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Proposal :: CA / Fuels Reduction

Submitted to CSS on Oct 31, 2023

Actions

FY 2023 USDA Forest Service Community Wildfire Defense Grant Application	File Name		
	State: CA	Keyword:	Fuels Reduction
	Region:	Priority:	Id:
	Administration Information		
	Funds Requested:		\$9,999,866
	Match:		
Score:	Ranking:	Project Funding: \$9,999,866	

Proposal Cooperator [CA]				
1	Cooperator Organization:	LACO Associates		
	Contact Person:	Jordan Blough		
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	City:	Eureka	State: CA	ZIP Code: 95501
	Phone:	7074620222	Email:	bloughj@lacoassociates.com

Applicant Information [CA]				
1	Applicant:	County of Mendocino		
	Contact Person:	Xuyen Mallela		
	Address:	501 Low Gap Road, Room 1010		
	City:	Ukiah	State: CA	ZIP Code: 95482
	Phone (work/cell):	7072346077	Fax:	7074635649
	Email:	mallelax@mendocinocounty.gov		
	Federal Tax ID:	946000520	UEI:	FSMPK8PJHKP8

Provide the expiration date for your sams.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 Sams.gov Expiration Date	
2	August 20, 2024
	https://sam.gov/entities/view/FSMPK8PJHKP8/coreData?status=Active&emrKeyValue=1382068~1692614742427546

Project Information		
3	Name of the Project:	Mendocino County Community Fuels Reduction and Capacity Building
	Community Name(s):	Mendocino County
	Counties:	Mendocino
	Congressional District:	02

GIS Coordinates		
3	Ref. Point Name:	Mendocino County Centroid
	Lat/Long:	39.440200, -123.931000
	Description:	This point represents the center point of Mendocino County. Specific project location maps have been provided as a supplemental submittal.
	Area Name:	Mendocino County
	Boundary Lat/Longs:	39.994795, -124.022067; 39.976783, -122.930980; 38.851772, -122.825706; 38.761443, -123.522653
	Description:	Corner points of the County of Mendocino. Specific project location maps have been provided as a supplemental submittal.

Provide a brief overview and purpose statement for the project, addressing the overall intent of this program to assist

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	
4	<p>The Mendocino County Community Fuels Reduction and Capacity Building project will implement aggressive vegetation management and hazardous tree removal throughout the County while building staff capacity through planning and capital equipment purchases. This mitigation measure is identified in the Countys 2016 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and 2020 Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP), and the Mendocino County General Plan (GP) 2020 Development Element and Resource Management Element updates.</p> <p>Project components include: Planning for fuels reduction and hazardous tree removal at key locations throughout the County, and a long-term fuels management plan for County facilities and ingress/egress disaster access along the County-maintained road system. Procure contract fuels reduction and tree removal crews to accelerate fuels treatment. Engage in fuels reduction activities: Vegetation management around critical facilities and along up to 312 miles of County-operated roads/evacuation routes. Hazardous tree removal along up to 312 miles of County roads; priority roads are detailed in the enclosed mapping. Purchase equipment and safety gear: Vegetation management tools: chainsaws, pole saws, hedge trimmers, combi trimmers, brush cutters, backpack blowers, backup batteries, and charging units. Safety gear: safety glasses, gloves, coolers, visors, hydration packs, hard hats, and vests. Capital equipment: mini excavator with mulcher, mowers with flail mower heads, and hand-fed chippers.</p> <p>These tasks hold significant priority in the County, and benefits include reduced wildfire risk, reduction in fuel loading, safer ingress/egress routes, improved community gathering spaces, resilient critical facilities, and improved community fire resiliency. Work will be conducted in areas with high or very high wildfire hazard potential and take place in an area impacted by a severe disaster within the past 10 years.</p> <p>The project will address crucial needs in the region and effectively reduce future wildfire impacts. As a disadvantaged County annually threatened by wildfire, it is imperative the County build the capacity to treat fire-adapted landscapes and build resilient communities. Accelerating fuels treatment will prevent fire ignition, reduce fire damage and recovery costs, benefit local communities, protect homes, and preserve the environment.</p> <p>Mendocino County is covered by its 2016 CWPP and 2020 MJHMP which emphasize hazardous fuels reduction and the need for state/federal resources in these areas. Other plans that support the project are the 2020 County Fire Vulnerability Assessment, the County GP which adopted the County Emergency Operations Plan and Design Element (DE) -219.3b: Identify new evacuation routes consistent with the County Evacuation Plan, ensuring effective ingress/egress from isolated communities, California Wildfire Forest Resiliency Action Plan, and the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.</p>

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. Include the Name and Date of the CWPP. (See NOFO for CWPP alternative requirements such as Hazard Mitigation Plans)**

Grant Component Type	
5	<p>The project correlates with Grant Component Type 2: Implementing a project described in a CWPP that is less than ten (10) years old. The project is proposing to implement activities described in the 2016 Mendocino County Community Wildfire Defense Plan and the Countys 2020 Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.</p>

