



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

October 14, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: Jordan Klein, Director, Planning and Development Department
David Sprague, Fire Chief

Subject: Revenue Grant: FEMA Fire Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a nonbinding letter of commitment of matching funds for a Hazard Mitigation Grant application for the City of Berkeley Home Hardening and Defensible Space Grants Project to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and subject to its award, to accept the grant, execute any resultant revenue agreements and amendments, accept any additional funding allocations from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, and designate the City Manager and Deputy City Manager as the applicant's authorized agents.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The City of Berkeley has been deemed eligible to apply for a grant of \$6 million as part of FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the City of Berkeley Home Hardening and Defensible Space Grants Project, to provide grants to property owners to reduce their risk from wildfires. FEMA requires applicants to provide a letter committing to expend matching funds equating to 25% of the award amount over the four-year grant duration, for a total project amount of \$8 million. The City match portion of \$2 million would include \$1,374,296 from property owners who would be required to pay a portion of their wildfire mitigation costs. The only City funds used will be in-kind expenditures for fire inspections, and the costs for administration of permit processing, plan check, inspections and other aspects of the review and approval of the wildfire mitigation projects. Matching funds of \$433,072 for Planning & Development Department staffing and administrative costs will come from permit fees collected in the Permit Service Center Fund 621, and matching funds of \$192,632 for Fire Department staffing will come from Measure FF – Public Safety funds, which fund the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Division.

The project would provide \$4.1 million in fire mitigation grants to property owners in the Berkeley Hills WUI area toward the costs of modifying structures with ignition-resistant building materials (home hardening) and creation of defensible space. Funding of \$1.88 million would offset City of Berkeley personnel and consultant costs for program

management and implementation. The grant application includes a request for an additional \$400,000 for grant management expenses, which do not require a local match. Applicants may request up to 5% of the total project cost in grant management expenses.

Source of Project Funds	Grant Funding (75%)	Local Match (25%)
FEMA Grant	\$6,000,000	
Property Owner Match		\$1,374,296
City in-kind staff cost match		\$625,704
Total	\$6,000,000	\$2,000,000

Use of Project Funds		
Grants to Property Owners for Home Hardening & Vegetation Mgmt.	\$4,122,889	
Program Management	\$1,877,111	
Total	\$6,000,000	

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The California Office of Emergency Services anticipates disbursing approximately \$1.35 billion of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding, to reduce or eliminate risks from future disasters. Berkeley submitted a Notice of Interest for a project to provide wildfire mitigation grants for vulnerable buildings within the WUI, and was invited to develop a full application. The proposed project must be in conformance with Berkeley's FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, which seeks to reduce the potential for loss of life, injury, and economic damage from wildfires, and must help protect and enhance quality of life in Berkeley, by encouraging home hardening to complement evidence-based defensible space practices. The project will also encourage residents and businesses to upgrade the hazard resistance of their own properties and advance Berkeley's Strategic Plan goal of creating a resilient, safe, connected, and prepared city.

The new \$6 million FEMA grant will help individual property owners make home hardening improvements and create better defensible space in areas within the High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ), with a focus on the Grizzly Peak and Panoramic Mitigation Zones. The City will require property owners to pay 50% of their total costs, with the remaining half covered by the FEMA grants.

If awarded funding, this project will be co-managed by the Fire Department and the Planning and Development Department's Building and Safety Division. Staff from both departments will conduct outreach to property owners: Fire Inspectors will identify grant-eligible activities at each property and create an inspection report, and Building and Safety staff will assist participants with applying for grants and meeting program requirements. Fire and Building and Safety staff will assist with mitigation projects, including project eligibility, plan review, permit issuance, inspection for defensible space and code compliance, monitoring progress and compliance with state and federal requirements, and problem solving for difficult projects.

BACKGROUND

Based on CAL FIRE's recommendations, the City has defined its WUI and FHSZs with consideration of local conditions including structure type, age and structure separation, how much home hardening has occurred, and the ability of the transportation infrastructure to support a timely evacuation. The Grizzly Peak and Panoramic Mitigation Zones are in the Very High FHSZ, due to significant wildfire risk originating east of the City's boundaries, and access challenges. Most of the structures in the WUI were built over 45 years ago and have not been updated to current Fire Code standards, and specifically Chapter 7A of the current building code that defines home hardening practices for homes built in a Wildland Urban Interface.

Since the passage of Measure FF, the Fire Department has created a WUI Division, which has inspected all properties in the Very High FHSZ. In 2025 the Fire Department will provide grants of up to \$2,900 each, from a separate \$1 million CAL FIRE grant, to assist low-income and disabled homeowners with vegetation management on private property.

