



ATTACHMENT A
PROJECT PROPOSAL
(Suggested Format)

Instructions: A Project Proposal must be submitted with the Standard Form (SF) 424 Application for Federal Assistance, for all BLM Assistance Agreements. Complete each section below. Use additional sheets as needed.

Person Submitting Proposal: Tom Meyer Date: 5/06/2023

Organization Name: County of El Dorado

NOFO No.: L23AS00286

Applicant Project Title (not the NOFO Title): El Dorado County Fire Adapted Communities

Estimated Period of Performance: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2029

Proposed Project Location (include BLM District/Field Office and BLM POC as applicable): West slope of El Dorado County. BLM Central CA District/Motherlode Field Office. BLM POC Jason Schroeder.

If project is to be awarded under a CESU please identify the appropriate N/A CESU: _____

PRIORITY HABITAT, SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS, AND DESIGNATED UNITS OR WATERSHED AREAS:

This project will reduce risk of wildfires starting and spreading onto BLM lands by providing defensible space around structures on private properties adjacent to these areas. Proposed project activities will be adjacent to Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, including the Pine Hill Preserve and the North Fork Cosumnes River. Additional hazardous fuels reduction treatments as well as maintenance on existing fuel breaks will be initiated as identified in the requested Community Wildfire Protection Plan update.

PROJECT ABSTRACT (4,000 Character Limit):

El Dorado County, located in the Central Sierras, continues to experience large and damaging wildfires, including the most recent Caldor and Mosquito fires. Much of the county is currently designated within a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and is experiencing an expansion of development into the wildland urban interface that are in many cases adjacent to or intermixed with federal lands. To protect natural resources, infrastructure, and promote a safe living environment for residents and visitors, El Dorado County seeks to create and maintain fire adapted communities.

El Dorado County proposes the following activities to promote fire adapted communities:

- Implement a comprehensive, year-round defensible space and home hardening inspection program that focuses on community outreach and voluntary compliance with local and state defensible space regulations and laws.

Community workplans following the Fire Adapted Communities framework will be utilized to inform and coordinate fire agency and community efforts. Funding assistance will be provided to local fire agencies and fire safe councils to build capacity for program implementation.

- Perform defensible space work on homes located in rural and low-income communities based on the defensible space evaluations performed by fire safe councils, fire districts, CAL FIRE, and the County. Work will be performed through the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council, or by private contractors selected through a competitive bidding process.
- Relying on information from the Western El Dorado County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, assess the network of existing and proposed strategic fuel breaks within the County which are in proximity to lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. El Dorado County will work with the local resource conservation districts and others to complete maintenance on existing fuel breaks and to initiate new projects that protect local communities and associated federal lands from the threat of wildfires.
- Establish a Firewise Community Coordinator to assist fire safe councils and communities with establishing and maintaining Firewise Communities. The Coordinator would ensure that Firewise Communities are utilizing standardized templates for their risk assessments and actions plans, and that the necessary technical expertise and support is provided to implement them.

Implementation of these activities will result in communities that are more resistant to the spread of wildfire. Implementation of defensible space and home hardening practices will reduce the number of structures impacted by wildfire and reduce the risk that wildfire will spread within communities and onto adjacent forest and wildlands.

The activities proposed in this project will directly benefit rural residents, communities, visitors, tourism related businesses, agricultural producers and natural resources on both public and private lands. Benefits to these groups include reduced fire risk, improved air and water quality, protection of critical infrastructure, including both power and water supplies, and the reduction in health-related impacts of wildfire smoke. Project activities will be implemented directly by the County and through cooperative agreements with local fire districts and other contractors.

STATEMENT OF NEED:

Post wildfire damage assessments reveal that defensible space around structures, combined with ignition resistant construction, play a critical role in protecting homes and slowing wildfire spread. This was evident during the 2021 Caldor Fire, which burned over 221,000 acres and destroyed over 1,000 homes, mostly within the community of Grizzly Flats. Over two-thirds of the homes and businesses in El Dorado County are located either adjacent to federal lands or within High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and need assessment and recommended treatment prescriptions to reduce the

potential for catastrophic loss.