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"	
6	<p>Mendocino County is considered an at-risk community in accordance with At-Risk Community Option 2: a group of homes and other structures with basic infrastructure and services at risk from wildfire as recognized by a state, regional, or national wildfire risk assessment, in which herbaceous or woody fuel conditions in and adjacent to the community are conducive to a wildfire disturbance event which threatens human life or values-at-risk. Per the CWDG Data Tool, Mendocino County has higher Wildfire Hazard Potential than 93.2% of counties in the nation.</p> <p>Sources: 2020 MJHMP: Wildfire Hazard Profile, pp. 4-221 to 4-244: https://mitigatehazards.com/mendocino-county/final-mjhmp/ 2016 Mendocino County CWPP: California Fire Alliance List of Communities at Risk</p>

2020 Mendocino County CWPP. California Fire Alliance List of Communities at Risk in the Mendocino Unit, p. 41: https://firesafemendocino.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MCCWPP_2016_REV-1.pdf
 2022 CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit Strategic Fire Plan: Communities at Risk List, pp. 43-45: <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/3kujwllk/2022-mendocino-unit-fire-plan.pdf>
 Wildfire Risk to Communities. Scott JH, Gilbertson-Day JW, Moran C, Dillon GK, Short KC, & Vogler KC. (2020). Wildfire Risk to Communities: Spatial datasets of landscape-wide wildfire risk components for the United States. Fort Collins, CO: Forest Service Research Data Archive. Updated 25 November 2020. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, <https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6045>

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	
	<p>Mendocino County has adopted the 2022 editions of the California Fire Code, California Residential Code, California Electrical Code, California Mechanical Code, California Plumbing Code, California Green Building Standards Code, and California Energy Code. The California codes adhere to standards that are equivalent to, or more stringent than, the roof construction standards established by the National Fire Protection Association.</p> <p>Sources:</p> <p>7 https://library.municode.com/ca/mendocino_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=MECOCO_TIT18BURE_CH18.04INGE_S18.04.025CACOAD https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-fire-code-2022 https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-building-code-2022 https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-electric-code-2022 https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-mechanical-code-2022 https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-plumbing-code-2022 https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-green-code-2022 https://up.codes/viewer/california/ca-energy-code-2022</p>

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 is disadvantaged by either using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) or by meeting the Low-Income definition. Note: Underserved communities are eligible to request a match waiver, as well as Tribes, Pacific Island Territories, and the USVI.

Grant Waiver	
	<p>8 Yes, Mendocino County is requesting a match waiver. Per the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, more than half of the Countys census tracts are identified as disadvantaged due to meeting more than one burden threshold and the associated socioeconomic threshold. Specifically, these disadvantaged areas rank above the 90th percentile for Expected Agricultural Loss Rate and Building Loss Rate and above the 65th percentile for Low Income. Per the CWDG Data Tool, Mendocino County, CA, is considered an underserved county and is eligible to apply for a cost-share waiver. It is identified as "disadvantaged" in the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool.</p> <p>(Source: Council on Environmental Quality. (2022). Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, version 1.0. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6045)</p>

10 points. 9000 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	
	<p>The Mendocino County Community Fuels Reduction and Capacity Building project is a capacity-building effort focused on reducing hazardous fuels throughout the County a priority that was identified in the County CWPP and MJHMP and consistently voiced by concerned communities. The central project elements include developing planning documents for both County Facilities vegetation management and priority County road hazardous tree removal, contracting fuels and tree removal crews to implement activities as defined in the strategic plans, and purchasing the equipment and safety gear needed to complete mitigation activities: clear roadsides, roadways, and evacuation routes; reduce fuels on and around critical facilities; and conduct hazardous tree removal.</p> <p>The proposed fuels crew will consist of contracted third parties to bolster existing County staff, and they will be trained and equipped to serve on a vegetation management crew and a hazardous tree removal crew. Vegetation management around critical facilities will fall under the direction of the Facilities division of the General Services Department (Facilities), and roadside vegetation and hazardous tree removal will take place under the direction of the Mendocino County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). Using contract crews is necessary to accelerate the pace and scale of overall vegetation treatment across Mendocino County. Up until this point, these departments have lacked the staff and monetary resources to mobilize a</p>

project of this scale. Without external funding, this important work cannot take place and the County will be forced to continue its existing fuels management without any increase in pace or scale.

To support crew efforts and expand overall work capacity, new equipment and safety supplies will be purchased. New equipment is a key component in providing a durable solution for long-term fuels reduction and will amplify the Countys ability to complete additional work beyond the grant term. This purchase will also build on the Countys existing but aging equipment which is largely gas powered and has seen use for numerous years. Proposed equipment purchases are listed below and categorized under the primary fuels reduction task they will be assigned to (please note that all equipment contains a specification below to illustrate the desired parameters; other, equivalent equipment specifications from alternative vendors or other brands will be considered during procurement):

Vegetation Management: (2) Husqvarna 540i XP 16 Chainsaws, (2) Husqvarna 530iPT5 Pole Saws, (2) Husqvarna 520iHD60 Hedge Trimmer Kits, (2) Husqvarna 325iLK Battery Trimmers, (2) Husqvarna 535iFR Brushcutters, (2) Husqvarna 550iBTX Backpack Blowers, (10) Husqvarna BLi950X Battery Backpacks, (20) Husqvarna BLi300 Lithium-ion Batteries, (20) Husqvarna Chargers QC500. Safety gear includes (20) safety glasses, (20) coated utility gloves, (10) 28-qt. chest coolers, (10) sunshade visors, (10) 100 oz. hydration packs, (10) hard hats, (10) high-visibility vests.

