



**MEMORANDUM
COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
ADMINISTRATION
County of Placer**

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors **DATE:** July 12, 2022
FROM: Jane Christenson, Acting County Executive Officer
BY: Melissa O'Neal, Management Analyst I
SUBJECT: Defensible Space Fuels Reduction Pilot Program for Very Low-Income Senior and Disabled Property Owners

ACTION REQUESTED

1. Approve the establishment of a pilot program to provide for up to \$5,000 per property towards defensible space fuels reduction for very low-income senior and disabled property owners in unincorporated Placer County for the period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024 at a cost of \$100,000 per year for a total cost of \$200,000.
2. Approve Budget Amendment AM-0669 transferring \$100,000 from General Fund to Community and Agency Support (CC10018) for FY 2022-23.

BACKGROUND

On May 21, 2020 the Hazardous Vegetation and Combustible Material Ordinance adopted by your Board came into effect. This ordinance governs the abatement of hazardous vegetation and combustible material on both vacant and improved parcels in unincorporated Placer County, and also provides fire officials with consistent guidelines to ensure adequate defensible space is maintained around structures and enforcement mechanisms are in place to encourage compliance.

Most property owners can mitigate the fuels as required by the ordinance through their own physical labor or by hiring a contractor to assist them. However, some property owners who are elderly or disabled are not physically able to perform the work themselves and cannot afford to hire someone to help them. This situation not only puts the property owners at risk of having a lien placed on their property if the county must step in and complete the fuels reduction work - it also creates a hazardous situation for the property owner and their neighbors while combustible fuels are not mitigated.

In awareness of this situation, staff from the County Executive Office and Code Enforcement have been working together alongside Emergency Services and County Counsel to apply for grants to develop this proposed pilot program with the goal of better protecting our residents and communities from the hazards of wildfire. Staff has so far been unsuccessful in procuring grant funding for this program despite repeated attempts due the competitive landscape of fire mitigation needs in California. Despite the current unavailability of grant funding, staff is seeking Board approval to fund this pilot program through a general fund contribution while grant opportunities continue to be pursued.

Through this proposed pilot program, up to \$5,000 per property would be available for fuels mitigation on properties owned by seniors or disabled individuals whose gross annual income fall at or below “very low” income guidelines as shown in the table below.

Annual Gross Income Level Based on Household Size for Placer County	Persons in Household							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Acutely Low	\$9,550	\$10,900	\$12,300	\$13,650	\$14,750	\$15,850	\$16,950	\$18,000
Extremely Low	\$19,050	\$21,800	\$24,500	\$27,200	\$31,040	\$35,580	\$40,120	\$44,660
Very Low Income	\$31,750	\$36,250	\$40,800	\$45,300	\$48,950	\$52,550	\$56,200	\$59,800
Low Income	\$50,750	\$58,000	\$65,250	\$72,500	\$78,300	\$84,100	\$89,900	\$95,700
Median Income	\$63,750	\$72,900	\$82,000	\$91,100	\$98,400	\$105,700	\$112,950	\$120,250
Moderate Income	\$76,500	\$87,450	\$98,350	\$109,300	\$118,050	\$126,800	\$135,550	\$144,300

California Department of Housing and Community Development's State and Federal Income Limits
<https://www.hcd.ca.gov/state-and-federal-income>

Potentially eligible properties will be identified by Code Enforcement Officers through defensible space inspections. Applications and required materials to verify age and income will be reviewed by CEO staff. Once eligibility for the program has been established, the property owner will be provided with a qualified list of contractors developed by Placer County Procurement Services, one of which they will select and schedule to perform the work as required by the Ordinance and prescribed in the Hazardous Vegetation Inspection Form prepared by the Defensible Space Inspector (DSI). When the DSI has verified the work has been completed as prescribed, an invoice up to \$5,000 from the participating contractor will be paid by the county. The DSI will also document the work through before and after photographs.

This funding will provide for a minimum of 40 properties to be served over the two-year period, however, since many properties will not need the full amount allowable, it is likely that many more properties will benefit from this program.

For properties that require tree and brush work, there is the potential for this program to utilize the Residential Chipper Program for branches and brush that cannot be hauled away or chipped by contractors hired under this program.

FISCAL IMPACT

If approved, the total fiscal impact of this item is \$200,000 to be encumbered at \$100,000 per year. The first year of this pilot program, FY 2022-23 would be funded through Budget Amendment AM-0669 increasing Community and Agency Support (CC10018) by \$100,000 from

Honorable Board of Supervisors

July 12, 2022

Defensible Space Fuels Reduction Pilot Program for Very Low-Income Senior and Disabled
Property Owners

Page 3

the General Fund. The funding for the second year of the pilot program would be included in the FY 2023-24 Budget.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