Following the Caldor Fire, El Dorado County formed a Vegetation Management and Wildfire Resilience Coordination Group to initiate a collaborative, community-based wildfire resiliency and vegetation management program that would accelerate current efforts in the County on both public and private lands. The Coordination Group includes a variety of agencies and organizations who have a mission or responsibility for wildfire prevention and mitigation. This includes federal land management agencies, CAL FIRE, local fire districts and fire safe councils. The Coordination Group has prepared a draft Wildfire Strategy for El Dorado County that describes the approach the county will utilize to coordinate wildfire preparedness and resilience across ownerships and jurisdictions. The draft strategy is currently being reviewed by numerous stakeholders.

The Coordination Group has developed a collaborative effort between El Dorado County, CAL FIRE, local fire officials and fire safe councils to conduct defensible space/home hardening assessments on homes within the State designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Local fire districts and fire safe councils in El Dorado County, however, lack the resources and capacity to address the level of effort needed to effectively assess and treat the number of homes and businesses at risk.

Strategic fuel breaks, combined with defensible space and home hardening, are an important part of an overall fire adapted community. Numerous hazardous fuels reduction projects have been implemented throughout El Dorado County in the last decade. Many have fallen into disrepair and no longer serve as the strategic asset they were intended to be. In addition, there is a need to plan and implement new fuel breaks in strategic locations.

Over 50 Firewise Communities have formed throughout El Dorado County, and additional communities continue to show interest. The County lacks the capacity to coordinate the needs for technical support and guidance for existing and new Firewise Communities. This has led to inconsistencies in how risk assessments and action plans are conducted and implemented.

This proposal directly supports the Department of Interior's Priorities to invest in America's infrastructure related to wildfire preparedness and hazardous fuels management. It furthers Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government by assisting citizens who live in rural areas, tribal communities, and veteran and low-income families.

TECHNICAL APPROACH:

El Dorado County proposes the following activities:

Implement a coordinated approach to defensible space/home hardening assessments on homes within the High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. This is a comprehensive, year-round Defensible Space Inspection/Assessment Program utilizing individual fire adapted community work plans that focus on community outreach and voluntary compliance with local and state defensible space regulations and laws. This

will include funding to support local fire district and fire safe council participation in this collaborative effort. All defensible space and home hardening assessment data will be standardized, collected and shared either through the State's Field Mapper program or El Dorado County's local survey tool. This effort will be overseen by the El Dorado County Defensible Space Coordinator as El Dorado County's match.

Provide defensible space work for approximately 1,000 homes located in rural and low-income communities. Work will be performed by private contractors to bring individual homes into compliance with State and local defensible spaces requirements based on the home assessment performed.

Plan, implement and/or maintain approximately 500 acres of new and pre-existing strategic fuel breaks that protect local communities and associated Bureau of Land Management lands from the threat of wildfires. This includes the areas around Auburn Lake Trails, Lake Hills, Pine Hill Preserve and Martinez Creek. Work collaboratively with Bureau of Land Management to ensure these projects are integrated with federal projects to create a comprehensive fuels treatment system that crosses land ownerships.

Provide education, outreach and assistance to create additional Firewise Communities and other local efforts within at-risk and low-income communities. This includes funding for a full time Firewise Community and outreach coordinator to engage in a countywide public education and outreach effort, including the Fire Adapted Community Program established under the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The coordinator will track and report on Firewise and public outreach contacts.

El Dorado County, in partnership with the Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience Coordination Group, will establish individual metrics and goals within the fire adapted community workplans developed for each area as consistent with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. A public facing dashboard will provide ongoing project status, including the number of inspections/assessments initiated, defensible space around homes completed, acres treated, public outreach contacts, and Firewise Communities engaged. The program anticipates evaluating up to 30,000 parcels, providing defensible space to 1000 homes and performing 500 acres in strategic hazardous fuels reduction work throughout the term of the grant. Progress will be measured on a quarterly and annual basis.

PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN:

All defensible space and home hardening assessment data will be collected and shared through the State's Field Mapper Program or local survey tool. The goals and objectives identified in the Fire Adapted Community work plans prepared for individual communities will provide the metrics for evaluation on a quarterly basis, including the number of assessments completed, defensible space jobs completed, landowners engaged and hazardous fuels reduction acres treated.

TIMETABLE OR MILESTONES TO COMPLETE EXPECTED OUTCOMES:
[Suggested table below]:

Milestone / Task / Activity	Start Date	Completion Date
Defensible Space and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Planning and Outreach	July 1, 2024	May 1, 2029
Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Defensible Space project Environmental Review	September 1, 2024	June 1, 2025
Defensible Space/Home Hardening Evaluations (30,000)	August 1, 2024	May 10, 2029
Defensible Space Projects (1000)	October 1, 2024	May 10, 2029
Hire Firewise Community and Outreach Coordinator	January 1, 2025	June 10, 2029
Firewise Community Workshops (2)	February 1, 2025	November 30, 2025
Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Implementation (100 acres)	April 1, 2025	June 30, 2026
Firewise Community Workshops (3)	February 1, 2026	November 30, 2026
Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Implementation (150 acres)	July 1, 2026	June 30, 2027
Firewise Community Workshops (2)	February 1, 2027	November 30, 2027
Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Implementation (150 acres)	July 1, 2027	June 30, 2028
Firewise Community Workshop (2)	February 1, 2028	November 30, 2028
Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Implementation (100 acres)	July 1, 2028	March 1, 2029
Project Close Out	March 1, 2029	June 30, 2029

PUBLIC BENEFIT AND PROGRAM INTEREST OF THE BLM:

Project activities will reduce community losses from wildfire and subsequently reduce the need for FEMA disaster support costs. The project will also reduce the risk to adjacent and intermixed federal lands from catastrophic wildfires occurring in the wildland urban interface.

QUALIFICATIONS/PAST PERFORMANCE:

Program Manager, Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience

Thomas Meyer, Program Manager

tom.meyer@edcgov.us

(530) 621-5569

Grant Manager

Ken Pimlott, Principal Management Analyst

Ken.pimlott@edcgov.us

(530) 621-5190

Grant Analyst

Janet Barentson, Analyst

Janet.barentson@edcgov.us

(530) 621-6748

The project will be managed by the El Dorado County Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience (OWPR). Project implementation will involve multiple stakeholders who are part of the county's Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience Coordination Group. Sub-awards may be made to local fire districts, fire safe councils, resource conservation

districts and private contractors to complete home assessments, and to perform defensible space and hazardous fuels reduction treatments.

Fire district and fire safe council volunteers performing defensible space and home hardening evaluations will be trained to the El Dorado County defensible space program standards. Hazardous fuels reduction project descriptions will be developed based on established best management practices with a defined scope of work and environmental review in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act. Projects will be managed by a resource conservation district or private contractor utilizing appropriate professionals, including registered professional foresters.

El Dorado County routinely hires consultants and contractors to carry out its mission and responsibilities. Examples include preparing and updating the General Plan Safety Element, Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Department of Transportation roadside hazardous fuels reduction and biomass feasibility studies.

El Dorado County has not participated in a BLM grants or contracts during the last 5 years.

LEVERAGING OF RESOURCES

This project is a partnership between local fire districts, fire safe councils, CAL FIRE, BLM, the Eldorado National Forest, resource conservation Districts and El Dorado County. Organizations will provide staff time and resources in support of the individual fire adapted community work plans. In addition, fire adapted community work plans will be coordinated with other hazardous fuels reduction efforts being undertaken by local, State, federal and non-governmental partners as part of the overall El Dorado County Wildfire Strategy.

OVERLAP OR DUPLICATION OF EFFORT STATEMENT

There is no overlap or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel.

ANTICIPATED FUTURE FUNDING NEEDS

The proposed project activities are long term program initiatives that will carry forward beyond the funding timeframes of this grant and will require future funding, support and investment. El Dorado County and its partners will seek funding opportunities including grants and operational budget allocations to continue these critical program activities.