Hazardous Tree Removal: (1) Caterpillar 309 CR with Caterpillar HM 210 Fixed Tooth Mulcher, (2) Tiger Tractor Mowers Model 5120 M with Flail Mower Head, (2) Bandit 12XP 12 Capacity Hand-fed Chippers.

Once the contract crews and equipment are secured, the County will commence road vegetation management, fuels reduction around critical facilities, and hazardous tree removal to protect evacuation routes, minimize fire risk, and decrease potential impacts on a large scale.

Roadside Vegetation Management and Hazardous Tree Removal: Managing roadside vegetation is a dire need not only prioritized in local plans but identified by concerned communities. The coverage area prioritized for this project will be 312 miles of County-operated roads detailed further under Landscape Impacts. The procured contract crew will assist MCDOT in addressing numerous hazardous trees throughout the County. The regional landscape is rife with dead and dying trees that are particularly hazardous in public spaces and, in the event of a wildfire, can burn more readily and intensify impact. Stand density reduction is particularly needed on County roads; large canopies can decrease visibility and obstruct evacuation routes, and the overall density of vegetation creates more hazardous fuel. Hazardous tree removal and increased stand density management remain priorities of MCDOT, though this work is currently beyond the abilities of the departments existing crew and equipment especially when handling very large trees. The addition of contracted help to handle overall tree management, as well as increasing equipment capacity to handle the task, will significantly bolster efforts and advance long-term MCDOT priorities. Target areas for tree removal are listed under Landscape Impacts. Tree removal work, in addition to protecting evacuation routes during wildfire events, will also protect evacuation routes during other disaster events such as severe storms and earthquakes.

Critical Facilities: Numerous critical facilities have been identified in the Mendocino County Fire Assessment Report as requiring fuels reduction to reduce wildfire impact. For the purpose of this application, the County is placing particular emphasis on Low Gap Park and Mendocino County Sheriffs Office and Jail located on the eastbound side of Low Gap Road, City of Ukiah. While this particular location does not classify as a DAC per CEJST data, the area is completely enclosed by disadvantaged census tracts 06045011500 and 06045011300 with 06045011500 beginning just across the street. Thus, addressing these facilities will not only serve to benefit public health and spaces but can reduce the spread of fires that originate from neighboring high-risk areas. This location also houses the Countys Emergency Operation Center; should a wildfire threaten this facility and require evacuation, the entirety of the Countys emergency response management apparatus would need to be relocated to an alternative, mobile EOC which is not as well-equipped as the primary EOC. Protecting this facility will support the immediate surrounding community as well as preserve continuity of services during disaster events anywhere in the County. Additional facilities to be targeted for vegetation management are detailed under Landscape Impacts.

Fuels crew efforts will be county-wide but with a particular geographic focus on at-risk areas with high to very high wildfire hazard potentials, and/or areas that have been impacted by a severe disaster within the past 10 years.

The Mendocino County Community Fuels Reduction and Capacity Building project supports the three goals outlined in the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy:

1. Resilient Landscapes Vegetation management provided by the Fuels Crew will aid in creating defensible spaces around County-managed roads throughout the region.
2. Fire Adapted Communities Management tasks are anticipated to benefit the communities surrounding the affected roadways, as well as yield a broader benefit by reducing the chances of wildfire and preventing spread across the County.
3. Safe and Effective Wildfire Response Roadside vegetation management tasks will restore and maintain ecosystems and limit the negative impacts of wildfires.

The project will benefit underserved communities: Mendocino County is ranked among the poorest counties in the state with a 16.1% poverty level and median income of \$56,378 which is less than 80% of both state and national medians. The majority of the County is also within a high or very high wildfire potential. As an at-risk community with an increasing need for wildfire resiliency, the County must leverage funds to complete risk mitigation projects that build its defense against fires and protect vulnerable communities.

The project also achieves goals detailed in the 2016 Mendocino County Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

The project is among the three Fuel Treatment Methods approved by CAL FIRE as being the most effective and environmentally friendly: chipping, prescribed burning, and shade and non-shaded fuel breaks (70).

The project correlates with several project objectives outlined in the CWPP including road clearing, vegetation management, and fuel break projects in all listed battalions (104-112).

The project also aligns with the following mitigation action listed in the Countys 2020 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan:

The project also aligns with the following mitigation action listed in the County's 2020 Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan:

ma-WF-MC-239: Coordinate with fire protection agencies to develop vegetation management program to remove understory brush, hazardous trees, and excessive fuels around County roads and evacuation routes (xxix).

