five-year period, the Program will have removed 9,500 tons of hazardous fuel, equivalent to 633-792 acres of treated land; completed 1,250 home ignition zone assessments; treated 200 high-risk homes with direct fuel reduction services; conducted 340 community cleanup events across 34 high-risk, low-income communities; developed a comprehensive water infrastructure inventory; and established a Communities Wildfire Defense Program within ESCOG for long-term coordination and resilience.

The Program advances the goals of the CWDG by implementing key mitigation strategies identified in both Counties CWPPs. These include enhancing green waste disposal; mapping and assessing water resources for fire suppression to safeguard critical facilities and communities; and supporting defensible space, home hardening, and home assessments by strengthening fire department capacity, sustaining dedicated wildfire coordination positions, and deploying a wildfire mitigation application.

Collectively, these strategies coalesce into a regional fire-adapted communities program serving both Inyo and Mono Counties that equips residents with education and training to mitigate wildfire impacts and strengthens regional resilience in alignment with the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy's three goals 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.

Additionally, the Program supports the California Forest Action Plans goals by improving forest health through proactive hazardous fuel removal, promoting sustainable biomass utilization by converting it into compost, protecting communities and infrastructure by expanding defensible space programs and improving fire suppression water infrastructure, and expanding collaboration and shared stewardship by integrating wildfire mitigation efforts with the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance and regional water, recreation, and conservation initiatives.

The Program is designed to evolve from a grant-funded initiative into a self-sustaining wildfire mitigation system, embedding resilience as a permanent, regionally coordinated effort across Eastern Sierra communities.

Applicant Budget [CA]				
	Grant	Match		TOTAL
	Funds Requested	Applicant	Non-Federal Contributors	Total Project Cost
Personnel / Labor:	\$946.400			\$946.400

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1 2	Fringe Benefits:	\$283,920	\$283,920
	Travel:	\$20,000	\$20,000
	Equipment:	\$363,000	\$363,000
	Supplies:	\$119,400	\$119,400
	Contractual:	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
	Other:	\$1,399,260	\$1,399,260
	Indirect Costs:	\$517,885	\$517,885
	TOTAL:	\$4,649,865	\$4,649,865

10 points. 5000 characters including spaces.

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. The budget narrative must describe how the grant funds will be spent with specific detail for each grant expenditure. It must describe how expenditures are applicable and relevant to the goals and objectives of the project. A project proposal must also show how the applicant will meet matching requirements or qualify for a waiver.

If qualified for a waiver, you do not need to show funding in the match column. Information regarding matching funds will not impact scoring. Any program income generated during the award period must be accounted for by either: 1) reducing the federal share of the award, 2) using as program match, or 3) using as additive funds to do more work. Program income means gross income earned by the recipient or subrecipient that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned because of the federal award during the period of performance.

Budget Explanation

Goal 1: Establish a Regional Communities Wildfire Defense Program

This program under ESCOG will coordinate wildfire mitigation, manage the hazardous fuels program, support home assessments, oversee water infrastructure assessment, and ensure long-term program sustainability.

Personnel: \$946,400

Two full-time staff (\$45.50/hr, 40 hrs/wk, 5 yrs):

- Resilience Manager coordinates efforts across Fire Safe Councils, Firewise USA Communities, Tribes, County agencies, CAL FIRE, and federal partners; manages hazardous fuels programs, biomass disposal, GIS tasks, risk mapping, mitigation tracking, infrastructure assessments, grant compliance, and Community Wildfire Protection Plan implementation; and collaborates to create jobs and identify future funding opportunities for sustainable implementation of mitigation programs.
- Community Coordinator leads engagement, education, and outreach; organizes 20 quarterly events and two major programs (Wildfire Resilience Week & Last Chance Survival Simulation); trains volunteers and oversees 1,250 HIZ assessments; collaborates with fire departments, fuel reduction crews, and Fire Safe Councils to implement mitigation efforts.