The City has recognized the significant wildfire hazard and recently adopted ordinances requiring defensible space, with a Zone 0 defensible space requirement in the Panoramic and Grizzly Peak Mitigation Zones. While home hardening of existing structures is not required by City ordinance, it is strongly recommended. Home hardening combined with defensible space has been scientifically demonstrated to reduce the risk of a wildfire spreading between structures. Staff will prioritize grants for properties in the Very High FHSZ in the first two years of the program, because these areas act as a buffer from the significant threat of wildfire originating east of the City limits. If enough funding remains in years three and four of the program, grants will be offered to all properties in the High and Very High FHSZ. The City of Berkeley Home Hardening and Defensible Space Grants Project would provide financial support to property owners seeking to make improvements.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

Buildings will be less likely to suffer damage in the event of a wildfire and to spread the fire to adjacent parcels, and as a result will be less likely than non-retrofitted structures to create additional environmental impacts from demolition and rebuilding efforts. If the

mitigation measures prevent a fire from igniting, that would reduce contamination in Berkeley from burned structures and vehicles.

This project is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code 21080.49(c) because the funding would be used to establish or enhance residential home hardening or defensible space for wildfire risk reduction within 200 feet of a legal structure, and the work would only take place in a high or very high wildfire hazard zone.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

If the City receives funding under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, more vulnerable structures in Berkeley are likely to be retrofitted, the City will retain housing, safety for residents and other community members will be increased, and Berkeley will be more resilient in the event of a major wildfire event.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Staff considered smaller grant award amounts to upgrade a greater number of individual properties within the entire WUI area, rather than prioritizing properties in the Very High FHSZ. Staff opted to prioritize larger grants in the Very High FHSZ, and particularly the Grizzly Peak and Panoramic Hill Mitigation area, to maximize the chance of preventing a fire from entering the City. Having the largest impact in hardening homes and reducing vegetation in the highest risk area of the city was deemed to be the most effective strategy for protecting properties.

CONTACT PERSONS

Jenny McNulty, Resilient Buildings Program Manager, Planning and Development Department, 510-981-7451
Lata Vasudevan, Community Services Specialist I, Planning and Development Department, 510-981-7491

Attachments:

1: Resolution

Exhibit A: Cal OES 130 – Designation of Applicant's Agent Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO COMMIT MATCHING FUNDS FOR A HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE HOME HARDENING AND DEFENSIBLE SPACE GRANTS PROJECT TO THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) AND SUBJECT TO ITS AWARD, TO ACCEPT THE GRANT, EXECUTE ANY RESULTANT REVENUE AGREEMENTS AND AMENDMENTS, ACCEPT ANY ADDITIONAL FUNDING ALLOCATIONS FROM THE HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM AND DESIGNATE THE APPLICANT'S DESIGNATED AGENT

WHEREAS, as a result of the declaration of a major federal disaster, the State of California is eligible for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding aimed at reducing or eliminating future damages; and

WHEREAS, federal funding is provided under the Robert T. Stafford Emergency Assistance and Disaster Relief Act (Stafford Act) through FEMA and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), Cal OES is responsible for identifying program priorities, reviewing applications and forwarding recommendations for funding to FEMA, and FEMA has final approval for activity eligibility and funding; and

WHEREAS, the federal regulations governing the HMGP are found in Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR) Part 206, and the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Federal Awards are found in 2 CFR Part 200; and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Interest was approved for City of Berkeley Home Hardening and Defensible Space Grants Project, and the City of Berkeley will submit a full application for HMGP funding on or before September 15, 2025; and

WHEREAS, a letter committing at least 25% matching funds is required as part of the grant application, with matching funds from a non-federal source; and

WHEREAS, the match will consist of \$2 million over the four-year grant period, \$1.37 million of which will come from property owners who participate in the grant program and make a match of at least 25% for any federally funded wildfire mitigation work, with the Permit Service Center Fund 621 and Measure FF – Public Safety funds providing the remaining \$625,704 in in-kind match through staffing and administrative costs associated with program implementation and operation; and

WHEREAS, the Permit Service Center Fund has an adequate fund balance to provide matching funds for Planning and Development Department staffing and administrative costs; and

WHEREAS, Measure FF – Public Safety has an adequate fund balance to provide matching funds for Fire Department staffing and administrative costs; and

WHEREAS, the \$6 million grant will be used to provide fire mitigation grants to property owners in the Berkeley Hills Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) area to offset costs for modification of structures with ignition-resistant building materials (home hardening) and creation of defensible space, and cover staffing and administrative costs associated with program implementation and operation, and an additional \$400,000 in funding will be used for grant management expenses.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to submit a nonbinding letter of commitment to provide \$2 million in local matching funds for the City of Berkeley's application for a \$6 million Hazard Mitigation grant from FEMA, and to accept the grant, as well as \$400,000 in funding for grant management expenses, and execute any resultant revenue agreements and amendments including any additional funding allocations from the Hazard Mitigation Program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager or Deputy City Managers are authorized to provide Cal OES Form 130 (Exhibit A) to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Service (Cal OES) for all matters pertaining to disaster assistance required under DR-4482 assurances and agreements.