Applicant Budget [CA]				
	Grant	Match		TOTAL
	Funds Requested	Applicant	Non-Federal Contributors	Total Project Cost
Personnel / Labor:	\$458,960			\$458,960
Fringe Benefits:	\$392,742			\$392,742
Travel:				
Equipment:	\$945,000			\$945,000
Supplies:	\$29,140			\$29,140
Contractual:	\$8,083,440			\$8,083,440
Other:				
Indirect Costs:	\$90,584			\$90,584
TOTAL:	\$9,999,866			\$9,999,866

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.

Project Budget Explanation
<p>As the County is requesting a match waiver, all costs below represent CWDG funds.</p> <p>Personnel Task includes County staff labor, including the Strategic Plans, DOT fuels reduction field crews, contractor field oversight, grant management, and project management. A summary of staff costs has been submitted as a supplemental document.</p> <p>252 hours, DOT Deputy Director at \$58.61 hourly: \$14,769 750 hours, Road Maintenance Supervisor III at \$42.45 hourly: \$31,838 2250 hours, Road Maintenance Worker IV at \$31.19 hourly: \$70,178 640 hours, Sr. Engineering Technician at \$39.79 hourly: \$25,465 400 hours, Engineer II at \$43.84 hourly: \$17,536 514 hours, Dept. Analyst at \$42.14 hourly: \$21,659 240 hours, Environmental Compliance Officer at \$40.46 hourly: \$9,710 600 hours, DOT Safety Officer at \$36.50 hourly: \$21,900 1800 hours, DOT Surveyor at \$32.69 hourly: \$58,842 80 hours, GSA Director at \$91.14 hourly: \$7,291 258 hours, Facilities and Fleet Manager at \$57.52 hourly: \$14,840 2,520 hours, Assistant Facilities Manager at \$52.47 hourly: \$132,224 120 hours, Principal Administrative at \$63.50 hourly: \$7,620 570 hours, Administrative Analyst II at \$44.01 hourly: \$25,085</p> <p>Total Personnel/Labor: \$458,960</p> <p>Fringe This line item contains the fringe benefit costs for the County staff described above:</p> <p>252 hours, DOT Deputy Director at \$52.94 hourly: \$13,341 1500 hours, Road Maintenance Supervisor III at \$41.74 hourly: \$31,305 1500 hours, Road Maintenance Worker IV at \$28.17 hourly: \$63,383 640 hours, Sr. Engineering Technician at \$37.13 hourly: \$23,763 400 hours, Engineer II at \$40.47 hourly: \$16,188 514 hours, Sr. Dept. Analyst at \$38.90 hourly: \$19,995 240 hours, Environmental Compliance Officer at \$36.95 hourly: \$8,868</p>

1800 hours, Environmental Compliance Officer at \$29.53 hourly: \$53,154
 600 hours, DOT Safety Officer at \$33.33 hourly: \$19,998
 1800 hours, DOT Surveyor at \$29.53 hourly: \$53,154
 80 hours, GSA Director at \$72.65 hourly: \$5,812
 258 hours, Facilities and Fleet Manager at \$43.57 hourly: \$11,241
 2,520 hours, Assistant Facilities Manager at \$41.84 hourly: \$105,437
 120 hours, Principal Administrative at \$39.19 hourly: \$4,703
 570 hours, Administrative Analyst II at \$27.29 hourly: \$15,555

Total Fringe Benefits: \$392,742

Equipment

This line item consists of purchasing capital equipment to enhance County capacity and expand the pace and scale of fuels treatment during and after the grant term.

- 1** 1 Caterpillar 309 CR Mini-Excavator (or equivalent), HM 210 Fixed Tooth Mulcher (or equivalent): \$285,000
1 2 Tiger Tractor Mowers Model 5120M (or equivalent), flail mower head: \$255,000 each; total \$510,000
 2 Bandit 12XP 12 Chippers (or equivalent): \$75,000 each; total \$150,000

Supplies

This line item consists of the purchase of supplies and materials to support County Facilities crews. Please note that Husqvarna equipment was used to budget, but equivalent units will be considered.

2 Husqvarna 540i XP Chainsaws 16 at \$650 each: \$1,300
 2 Husqvarna 530iPT5 Pole Saws at \$500 each: \$1,000
 2 Husqvarna 520iHD60 Hedge Kits at \$750 each: \$1,500
 2 Husqvarna 325iLK Battery Trimmers at \$400 each: \$800
 2 Husqvarna 535iFR Brushcutters at \$650 each: \$1,300
 2 Husqvarna 550iBTX Backpack Blowers at \$550 each: \$1,100
 10 Husqvarna BLi950X Battery Backpacks at \$1,019 each: \$10,190
 20 Husqvarna BLi300 Lithium-ion Batteries at \$300 each: \$6,000
 20 Husqvarna Chargers QC500 at \$180 each: \$3,600

20 safety goggles at \$8 each: \$160
 20 coated gloves at \$5 each: \$100
 10 28 qt Chest Coolers at \$56 each: \$560
 10 sunshade visors at \$19 each: \$190
 10 100 ounce hydration packs at \$108 each: \$1,080
 10 hardhats at \$17 each: \$170
 10 high visibility vests at \$9 each: \$90

Total: \$29,140

Contractual

This line item consists of contractual expenses to implement fuels reduction and hazardous tree removal activities, including California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis and other environmental review, arborist consultations, and vegetation management crews.