Fringe Benefits: \$283,920 (30% of two full-time staff salaries)

Travel: \$20,000 (150 trips over 5 years):

Two full-time ESCOG staff estimated to perform 120 site visits, host 20 workshops/events, and attend 10 wildfire mitigation conferences (total 150 trips) over 5 years.

- Estimated approx. 150 miles round trip \$105 each: \$15,750

- Estimated lodging for 25% of trips - \$150 each: \$5,625

- Estimated per diem for 25% of trips - \$59 each: \$2,213

Travel total is approx. \$23,588, rounded down to \$20,000

Goal 2: Empower Residents to Mitigate Wildfire Risks

Increase community engagement, volunteer training, and homeowner education. ESCOG will host 20 quarterly events over five years and run Wildfire Resilience Week & Last Chance Survival Simulation. Partner with fire departments and FSCs to conduct 250 annual HIZ assessments using mitigation software to promote customized low-cost, high-priority mitigation strategies.

1 Supplies: \$119,400

3 -Community Engagement & Training: \$50,000 for educational materials, audio/visual equipment, marketing, venue rentals for 2 annual regional workshops, and quarterly community education events to promote fire adaptation and preparedness.

-Mitigation Software: \$55,000 to purchase software to conduct 1,250 home ignition zone assessments across Inyo and Mono Counties and support scheduling 340 community fuel reduction events. (\$5,000 startup fee in year 1, then annual cost of \$10,000 for maintenance, support, and data storage).

-Tablets for HIZ assessments: \$14,400 for 4 tablets @ \$600 each (\$2400) + \$50/month for cellular service (\$12,000).

Goal 3: Establish a Regional Hazardous Fuel Removal System

Develop infrastructure for 340 total fuel removal events over 5 years, removing 9,500 tons of biomass used to generate 19,000 tons of compost.

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Equipment: \$363,000

- Towable 15 Chippers (2 units): \$168,000 (Initial purchase +\$10,000/yr maintenance).
- Rolloff Dumpsters (6 units, 30 cubic yards): \$100,000.
- Towable Airburner: \$95,000 (Initial purchase + \$548/yr maintenance).

Contractual: \$1,000,000

Local Hazardous Fuel Reduction Crews treat 200 high-risk homes over 5 years (40 homes/yr @ \$5,000/home).

Other - Subawards to Inyo & Mono Counties: \$1,399,260

- Compost Containment Pads (2 landfills, one in Inyo & one in Mono County): \$80,000 (\$40,000/site: \$7,500 site prep, \$12,500 concrete surfacing, \$7,500 runoff control, \$4,000 perimeter fencing, \$5,000 water/electric setup, \$3,500 permits).
- Waste Disposal Fees: \$237,500 (9,500 tons @ \$25/ton).
- County Personnel Using Purchased Equipment to Chip & Haul Biomass: \$761,760 (Inyo: 2-person crew @ \$72/hr, 16 hrs/event; Mono: 3-person crew @ \$90/hr, 8 hrs/event; serving 19 & 15 communities, twice/yr).
- Commercial Chipper Rental: \$320,000 (for large-diameter material >15", 2 weeks/yr at landfills).

Indirect Costs: \$517,885

(15% of total program costs, excluding equipment & chipper rentals). Covers admin overhead (office space, utilities, grant compliance, reporting) per 2 CFR 200. ESCOG follows the 15% de minimis rate.

No matching funds or cost-share contributions will be used.

10 points. 7500 characters including spaces.

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 education/outreach programs, planning/assessment efforts clearly described, etc.). Include metrics for measuring progress towards the accomplishment(s). Describe any applicable less quantifiable return on investments.

Accomplishments

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.

Goal 1: Develop a Regional Communities Wildfire Defense Program

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.

Activities

- Regional Coordination: ESCOG will serve as the central coordinating body, facilitating quarterly meetings with 10 Fire Safe Councils (FSC), 30 Firewise USA Communities (FWC), and 25 agencies. Staff will track progress and align projects with federal, state, and local risk assessments.
- Home Assessment and GIS Mapping: Use mitigation software to schedule 1,250 assessments, collect real-time data, generate customized mitigation reports, and prioritize high-risk households for hazardous fuel reduction 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 data, generate annual reports, and track program effectiveness.

