



Information and General Services Department

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Memo

MEETING DATE: November 16, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Steve Monaghan, Chief Information Officer

SUBJECT: **Resolution approving submittal of an application for grant funding to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program to fund the *BRIC 2021 Nature-Based Mitigation & Wildfire Retrofitting for Climate Resiliency In Nevada County* project, for hazard mitigation funding totaling \$22.3 million dollars and authorizing the Chief Information Officer or their designee to execute this application and other required documents for Department of Homeland Security grant program**

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the Resolution.

FUNDING: There is no application fee for the application of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant. If awarded the grant will run through the Office of Emergency Services' (OES) Budget. The grant requires a cost share for the BRIC program. The OES grant application is for approximately \$22.3 million with a local cost share of \$3.8 million. OES will identify and pursue matching fund opportunities such as state grants, CAL FIRE grants, foundation grants, and in-kind partner services. The Governor's \$1.5 billion wildfire and forests resilience package includes investments for community hardening in fire-vulnerable areas, strategic fuel breaks and fuel reduction projects. OES will seek these funds with the goal of securing the full match over the course of the project. Depending on the amount of matching funds secured, between \$0- \$3.8 million of general fund expenditure may be required to meet the match requirement. If the proposed BRIC grant application is awarded, final acceptance may be contingent on the availability of such outside funds for the match component.

BACKGROUND: The BRIC program makes federal funds available to states, U.S territories, federally recognized tribal governments, and local communities for hazard mitigation activities. The BRIC grant program seeks to categorically shift the federal focus from reactive disaster spending toward research-supported, proactive investment in community resilience so when the hurricane, flood or wildfire comes, communities are better prepared. BRIC provides funds on an annual basis for hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of mitigation projects prior to a disaster.

This proposal is due December 1, 2021. Nevada County Office of Emergency Services submitted a notice of intent to apply in September 2021 and was invited to submit a full application later this fall. OES was advised that competitive projects should be significant in scope, as average projects costs in 2020 were approximately \$17 million.

Nevada County OES is proposing a BRIC project to help mitigate wildfire risks to life, property, and the environment: *BRIC 2021 Nature-based Mitigation & Wildfire Retrofitting for Climate Resiliency in Nevada County*. The project area surrounding Grass Valley is selected due to high fire severity risk, population and home density, critical infrastructure, and the opportunity to benefit a low-income area. This project may serve as a model to replicate in additional high-priority areas throughout the County.

The Woodpecker Ravine Fuel Modification Zone, the project's primary hazardous fuel reduction strategy, will provide necessary vegetation management for fire agencies to defend against fires that may threaten the communities of Alta Sierra, Cedar Ridge, Ophir Hill, Chicago Park, Peardale, Lower Colfax, You Bet, Greenhorn and Empire Mine. The project is in a high-risk region adjacent to the City of Grass Valley, and not far from Nevada City, on predominantly private lands within the State Responsibility Area.

The *BRIC 2021 Nature-based Mitigation & Wildfire Retrofitting for Climate Resiliency in Nevada County* application is approximately \$22.3 million with a local cost share of \$3.8 million with the remaining cost share coming from property owner participants in the residential piece of the proposed program. The grant application is written with a 70% federal share and a 30% non-federal share. The non-federal cost share may consist of cash, donated or third-party in-kind services, materials, or any combination thereof. As previously stated, a portion of cost share will come from homeowner share of costs for home hardening and defensible space implementation. OES will identify additional match funds from state grants, CAL FIRE grants, foundation grants, and in-kind partner services. The Governor's \$1.5 billion wildfire and forests resilience package includes investments for community hardening in fire-vulnerable areas, strategic fuel breaks and fuel reduction projects. OES will seek these funds with the goal of securing the full match over the course of the project. Depending on the amount of matching funds secured, between \$0- \$3.8 million of general fund expenditure may be required to meet the match requirement. FEMA will provide 100% federal funding for management costs.

The overarching goals for this project are as follows:

- To provide protection to County Identified lifelines that include safety and security, communication, transportation, and water.
- Encourage property owners to create and maintain defensible space and to harden their homes to reduce the potential for ignition from embers, direct flame, or radiant heat. We propose multiple strategies to accomplish this goal, such as defensible space inspections, structure hardening assessments, educational outreach in conjunction with partner agencies, no-cost green waste disposal, and cost-share incentives for property owners to complete defensible space and harden structures.
- Reduce vegetation in large-parcel sites and complete the Woodpecker Ravine Fuel Modification Zone to provide buffers to decrease fire spread and intensity, provide anchor points, and increase ancillary environmental benefits such as forest health, water quality, etc.

Upon the Board's approval, OES will submit the application to FEMA by December 1st. If awarded, staff will return to the Board to accept the grant funds and provide an additional update.

Item Initiated by: Jenn Tamo, Senior Administrative Analyst

Approved by: Steve Monaghan, Director, Information and General Services