CEQA Analysis and Environmental Review

The work is expected to qualify for categorical CEQA exemptions under either Section 15301: Existing Facilities or 15304: Minor Alterations to Land. The CEQA Consultant will provide verification of these exemptions and may also provide various field surveys for nesting birds.

This task has been allocated 1,250 hours at \$160 per hour, totaling a \$200,000.

Arborist Assessments

A consulting arborist will support hazardous tree determinations as-needed. This task has allocated 800 hours at \$125 per hour, totaling \$100,000.

County Facilities Hazardous Fuels Reduction

County staff has used recent project costs and estimates from local partners to estimate the cost per acre. This task assumes a rate of \$6,920 per acre of treatment. Across 632 acres of facilities, this task totals \$4,373,440.

Contract Hazardous Tree Removal

Hazardous tree removal along County roadways. Given the uncertainty in estimating the number of trees which will be removed, this task contains a budget allocation. This task has been allocated \$3,410,000.

10 points. 8000 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 acres treated, # 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 project will be accomplished with an initial planning phase followed by contractor procurement, equipment purchases, and mitigation activities measured below.

Following grant execution, the County Facilities team and MCDOT will spend the first six months of the term developing their respective strategic plans. Facilities will develop a fuels reduction plan to determine a schedule and identify the level of work needed for each critical facility site, and MCDOT will evaluate roads of primary concern as well as mark trees for removal. During this time, an arborist will be contracted to help identify and recommend additional trees for removal. Throughout the strategic planning process, both departments will identify specific work tasks and assign them to either County forces and/or the contractor(s). These initial months will also be used to finalize equipment purchases and place orders with vendors. The success of the initial six months of the grant term will be measured via the completion of the two proposed strategic plans for the project.

Contractors will be procured once the plans are developed/approved, and equipment orders are secured. Efforts will focus on staffing a vegetation management crew and a tree removal crew. In accordance with the departments strategic plans, contractors and existing County forces will conduct vegetation management on and around identified roads and critical facilities and remove trees that were marked for removal during the planning phase. This work will take place throughout the remainder of the grant term and will set the foundation for ongoing fuels reduction work beyond the lifetime of the grant. While the outcomes which will occur beyond the grant term; namely increased pace and scale of in-house vegetation management by County staff, are challenging to quantify, they will yield ongoing project benefits for years following project completion.

1 A general timeline across the five-year grant term is provided below.

- 2** Months 1-60: Project Management and Grant Management. Oversee project activities, direct County staff, coordinate with USFS, other entities/agencies, complete quarterly and annual project reports, including geospatial data regarding locations treated.
- Months 1-6 Kickoff: Develop strategic work plans. Place equipment orders with vendors and receive orders (pending equipment availability). Develop scopes of work and bid documents for contractors. Deliverables: Facilities and MCDOT Strategic Plans; equipment and supply purchase orders.
- Months 7-9 Bidding process: Solicit bids from contractors, assess bids, make award(s), and execute contract(s). Deliverables: Executed contracts with selected vendors.
- Months 10-59 Mitigation activities conducted in accordance with plans. Deliverables: Pre-and Post-treatment photos, summaries of work completed, number of trees removed each quarter, and total acreage treated each quarter.
- Month 60 Grant Closeout. Deliverable: Closeout report

Measurable outcomes include:

Procured Equipment:

- 1 Caterpillar 309 CR with HM210 Fixed Tooth Mulcher (or equivalent);
- 2 Tiger Tractor Mowers 5120 M with Flail Mower Head (or equivalent);
- 2 Bandit 12XP 12 Capacity Hand Fed Chipper (or equivalent)

Trees Removed:

312 miles of high priority County Roads are treated by removing the highest priority hazardous trees

Acres of Facility Properties:

632 acres of County Facilities receive fuels reduction treatment

10 points. 8000 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 partners 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

While this project will be led and completed by County of Mendocino staff with the support of contract fuels and tree crews, the project implementation will be coordinated with other agencies in the County active in fuels reduction to ensure no duplication of effort, share resources if feasible, and build opportunities for future partnerships. Specific agencies the County expects to engage to support the strategic planning of fuels reduction areas include the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council (MCFSC), the City of Ukiah (recipient of a 2022 CWDG award) and the Cities of Willits, Point Arena, and Fort Bragg. The County will also engage local fire districts to help to identify roads and other areas needing fuels reduction within their service areas. Mendocino County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) elements of this project along the County Maintained Road System will draw on any advice provided by emergency transportation partners such as California Highway Patrol (CHP), Mendocino County Sheriffs Office (MCSO) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

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This project is broadly supported by the entirety of Mendocino County. Though letters of support are not required under this program, the County has secured letters of support from the following twenty entities: Congressman Jared Huffman; State Assemblymember Jim Wood; State Senator Mike McGuire; California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Mendocino Unit; California Highway Patrol; the Mendocino Council of Governments; Coastal Valley EMS Agency; the City of Willits; the City of Point Arena; Mendocino County Resource Conservation District; Mendocino County Fire Safe Council; the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians; Anderson Valley Fire Department; Redwood Coast Fire Protection District; Long Valley Fire Protection District; Hopland Fire Protection District; Mendocino Volunteer Fire Department; Leggett Valley Fire and Rescue; and Elk Community Services District.