Outcomes

- Regional Partnerships: Host quarterly meetings, 20 over 5 years, to implement the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and strengthen Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance efforts and resource alignment. Ensure participation of at least 65 wildfire mitigation groups.
- Risk Tracking: Use software to track progress and align 1,250 assessments with regional risk management plans.
- Monitoring: Produce five annual progress reports and maps to track risk reduction and defensible space compliance.

Impact

- 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.

Goal 2: Empower Residents to Mitigate Wildfire Risks

Objective: Provide residents with the knowledge, skills, and tools to reduce wildfire risk at the individual and community level through education and direct support.

Activities

- 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 FSCs and fire departments 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 FWCs by Year 5.
- Education: Deliver quarterly community-specific wildfire education presentations and 2 regional workshops, Wildfire Resilience Week and Last Chance Survival Simulation Workshop, yearly.
- Property Assessments: Complete 1,250 home ignition zone assessments and provide mitigation recommendations.

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-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.

1 -Targeted Risk Reduction: High-risk households receive tailored support, ensuring resources are directed effectively.

4 -Job Creation: A key component of this program is its connection to job creation initiatives in the region. Cerro Coso Community College has developed a Wildland Fire and Forestry curriculum that requires students to complete work experience internships. Sustaining the local hazardous fuel reduction crews and providing support to FSCs 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 job creation and fill critical gaps in regional hazardous fuel reduction, community preparedness, and fire response.

Goal 3: Establish a Regional Hazardous Fuel Removal System

Objective: Develop infrastructure for hazardous fuel removal that supports sustainable biomass management while reducing fire hazards across Inyo and Mono Counties.

Activities

-Hazardous Fuel Cleanup Events: Conduct 340 community cleanup events over five years (68 per year). Events will focus on hazardous fuel collection, chipping, and disposal in 34 high-risk communities, coordinated with FSCs, County teams, and hazardous fuel reduction crews.

-Chipping and Biomass Management: Deploy two towable 15 chippers, six 30-cubic-yard 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 340 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, one airburner to support cleanup operations.

Impact

-Community Resilience: 100% of participating communities will have reliable green waste disposal services.

-Sustainability: 9,500 tons of biomass will be converted to create 19,000 tons of compost to 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 to 4: Scale up full operations, expand FWC 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:

9,500 tons of hazardous fuels removed, treating 633 to 792 acres.

1,250 home ignition zone assessments completed.

200 high-risk homes treated with hazardous fuel reduction services.

20 community workshops and 10 regional workshops engaging over 1,250 residents.

Less Quantifiable Return:

-Increased Community Resilience: Expanded Fire Safe Councils and Firewise USA Communities will create lasting local engagement. Local hazardous fuel reduction crews assist elderly, disabled, and low-income residents who cannot maintain defensible space on their own, ensuring equitable access to fire protection.

-Job creation: Integrating local hazardous fuel reduction crews with the recently developed Cerro Coso Community College Wildland Fire curriculum through work experience credits will address staffing shortages and build the next generation of fire professionals.

-Sustainable Biomass: Collaborations with local composters and the planned bioenergy facility in Mono County will provide long-term solutions for biomass.

10 points. 7500 characters including spaces.

The application should clearly define collaborative elements, including support from partners, agencies, landowners, and communities. A project proposal must identify partners that will be actively engaged in carrying out the project and add value to project planning and implementation, with a description of each partner's role. Collaboration may be qualitative in nature, and the contribution of a partner may be more than the number of partners involved.

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

The Communities Wildfire Defense Program drives regional collaboration, uniting key partners to reduce wildfire risk and strengthen community resilience. As the lead agency, the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) coordinates

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strengthen community resilience. As the lead agency, the Council of Governments (ESCOG) coordinates mitigation efforts, manages grants, and aligns strategies across local, state, and federal levels. By prioritizing cross-jurisdictional cooperation, ESCOG ensures these efforts endure beyond the grant. Dovetailing with this Program, ESCOGs leadership in job creation and biomass utilization through its Sustainable Recreation and Ecosystem Management Program and Pace and Scale Accelerator Project addresses critical capacity gaps for long-term wildfire resilience.

