

---

**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**Board Agenda Memorandum**

---

**MEETING DATE:** April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** **Brian Foss, Planning Director**

**SUBJECT:** Resolution to execute a contract with Ascent Environmental Inc., to prepare the County's 7<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update, covering the 2027-2035 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) to achieve certification by the California Department of Housing and Community Development for an amount not to exceed \$319,370 and directing the Auditor Controller to amend the fiscal year 2025/2026 Planning and Sources and Uses Budgets (4/5 Affirmative Vote)

---

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt the Resolution.

**FUNDING:** Funding will be provided from the General Fund and Planning Department Fund balance.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Resolution to approve the contract

---

**BACKGROUND:** Nevada County is required by State law to update its Housing Element every eight years. This update, known as the 7th Cycle Housing Element (2027–2035), is mandated under Government Code Sections 65580–65589.8 and ensures that the County plans for existing and projected housing needs for all income levels.

This update will build on recent efforts, including the County's General Plan and prior housing initiatives, while incorporating lessons from previous cycles, new legislation, and local community input. The consultant will collaborate closely with County staff, leveraging the County's local knowledge with the consultant's technical expertise in housing policy, HCD compliance, and environmental review.

The County released a Request for Proposals on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 to solicit proposals from qualified firms to develop the County's Housing Element. The RFP period closed on February 13, 2026, and the County received 7 proposals. A County team comprised of staff from CDA and HHSA reviewed the proposals and selected Ascent Environmental, Inc. as the most qualified firm with the most complete and comprehensive proposal and approach to complete the work.

The amount of the contract is \$319,370 to complete the work. The scope of work for the project includes working closely with Nevada County Community Development Agency staff, partner agencies, elected and appointed officials, residents, and HCD throughout the process to ensure the Housing Element is compliant with all State requirements and is adopted and certified prior to the statutory deadline.

The primary objectives of the Housing Element Update are to:

- Update the Nevada County Housing Element to comply with the Housing Element law and related state laws, including updates adopted since the 6th Cycle.
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of housing needs, fair housing issues, constraints, and sites inventory to demonstrate capacity to meet the RHNA in all income categories.
- Develop policies and programs that address local challenges such as limited infrastructure and wildfire risk; affirmatively further fair housing; remove barriers to housing production; and address special housing needs (e.g., seniors, persons with disabilities, extremely low-income households, farmworkers, and people experiencing homelessness).
- Ensure inclusive community engagement that reaches all economic segments of the community and incorporates feedback into the Housing Element.
- Prepare environmental documentation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to support adoption.
- Achieve HCD certification in a timely manner through proactive coordination and revisions.

The previous Housing Element updates have been completed in-house by Planning staff. Based on increased Regional Housing Needs Allocation requirements, and significant changes in State law regulating housing elements staff is recommending contracting with a consulting firm to leverage expertise and recommendations for a successful Housing Element update. The Housing Element is required to be approved by the Board of Supervisors and submitted to HCD by May 2027. Staff recommends adopting the Resolution to approve the contract with Ascent Environmental, Inc.

**Initiated and Approved by:** Brian Foss, Planning Director