



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
July 29, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager
Submitted by: David Sprague, Fire Chief, Fire Department
Subject: Contract with Wildfire Defense to Serve as the Alameda County Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution:

1. Authorizing the City Manager or designee to execute a contract with Wildfire Defense to serve as the Alameda County Coordinator for coordination with local agencies, fire safe councils, and wildfire mitigation community groups for the initial period August 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, in an amount not to exceed \$155,500, and to apply for and receive future grant funding in collaboration with Berkeley Fire Department staff to maintain the position through 2028; and
2. Authorizing the City Manager or designee to execute any amendments for not more than \$225,000 per year in Fiscal Year (FY) 25, FY26, and FY27, upon receiving additional California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) grants to continue contracting Wildfire Defense to serve Alameda County communities, provide resources and education on wildfire safety, promote collaboration, assist local groups with funding opportunities, and aid multi-jurisdictional planning.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Funding for this contract is provided by the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) County Coordinator Grant Program for FY 2025–2026 [Fund Number: 336-72-741-831-0000-000-422-612990-]. As there are no matching funds required, there is no impact to the City’s General Fund. Staff will seek additional grant funding to sustain the position beyond July 2026.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Alameda County faces persistent and significant wildfire risk, particularly in the wildland-urban interface areas such as the Berkeley, Oakland Hills, and Hayward. Recent years have seen increased wildfire activity across California, highlighting the urgent need for coordinated, countywide mitigation and preparedness efforts. While the region is home to a number of active wildfire mitigation groups and agencies, these efforts have historically been fragmented, with limited formal collaboration or shared strategic planning.

The California Fire Safe Council funds county coordinator positions, and Alameda County is one of six counties that did not have a Coordinator position prior to FY25. The position is housed within Fire Department and actively coordinates and collaborates with county-wide community groups, fire councils, HOAs, and other mitigation support groups. The City of Berkeley issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to contract with an individual that will serve as the Alameda County Coordinator. The chosen vendor will work in partnership with all Alameda County jurisdictions to complete the required deliverables as set forth by the grantor and develop a work plan to further coordinate wildfire mitigation activities with a budget not to exceed \$155,500 for the current period of performance ending in July 2026. The City Council approved the formal bids and solicitation request for Specification No. 25-11738-C at the June 3, 2025, City Council meeting. The RFP was then posted on the City's Bids and Solicitation site on June 17, 2025. Responses to questions were made available on the City's website on June 23, 2025. The deadline for proposal submissions was July 8, 2025, resulting in 2 complete proposals being received. The selection committee included leaders and staff from the Berkeley Fire Department, Alameda County Fire Department, Fremont Fire Department, and Hayward Fire Department. The committee reviewed the proposals and interviewed bidders on July 10, 2025, making their final selection on July 11.

This initiative directly supports the City's strategic goals to:

- Create a resilient, safe, connected, and prepared city.
- Provide efficient and effective government services.
- Champion and demonstrate social and racial equity by protecting the most vulnerable communities from wildfire risk.
- Advance environmental justice and protect the environment through proactive hazard mitigation planning.

BACKGROUND

The County Coordinator program, funded by the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC), is designed to address the need for countywide collaboration and strategic alignment. The Coordinator will serve as a central point of contact, connecting wildfire mitigation groups, supporting grant applications, and facilitating the use of advanced planning tools such as the pathways analysis. The Coordinator will also be responsible for fulfilling specific grant deliverables and building regional capacity while developing a sustainable framework for ongoing collaboration.

During the previous County Coordinator grant period, the City of Berkeley was unable to hire a full-time County Coordinator due to delays in funding availability, resulting in only interim, volunteer-based coordination. This gap limited the county's ability to build sustained relationships, leverage data-driven planning tools, and increase the flow of mitigation funding to high-risk communities. There remains a clear need for a

professional, dedicated County Coordinator to unify wildfire mitigation groups, facilitate project implementation, and ensure compliance with state and federal grant requirements.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

Ensuring the Department is maximizing available resources and working with other county coordinators to collaborate on regional mitigation activities will help sustain the local environment and mitigate the potential of fire, mudslides, and other catastrophic impacts associated with the overgrowth of vegetation and loss of habitat post-wildfire.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Wildfire Defense is uniquely qualified to coordinate countywide wildfire mitigation efforts, having demonstrated expertise in wildfire planning, grant administration, and stakeholder engagement. This contract ensures continuity of critical wildfire resilience work and positions the City and County to secure future funding.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Shanalee Gallagher, Principal Program Manager, Fire Department (510) 981-3473

Attachments:

1: Resolution

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

CONTRACT: WILDFIRE DEFENSE TO SERVE AS THE ALAMEDA COUNTY
COORDINATOR

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley and Alameda County have prioritized wildfire mitigation and resilience; and

WHEREAS, Alameda County Board of Supervisors provided City of Berkeley support to apply for and manage a county-wide position; and

WHEREAS, the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) County Coordinator Grant Program provides funding to support countywide wildfire mitigation coordination; and

WHEREAS, Wildfire Defense has been selected and is qualified to serve as County Coordinator, facilitating partnerships, ensuring deliverables, and securing future grant funding.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager or designee is authorized to execute a contract with Wildfire Defense to serve as the Alameda County Coordinator for coordination with local agencies, fire safe councils, and wildfire mitigation community groups for the initial period August 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, in an amount not to exceed \$155,500, [Fund Number: 336-72-741-831-0000-000-422-612990-] and to apply for and receive future grant funding in collaboration with Berkeley Fire Department staff to maintain the position through 2028.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Manager or designee is authorized to execute any amendments for not more than \$225,000 per year in Fiscal Year (FY) 25, FY26, and FY27, upon receiving additional California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) grants to contract Wildfire Defense to serve Alameda County communities, provide resources and education on wildfire safety, promote collaboration, assist local groups with funding opportunities, and aid multi-jurisdictional planning.