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 establish 8 Firewise USA Communities (FWC) with 21 more in formation (previously, none existed in the region) and reform the Inyo-Mono Resource Conservation District (RCD), which aims to become a long-term home for a regional hazardous fuel reduction crew and equipment lending library. With funding for these County Wildfire Coordinator positions ending in December 2024, this Program offers the opportunity to transition them into ESCOG, allowing them to better leverage regional resources and enhance wildfire mitigation across jurisdictions.

FSCs/FWCs are vital community-level partners that mobilize residents, lead volunteer mitigation efforts, and drive defensible space initiatives. Their grassroots leadership builds public engagement in wildfire preparedness, but volunteer-driven efforts lack sustainability. This Program provides resources, coordination, and support for Home Ignition Zone assessments, cleanup events, and fuel removal, ensuring these vital efforts expand and endure.

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 and form the Wildfire Resilience Week and Last Chance Survival Workshop cadre in collaboration with the County Wildfire Coordinators, strengthening community knowledge and participation in wildfire preparedness.

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 Program will also support the planned Mono County bioenergy facility, which will convert hazardous fuels into renewable energy, offering a scalable biomass solution.

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5 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, a 60,000+ acre landscape-scale, fuel reduction initiative, 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.

The Whitebark Institute, a pivotal partner, is the lead organization for the Eastern Sierra Climate and Community Resilience Project (ESCCRP), Wildfire Resilience Week, and facilitator of the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (ESWA), a regional collaborative that plans and implements landscape-scale fuel reduction projects while leading outreach, job creation, and biomass solutions. This Program will integrate and build upon their existing projects through collaborative planning and community workshops.

Local hazardous fuel reduction crews are integral to this Program's workforce capacity. The Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Tribe (LPPST) 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 LPPST clear hazardous fuel from around three homes, integrating with the larger project. This Program will sustain and expand those efforts. The Bishop Paiute Tribe (BPT) manages two hazardous fuel reduction crews: one working on the ESCCRP during summer and another removing hazardous fuels around homes. This Program will provide winter work, ensuring year-round employment for BPT crews. The Bishop Fire Department recently started a wildland fire program and faces challenges maintaining firefighter interest due to its volunteer-based structure. This Program will create steady work for a small crew to conduct Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) assessments and fuel reduction, helping build their program. Mammoth Lakes Fire Department serves as a successful model for this approach, inspiring other volunteer fire departments to adopt similar programs.

Job creation 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 hazardous fuel reduction 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 mitigation and response.

This Program enhances resilience by integrating mitigation efforts, institutionalizing fuel reduction within County operations, funding job creation, and aligning with regional landscape-scale projects to ensure wildfire preparedness remains a long-term priority. The ESWA provides a lasting framework for interagency coordination, uniting local governments, federal agencies, Tribes, fire departments, and community organizations.

By funding equipment, fuel reduction, and administrative support, this Program sustains FSC/FWCs, volunteer fire departments, and Tribal crews, easing financial burdens and strengthening capacity. These collaborations expand wildfire mitigation, model rural solutions, and build lasting infrastructure for resilience. By uniting diverse partners, this Program fosters strategic, community-driven action that reduces wildfire risk, enhances workforce training, and ensures sustainable resource management.

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10 points. 7500 characters including spaces.

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 the overall landscape and land ownership that the project influences in addition to the defined project area. Specify areas targeted for planning or mitigation. Clearly describe each proposed activity and include details on where they will be occurring. Include the approximate number of structures that will benefit from the proposed action.

Landscape Impacts

The Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program bridges the gap between large-scale hazardous fuels reduction projects on federal, state, and Tribal lands, like the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP) and the currently limited efforts to mitigate wildfire risk within communities in Inyo and Mono Counties. While federal and state agencies conduct landscape-scale treatments on public lands, wildfire ignition and spread within communities remain dangerously under-addressed, placing lives, property, and local economies at risk. This program will provide the critical missing link by empowering residents and local organizations to reduce hazardous fuels on private lands and coordinate with agency-led treatments on adjacent public lands.