Letters of support from all above-mentioned entities have been submitted externally along with project maps and other supporting documentation. Mendocino County intends to coordinate with these entities to better understand what work theyd like to see completed, as well as to obtain a deeper understanding of roads that need attention regionwide. Of these partnerships, collaboration with the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council will be particularly important.

MCFSC has managed a series of road clearing/fuel break creation projects aimed at corridors on which ingress and egress may be particularly critical in a wildfire situation. Starting in 2020-21, substantial projects were managed by the MCFSC on both the eastern and western ends of the Ukiah Valley and in Brooktrails. In 2022 MCFSC managed projects in Brooktrails and in a portion of Orr Springs Road. In 2023-2024, MCFSC will be providing road clearing in parts of Yorkville, Willits, and Cherry Creek. MCFSC is also managing projects to obtain CEQA clearance so that a wide range of other projects will be shovel ready when resources become available. In collaboration with CAL FIRE, MCFSC intends to continue identifying key ingress/egress routes throughout the county that would benefit from treatment. As such, MCFSC has acted as a leading entity in conducting grant-funded road clearing in recent years, and the County expects to leverage their expertise to support this project.

10 points. 8000 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 landscape influenced by the project encompasses the entire County of Mendocino, and all work will occur on or around County owned and operated roads, facilities, and lands. The only work proposed on non-County owned properties are select microwave repeater sites which are leased by the County; however, the County already has access agreements with these landowners for vegetation management. Mendocino County comprises more than 3,800 square miles with landscapes including those dominated by dense conifer and mixed conifer forests, oak woodlands, chaparral, and seasonal grasses; Mendocino County also contains widely varied topography, with elevations ranging from sea level up to almost 7,000 feet, yielding significant elevation changes and numerous areas of steep terrain. This geography presents numerous natural resources management challenges and is prone to severe wildfires: since 2017, two of the three largest wildfires in recorded California history were ignited within Mendocino County.

While the scale of this project is regionwide, the Facilities and MCDOT teams have identified priority roads and facilities throughout the County to be addressed within the five-year grant period, listed below.

Roadside Vegetation Management

The coverage area is 312 miles within the 1,018-mile County road network. These road segments will be targeted for roadside fuels reduction and clearing of ingresses/egresses and evacuation routes. Specific work tasks include mechanical treatments, mowing, weed whacking, mastication, and other treatments. In developing the preliminary list of priority roads, MCDOT divided the County into quadrants aligned with the Countys current evacuation zones and categorized the roads according to their area. Area 1 represents Northern Mendocino, Area 2 is East, Area 3 is South, and Area 4 is West. The roads identified are shown on mapping enclosed with this project application.

Generally, Area 1 roads will include key evacuation routes serving communities including Covelo and the Round Valley Indian Tribes; Laytonville, Branscomb, and the Cahto Rancheria; Willits, Brooktrails, and the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians. Area 2 roads will include key evacuation routes serving communities including Potter Valley and the Potter Valley Tribe; Redwood Valley and the Redwood Valley Rancheria and Coyote Valley Rancheria; Ukiah, including the Pinoleville Band of Pomo Indians, the Yokayo Rancheria, and the Guidiville Rancheria; and Hopland and the Hopland Rancheria. Area 3 roads will include key evacuation routes serving communities including Philo; Boonville; Navarro; Elk; and Point Arena, Anchor Bay, and Manchester Point Arena Reservation. Area 4 roads will include key evacuation routes serving communities including Fort Bragg; Westport; Comptche; Albion; Mendocino; and Little River.

Roadside Hazardous Tree Removal

Tree removal activities will be targeted within the above-listed priority roads throughout the County. When MCDOT develops its strategy plan at the beginning of the grant term, trees will be identified by County staff and, when applicable, verified by a contracted arborist, and marked for removal. Tree removal efforts will be limited to the 312 miles of identified roads and occur in tandem with road vegetation management tasks; the exact number of trees to be targeted by this project will be determined in the strategic plan. Tree removal will focus on the most hazardous trees threatening ingress and egress routes; all removed trees will be either disposed of onsite or hauled away, and no stumps will be removed following felling of trees. No slash, chips, or other materials will be deposited in watercourses or other sensitive habitat areas.