Exhibit A: Cal OES 130 – Designation of Applicant's Agent Resolution



DESIGNATION OF APPLICANT'S AGENT RESOLUTION

NON-STATE AGENCIES

OES-FPD-130 (Rev. 10-2022)

Cal OES ID No: _____

DESIGNATION OF APPLICANT'S AGENT RESOLUTION FOR NON-STATE AGENCIES

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE _____ OF THE _____
(Governing Body) (Name of Applicant)

THAT _____, OR
(Title of Authorized Agent)

_____, OR
(Title of Authorized Agent)

(Title of Authorized Agent)

is hereby authorized to execute for and on behalf of the _____,
(Name of Applicant)

a public entity established under the laws of the State of California, this application and to file it with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services for the purpose of obtaining federal financial assistance for any existing or future grant program, including, but not limited to any of the following:

- **Federally declared Disaster (DR), Fire Mitigation Assistance Grant (FMAG), California State Only Disaster (CDAA), Immediate Services Program (ISP), Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), Legislative Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (LPDM),** under
- Public Law 93-288 as amended by the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988, and/or state financial assistance under the California Disaster Assistance Act.
- **Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA),** under Section 1366 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968.
- **National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP)** 42 U.S. Code 7704 (b) ((2) (A) (ix) and 42 U.S. Code 7704 (b) (2) (B) National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, and also The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, Div. F, Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-141
- **California Early Earthquake Warning (CEEW)** under CA Gov Code – Gov, Title 2, Div. 1, Chapter 7, Article 5, Sections 8587.8, 8587.11, 8587.12

That the _____, a public entity established under the
(Name of Applicant)

laws of the State of California, hereby authorizes its agent(s) to provide to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services for all matters pertaining to such state disaster assistance the assurances and agreements required.



Please check the appropriate box below

- ☐ This is a universal resolution and is effective for all open and future disasters/grants declared up to three (3) years following the date of approval.
- ☐ This is a disaster/grant specific resolution and is effective for only disaster/grant number(s):_____

Passed and approved this ___ day of _____, 20__

(Name and Title of Governing Body Representative)

(Name and Title of Governing Body Representative)

(Name and Title of Governing Body Representative)

CERTIFICATION

I, _____, duly appointed and _____ of
(Name) (Title)

_____, do hereby certify that the above is a true and
(Name of Applicant)

correct copy of a resolution passed and approved by the _____
(Governing Body)

of the _____ on the _____ day of _____, 20__.
(Name of Applicant)

(Signature)

(Title)



Cal OES Form 130 Instructions

A Designation of Applicant's Agent Resolution for Non-State Agencies is required of all Applicants to be eligible to receive funding. A new resolution must be submitted if a previously submitted resolution is older than three (3) years from the last date of approval, is invalid, or has not been submitted.

When completing the Cal OES Form 130, Applicants should fill in the blanks on pages 1 and 2. The blanks are to be filled in as follows:

Resolution Section:

Governing Body: This is the group responsible for appointing and approving the Authorized Agents.

Examples include: Board of Directors, City Council, Board of Supervisors, Board of Education, etc.

Name of Applicant: The public entity established under the laws of the State of California.

Examples include: School District, Office of Education, City, County or Non-profit agency that has applied for the grant, such as: City of San Diego, Sacramento County, Burbank Unified School District, Napa County Office of Education, University Southern California.

Authorized Agent: These are the individuals that are authorized by the Governing Body to engage with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services regarding grants for which they have applied. There are two ways of completing this section:

1. **Titles Only:** The titles of the Authorized Agents should be entered here, not their names. This allows the document to remain valid if an Authorized Agent leaves the position and is replaced by another individual. If "Titles Only" is the chosen method, this document must be accompanied by either a cover letter naming the Authorized Agents by name and title, or the Cal OES AA Names document. The supporting document can be completed by any authorized person within the Agency (e.g., administrative assistant, the Authorized Agent, secretary to the Director). It does not require the Governing Body's signature.
2. **Names and Titles:** If the Governing Body so chooses, the names **and** titles of the Authorized Agents would be listed. A new Cal OES Form 130 will be required if any of the Authorized Agents are replaced, leave the position listed on the document, or their title changes.



Checking Universal or Disaster-Specific Box: A Universal resolution is effective for all past disasters and for those declared up to three (3) years following the date of approval. Upon expiration it is no longer effective for new disasters, but it remains in effect for disasters declared prior to expiration. It remains effective until the disaster goes through closeout unless it is superseded by a newer resolution.

Governing Body Representative: These are the names and titles of the approving Board Members.

Examples include: Chairman of the Board, Director, Superintendent, etc. The names and titles **cannot** be one of the designated Authorized Agents. A minimum of three (3) approving board members must be listed. If less than three are present, meeting minutes must be attached in order to verify a quorum was met.

Certification Section:

Name and Title: This is the individual in attendance who recorded the creation and approval of this resolution.

Examples include: City Clerk, Secretary to the Board of Directors, County Clerk, etc. This person **cannot** be one of the designated Authorized Agents or Approving Board Member. If a person holds two positions (such as City Manager and Secretary to the Board) and the City Manager is to be listed as an Authorized Agent, then that person could sign the document as Secretary to the Board (not City Manager) to eliminate "Self-Certification."