The need for community-based fuels reduction has never been greater. Since 2015, two of the most destructive wildfires in Eastern Sierra history have burned 140 homes, an unprecedented loss for the region. In Inyo County alone, an estimated eight fires in the past three years have triggered evacuations, many igniting within communities before spreading to the wildland. With 95% of the region federally managed, local communities lack the workforce, infrastructure, and sustained funding needed to conduct large-scale mitigation projects. Federal agencies, which have historically assisted with fuel reduction efforts, are increasingly stretched thin by staffing shortages and capacity constraints. As a result, the responsibility for wildfire mitigation is falling more heavily on local communities, all of which lie within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) or Intermix.

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6 Momentum is building. Since 2023, eight new Firewise Communities have been recognized, with 21 more in development, a testament to growing community commitment to wildfire preparedness. However, without a structured, long-term program to support and sustain these efforts, much of this grassroots progress risks being lost. Fire Safe Councils (FSCs) have led community cleanups, but as volunteer-driven organizations, their efforts remain inconsistent and financially unsustainable. To turn these sporadic efforts into a coordinated, sustained wildfire defense strategy, a regional framework is essential - one that provides infrastructure, resources, and lasting community engagement. The Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program will directly support 34 communities across the region, removing 9,500 tons (equivalent to 633-792 acres) of hazardous fuels within communities, engaging 1,250 residents in home ignition zone risk assessments and wildfire preparedness education. This scale of action will significantly enhance local capacity to reduce wildfire risk and protect lives, property, and natural resources.

By linking community mitigation efforts with federal and state-led landscape-scale treatments, this program will create a continuous fuel reduction corridor across mixed-ownership lands, reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the Eastern Sierra foothills, riparian corridors, and high-altitude sagebrush-steppe ecosystems. Special attention will be given to preventing vegetative conversion in lower elevation foothills where cheatgrass and other invasives increase fire spread, and to protecting riparian habitats, which act as wicks that funnel lightning-caused fires from the Inyo National Forest directly into the hearts of communities and serve as critical water sources for both ecosystems and human communities. Additionally, this program will preserve critical habitats and sensitive species, such as the Bi-State Sage Grouse, by reducing high-intensity wildfires that threaten the sagebrush ecosystem. Soil moisture retention and revegetation efforts will be incorporated into post-treatment strategies to ensure long-term ecosystem health in fuel-treated areas.

Meanwhile, shifting weather patterns are driving cycles of extreme drought followed by heavy precipitation, accelerating vegetation growth beyond management capacity. This challenge is further compounded by the region's land ownership pattern, where public lands completely surround communities, creating complex WUI management issues. Reducing wildfire risk within communities is not only essential for resident safety but also critical for protecting the public lands that sustain the regions tourism-driven economy.

Recognizing that wildfire resilience requires ongoing maintenance, this program is designed to establish self-sustaining, locally driven mitigation efforts. By developing a regional model for wildfire resilience, this project will transform community-led efforts into a fully integrated, long-term wildfire defense strategy. The program aligns with the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, the State Forest Action Plan, and the Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) of Mono and Inyo Counties, all of which emphasize protecting residential property, public health, and ecosystems from high-intensity wildfires as a means of safeguarding the region's economy and way of life.

10 points. 7500 characters including spaces.

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 as well as who or what organizations are responsible.

Project Sustainability

The Eastern Sierra Communities Wildfire Defense Program transitions from a grant-funded initiative into a long-term wildfire mitigation system, ensuring wildfire resilience becomes a permanent, regionally coordinated effort. This Program builds on the foundational work of Fire Safe Councils (FSCs), Firewise USA Communities (FWCs), Tribes, volunteer fire departments, and regional agencies while strengthening the ability of Counties to embed wildfire mitigation into standard operations.