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Critical Facilities Fuels Reduction

Priority critical facilities include Low Gap Park and the neighboring Mendocino County Administrative Complex, which includes the Sheriffs Office, Jail, Juvenile Hall, Probation Office, County Executive Office, and Emergency Operations Center. Critical Facilities also include eleven microwave repeater sites located on remote peaks throughout the County; these sites enable microwave and emergency radio communications and are vital to the abilities of first responders, including County Sheriff and

local police, local firefighters, emergency medical personnel, California Highway Patrol, State firefighters, and other public safety officials. The Facilities team has also identified the following locations for fuels reduction: Faulkner Park, Indian Creek Park, McKee Park, and Mill Creek Park. Should sufficient funding be available, the County will also consider and conduct targeted fuels reduction around lower priority sites including the Boonville, Hopland, and Willits Veteran Halls, the Covelo and Little River Airports, the Willits Library and Museum Complex, Lions Park, the Willits Justice Center, and Redwood Valley Substation. The total estimated acreage of targeted facilities is 632. While there are dozens of structures that will receive direct protection within these sites, the benefits of the work are expected to expand beyond each sites boundary. Using FEMA's standard Benefit-Cost Analysis methodology, hazardous fuels reduction projects can be considered to protect all structures within a two-mile radius of the fuels reduction activities; while a precise count of structures on each parcel in the County within two miles from each site is not available, it is likely that this project will yield benefits for thousands of structures overall in the form of reduced wildfire hazard and preserved continuity of services by protecting critical facilities. Because these sites generally allow public access, they are also high risk for unintentional fire ignitions caused by recreational activities and other anthropogenic sources. By successfully managing vegetation at these sites, the likelihood of fire ignition at each site is significantly reduced, protecting adjacent sites and surrounding areas from a spreading fire. Vegetation management in these areas will include removing small trees less than 10 feet tall or 6-inch diameter at breast height and removing flammable understory material, ladder fuels, grasses, and similar materials which can accelerate the spread of wildfire.

The Mendocino County Community Fuels Reduction and Capacity Building will include coordination with other entities conducting fuels reduction work and ensure no duplication of effort in treatment areas. Recent relevant local projects include:

1. The Ukiah Valley Fire Fuels Reduction Project Aggressive fuels reduction in and around Ukiah Valley.
2. Willits and Brooktrails Fuel Reduction Aggressive fuels reduction in the Brooktrails subdivision, a steep, densely forested and densely developed area with over 1,500 homes interspersed through mixed conifer forest
3. Mendocino County Resource Conservation District Hazardous Tree Removal Aggressive hazardous tree removal serving public roads and multi-use private roads in the 2017 Redwood Complex Fire footprint

10 points. 8000 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 purpose of the Mendocino County Community Fuels Reduction and Capacity Building project is to not only complete this crucial work within the grant term but to set the stage for continued work and maintenance beyond the lifetime of the grant. Expanding the Countys ability to complete maintenance and infusing funds into the effort will result in a complete overhaul of targeted properties, anticipated to achieve lasting results, and decrease the frequency of hazard reduction in these areas. This will also reduce the frequency of necessary maintenance and reduce the overall costs to maintain these facilities in the future. The proposed hazardous tree removal will also yield durable, long-lasting results, as the majority of trees which threaten roadways are expected to be established, larger trees; once these trees have been removed, it will likely be at least a decade before other trees grow to sufficient size to warrant similar treatment.

Beyond the benefits provided by the contract fuels and tree removal work proposed, the purchase of new equipment will enable the County to address vegetation and tree management on a long-term scale using County staff, minimizing future needs for contract fuels reduction. Contract tree crews are significantly more costly than in-house crews, and by expanding the Countys ability to utilize in-house staff for these activities, long-term cost savings will be realized. Without new equipment, this overall effort will be significantly hindered due to a shortage of necessary supplies, aged existing hand tools, and lack of necessary funding resources to purchase new equipment, especially capital equipment.

1 The proposed hand tool purchases are primarily battery-powered electric tools; this allows for efficient recharging from anywhere in addition to reducing carbon emissions. New equipment will also result in an expanded lifetime and usefulness for these tools which will allow this level of fuels reduction work to take place invariably for several years. The hand tool equipment will be primarily utilized by County Facilities staff in maintaining fuels around County facilities, with a focus on critical facilities such as microwave repeater sites, public safety facilities, and County administrative buildings, as well as public recreation areas such as County parks.

The proposed capital equipment purchases, consisting of two chippers capable of chipping up to 12 diameter logs, two tractor mower attachments, and a mini-excavator with fixed-tooth mulcher attachment, all will expand the Countys ability to manage roadside vegetation in a durable, cost-effective manner. This expansion of the Countys capital equipment portfolio will allow for more aggressive fuels management on an annual basis, reduce the need to rely on contract crews or rented equipment, and reduce long term fuels reduction costs.

Overall, the five-year term and maximum project award of the CWDG funding will allow for a more comprehensive fuels reduction effort than County staff has been able to undertake in prior grant-funded projects. This provides a significant opportunity to catalyze fuels reduction and bring numerous County properties in to a more manageable state wherein maintenance efforts are less resource-intensive and can be conducted on a more consistent basis than in prior years. This infusion of funding to support aggressive work via contract crews, coupled with the addition of new capital and equipment purchases to expand the capacity of existing County crews, will lead to increased vegetation management throughout the County on an on-going basis.

10 points. 3000 characters including spaces.

Does this project benefit a low-income community as defined in the NOFO?