At the heart of this sustainability effort is staff and Program participation in the Eastern Sierra Wildfire Alliance (ESWA), a coalition bringing together local, state, federal, and Tribal partners to align mitigation priorities, address barriers, and ensure long-term coordination. The Program also complements the Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP), which lays the groundwork for large-scale fuels management on public lands. By integrating with these initiatives, this Program

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ensures mitigation efforts extend seamlessly across landscapes, linking public, private, and Tribal lands in a unified risk-reduction approach. Additionally, it utilizes and updates the Counties Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) to keep mitigation priorities data-driven and aligned with evolving wildfire risks.

A key element of long-term sustainability is embedding chipping, biomass disposal, and composting services into County operations. Inyo and Mono Counties absorb these services into their regular workflows, ensuring hazardous fuels reduction continues without reliance on external funding. This Program also expands and unifies small-scale composting efforts initiated by the Bishop Paiute Tribe Food Sovereignty Program, Bishop Community Garden, and private landowners, creating a regional composting system that transforms green waste into a valuable agricultural and soil restoration resource. This shift reduces disposal costs while generating economic and environmental benefits.

Beyond composting, the program integrates into Mono County's planned 2.5 MW bioenergy facility, which received a USFS Wood Innovations Grant in 2023 to begin site development. This facility serves as a permanent, carbon-friendly biomass disposal option, supporting renewable energy generation while sustaining fuels reduction efforts.

Sustaining this program requires a diversified funding strategy beyond grants. Counties invest in permanently funding chipping, hauling, and composting services, while cost-share agreements with FSCs and FWCs encourage local financial commitment. Ongoing state and federal funding from CAL FIRE, FEMA, USDA, and Good Neighbor Authority agreements provides additional support. Public-private partnerships leverage contributions from utilities, insurance providers, and private landowners, while a fee-for-service model managed by the Inyo-Mono Resource Conservation District (RCD) offers affordable fuels reduction services and equipment lending.

A regionally coordinated hazardous fuel reduction workforce is central to this initiative, ensuring year-round wildfire mitigation across Inyo and Mono Counties. This collaborative system unites Tribal hazardous fuel reduction crews, fire departments, public agencies, and private contractors to sustain a consistent fuels reduction effort. At its core, Cerro Coso Community College's Fire and Forestry program supplies trained students to augment these crews in fuels reduction, home assessments, and defensible space work, creating a continuous pipeline of skilled labor.

17

To ensure operational continuity, the Inyo-Mono RCD serves as the coordinating hub, managing contracts, equipment, and crew training while supporting Tribal and volunteer fire crews. Cerro Coso integrates academic training with real-world experience, offering paid, hands-on opportunities in wildfire mitigation. Funding from state and federal grants, along with cost-sharing agreements among agencies, utilities, and private landowners, sustains long-term staffing. This workforce model ties directly to ESCCRPs broader vision for landscape-scale resilience, supplying skilled labor to implement and maintain fuels reduction projects across public and private lands. By aligning this workforce with CWPP priorities, wildfire mitigation remains data-driven, responsive to evolving risks, and continuously scaled based on capacity and need.

Investments in technology further support sustainability by improving efficiency, coordination, and impact tracking. Home assessment and scheduling software automates defensible space inspections and fuels reduction scheduling, reducing administrative costs. GIS mapping and data analytics track acres treated, fuels removed, and risk reduction progress, securing future funding by demonstrating measurable success. Integrated emergency response planning ensures fuels reduction aligns with regional fire preparedness strategies, while real-time project tracking and risk analysis keep CWPP priorities up to date.

The program's sustainability also depends on strong governance and coordination among local, Tribal, and regional partners. ESCOG leads regional coordination, securing funding and ensuring alignment with ESWA, ESCCRP, and other key initiatives. Counties integrate fuels management into standard operations, eliminating reliance on external funding. FSCs and FWCs remain central to community engagement, leading outreach, training, and volunteer mobilization. The Inyo-Mono RCD facilitates workforce sustainability, ensuring long-term staffing, training, and equipment access, while the Whitebark Institute provides technical expertise and project support, keeping mitigation efforts aligned with statewide and federal wildfire management priorities.

Over five years, this Program transitions into a self-sustaining wildfire mitigation system through a phased approach. In Year 1, the focus is on hiring staff, purchasing equipment, launching partnerships, and integrating chipping and biomass disposal into County operations. Year 2 expands workforce training, establishes cost-sharing agreements, and pilots fee-for-service models through the RCD. By Year 3, hazardous fuel reduction crews are fully operational, with stable funding from state workforce grants, utility and landowner contracts, and County contributions. Year 4 finalizes transitioning key services to local governments, ensuring fuels reduction becomes a permanent function of Public Works and Solid Waste Divisions, while expanding revenue for long-term workforce funding. By Year 5, the program is fully institutionalized, with funding secured, a self-sustaining workforce, and ongoing CWPP updates guiding wildfire mitigation.

By integrating government operations, job training, public-private partnerships, and technology, this program ensures wildfire resilience remains a regional priority for decades. It sustains itself beyond the grant period while strengthening and formalizing the work of Fire Safe Councils, Firewise Communities, volunteer fire departments, Tribes, ESWA, ESCCRP, the Whitebark Institute, and local agencies. More than a mitigation effort, this initiative establishes a permanent, regionally-coordinated wildfire resilience model, ensuring ongoing hazardous fuels reduction, home hardening, and defensible space work. The result is lasting protection for communities across Inyo and Mono Counties.

10 points. 3000 characters including spaces.

Does this project benefit a low-income community as defined in the NOFO? To receive priority points the application must clearly demonstrate and document whether the project benefits a low-income community, as defined.

Please respond yes or no. Provide a description and web link to the verification source.

Does this Project Benefit a Low-Income Community

Yes, Inyo County, CA, meets the "low income" criteria. The Census Bureau estimates its median household income is between

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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>)

- 1**
- 8** With the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires in the region, some low-income communities are experiencing higher home insurance costs or policy cancellations due to elevated wildfire risk. Many residents have already lost homeowners' insurance, further limiting their ability to recover from disasters.

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.

Furthermore, Bishop and Lone Pine, two of the high-risk and low-income communities targeted through this Program, have designated Opportunity Zones that incentivize people to invest in job creation and economic growth in these distressed areas.

10 points. 3000 characters including spaces.

Has all or part of the project area been impacted by a severe disaster that impacts wildfire risk and/or hazard?

Please respond yes or no. Provide a web link to the verification source.

Has this Community Been Impacted by a Severe Disaster: Part 1

YES. Both Inyo and Mono Counties have experienced multiple federally declared disasters that have increased wildfire risk. Inyo County faced Tropical Storm Hillary (2024, FEMA DR-4750-CA) and five Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides: twice in 2017 (DR-4305 & DR-4301) and three times in 2023 (DR-4683 & DR-4699). Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2024). Disaster Declarations Summary. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, <https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6027>

Mono County experienced Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides in 2023 (EM-3591-CA, EM-3592-CA, DR-4699-CA) and 2017 (DR-4308-CA, DR-4305-CA, DR-4301-CA), significantly increasing wildfire risk. Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2024). Disaster Declarations Summary. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, <https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6051>

These storms damaged or destroyed critical roads, isolating communities for days and making wildfire response and evacuation nearly impossible. Many dirt and gravel roads remain impassable, requiring years of maintenance.

- 1**
- 9** These storms also triggered rapid vegetation growth and downed fuels, including an exponential increase in highly flammable tumbleweeds. Avalanches, flooding, and high river flows uprooted trees, depositing woody debris in riparian areas, creating fire pathways into the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Record-breaking snowstorms in 2023 caused exploding buried propane tanks, avalanches, and flooding. Road closures lasted a month, crippling the outdoor recreation economy. Spring melt fueled extreme vegetation growth, producing dense, three-foot-high grasses that have since dried out.