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

Does this project benefit a low-income community?	
1 6	<p>Mendocino County is considered a low-income community as defined in the NOFO, which defines low-income communities as an application jurisdiction (community, county, or tribal area) that has less than 80% of the median household income of its state or the nation. Per 2017-2021 census data, the median household income in the County is \$56,378. Against the median household incomes of the State of California (\$84,097) and the United States (\$69,021), Mendocino County makes up 60% of the state average and 79% of the national average. In general, Mendocino County consistently ranks among the poorest counties in California. Additionally, according to the CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index, Mendocino County scores 0.9561 which indicates a high level of vulnerability.</p> <p>Sources: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mendocinocountycalifornia/INC110221#INC110221 https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/interactive_map.html U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). American Community Survey. Washington, DC. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6045</p>

10 points. 3000 characters including spaces.

Has this community been impacted by a severe disaster within the previous 10 years? Please respond yes or no. Provide a description and web link to the verification source. 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 later in this 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?	
1 7	<p>Yes. In the past 10 years, four governor-proclaimed fire-related disasters occurred in Mendocino County. Recent and notable wildfires include the Ranch and River Fires (2018), Redwood Fire (2017), North Pass Fire (2012), and the prolific Mendocino Lightning Complex (2008) which burned 54,817 acres, caused \$48.5 million in damages, and resulted in the destruction of a residence and outbuilding that injured 47.</p> <p>Previous wildfires, especially severe, stand-replacing fires, denude the landscape and cause a shift in ecosystem composition and habitat values. Severe fires can result in spaces where fast growing, invasive species can colonize and push out native species and prevent the regrowth of healthy forests. These invasives can also be highly flammable and difficult to manage effectively due to their rapid growth. Damage to homes has displaced residents and, in many cases, residents have been unwilling or unable to rebuild in the same area, leading to reduced maintenance of vegetation on privately held lands and resulting in greater fuel loading.</p> <p>In addition, the denuded, post-fire landscape can result in highly hazardous conditions conducive to erosion, flooding, debris flows, and landslides, all of which continue to impact the community long after a wildfire is extinguished. Over the past ten years, Mendocino County has experienced seven disasters related to severe winter storms, flooding, and mudslides (two in 2017, two in 2019, and three in 2023) alongside five wildfire disasters (2017, three in 2018, 2020, and 2021). When a severe winter storm event follows a wildfire, the lack of vegetation and impacts to soils greatly inhibit the ability of the landscape to percolate stormwater flows subsurface, leading to more runoff, erosion, and potential landslides and debris flows. These events, in addition to threatening values at risk, cutting off road access, and causing significant disruption in the community, can also further degrade habitat, especially through contribution of excess sediment to waterways. This habitat degradation impacts numerous species, especially critically endangered salmonids which use watercourses in Mendocino County for spawning and rearing. The proposed project will reduce future wildfire risk through vegetation management, and the proposed roadside hazardous tree removal activities will also create a more resilient transportation network less likely to be closed or otherwise impacted by falling trees during both wildfires and severe winter storms.</p> <p>Sources: https://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/disaster-list.htm https://www.mendocinocog.org/files/7261d7732/FireVulnerabilityAssessment.pdf</p>

20 points. 3000 characters including spaces.

Please respond yes or no, if this project is located within an area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential as defined by a state, regional, tribal, territorial, or national wildfire hazard potential assessment. Provide a description and web link to the verification source.

Does the project location have wildfire hazard potential?	
1 7	<p>Historically, wildland fires in Mendocino County have burned thousands of acres and caused considerable property losses and the occasional loss of life. On average, it is estimated that a wildfire greater than 5,000 acres will occur in the County once every three years. In the past 10 years, four governor-proclaimed wildfire disasters occurred in the County.</p> <p>Mendocino County is considered an at-risk fire community according to state and national data. According to the most recent CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps (June 2023), the majority of Mendocino County has a high or very high wildfire hazard potential which amounts to over 1.5 million acres. Nearly the entire eastern half of the County falls under very high while the western half is largely a high potential.</p>

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Per FEMA's National Risk Index, Mendocino County's risk index is in the 95.1 national percentile. Compared to the rest of the U.S., the County has a relatively moderate ranking for expected annual losses and community resilience, and social vulnerability is very high. Among hazard type risk ratings, the County scores highest for wildfire (97.3), drought (99.4), earthquake (98.4), landslide (99.5), and riverine flooding (96.0).

Per the CWDG Data Tool, Mendocino County, CA, meets the "wildfire hazard potential" criteria and has a higher wildfire hazard potential than 93.2% of counties in the nation.

Sources:

https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/ti1iggod/fhsz_county_sra_11x17_2022_mendocino_2.pdf

<https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/map>

Wildfire Risk to Communities. Scott JH, Gilbertson-Day JW, Moran C, Dillon GK, Short KC, & Vogler KC. (2020). Wildfire Risk to Communities: Spatial datasets of landscape-wide wildfire risk components for the United States. Fort Collins, CO: Forest Service Research Data Archive. Updated 25 November 2020. As reported by the CWDG Data Tool, <https://wildfirerisk.org/cwdg-tool/6045>

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