Similar 2017 storms contributed to increased wildfire intensity. Afterward, Mono County suffered the Mountain View Fire, Slinkard Valley Fire, and Boot Fire, burning 36,904 acres total.

Two extreme winter wildfires over the past decade burned nearly 10% of Mono County's permanent housing: the Round Fire (2015, 7,000 acres, 41 homes lost) and Mountain View Fire (2020, 20,879 acres, 98 homes lost).

Before 2015, wildfires rarely exceeded 7,000 acres and were easier to control due to sparse Great Basin and high alpine ecosystems. Since 2015, wildfire behavior has changed, leading to larger, more destructive fires across both Counties.

If yes, in order to receive priority points the application must clearly demonstrate and document whether the project benefits a community that has been impacted by a severe disaster within the previous ten (10) years, and clearly exhibit how the severe disaster increased wildfire risk and/or hazard and was of a scale and scope to have had landscape impacts (please see full definition in the NOFO). Note: simply listing a disaster will not suffice; you must explain how this disaster has impacted the community's wildfire risk and hazard (not all disasters will qualify for points if it cannot be shown they have influenced the community's risk or hazard).

Has this Community Been Impacted by a Severe Disaster: Part 2

YES. Both Inyo and Mono Counties have experienced multiple federally declared disasters that have increased wildfire risk. Inyo County faced Tropical Storm Hillary (2024, FEMA DR-4750-CA) and five Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides: twice in 2017 (DR-4305 & DR-4301) and three times in 2023 (DR-4683 & DR-4699). Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2024). Disaster Declarations Summary. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, <https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6027>

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2
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Before 2015, wildfires rarely exceeded 7,000 acres and were easier to control due to sparse Great Basin and high alpine ecosystems. Since 2015, wildfire behavior has changed, leading to larger, more destructive fires across both Counties.

10 points. 3000 characters including spaces.

To receive priority points the application must clearly demonstrate and document whether the project is located in an area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential as defined by a local, state, Tribal, regional, or national wildfire hazard potential assessment.

Please respond yes or no, and provide a description and web link to the verification source.

Does the Project Location have Wildfire Hazard Potential

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, wildfirerisk.org)

INYO COUNTY: YES: <https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6027>

Inyo County, CA, is considered at risk and 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, wildfirerisk.org)

The Eastern Sierra is a landscape of extremes, ranging from Mt. Whitney (14,505 feet), the highest mountain in the Lower 48, to Death Valley (minus 282 feet), the lowest point in North America. This dramatic topography creates extreme weather, including winter snow depths of up to 60 feet on Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and prolonged drought years such as 2013-2015, recorded as the driest three-year period in 1,200 years by Dr. Daniel Swain, a research fellow at the NSF National Center for Atmospheric Research.

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1 The region is dominated by Great Basin and Mojave Desert lowlands, some of the driest, hottest landscapes on Earth, including Death Valley National Park. Extreme weather patterns have increased, making wet years and storms wetter and dry years even drier. Over the past decade, these conditions have resulted in the first recorded instances of large-scale home losses due to wildfire in the region's history.

The shifting weather patterns have led to significant changes in vegetation, increasing wildfire risks. Extreme rain and snow events trigger explosive vegetation growth in landscapes historically dominated by sparse sagebrush and desert ecologies. Much of this growth consists of invasive species like cheatgrass, which dries quickly and becomes highly flammable. When extreme wet conditions like winter storms or summer monsoons are followed by extended heat and drought, wildfire risk escalates exponentially.

The Sierra Nevada's downslope and upslope winds, combined with prolonged dry conditions, rapidly dry out fuels in the spring and summer, creating ideal conditions for wildfire. Fine fuels, such as grass and leaf litter, can become highly flammable within just one hour following a drop in relative humidity. Meanwhile, low live fuel moisture in shrubs and trees contributes to extreme fire behavior, leading to crowning and torching.

High winds accelerate fire spread, allowing grass and shrub fires to engulf communities with little warning for evacuation. The region also experiences a winter wildfire season, where extreme topography, combined with shifting weather patterns, contributes to the risk of wildfires igniting even during colder months.

