



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
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READY FOR WILDFIRE: GRANT FUNDING TO CREATE WILDFIRE PREPARED COMMUNITIES

New pilot program leverages federal and state funds to support defensible space and ignition resistant retrofits in six vulnerable California counties

Sacramento – Homeowners in six California counties will soon begin receiving home retrofits with ignition resistant materials to California’s most vulnerable populations as part of the California Wildfire Mitigation Program. The pilot home hardening initiative provides funding for defensible space and ignition resistant retrofits to harden approximately 2,500 homes in six counties over the next three years.

The California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) established a joint powers authority to develop this pilot program. Home hardening has never been done at a community scale like this before; typically, home hardening has been done by individual homeowners, not entire communities. The intent of this pilot program is to create a template from which communities can learn how to scale up from hardening a few individual homes to hardening the entire community, creating greater resilience for everyone.

“This is an important step forward,” said Acting State Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant. “The home hardening initiative pilot will help California create a model for hardened communities that others can learn from and replicate.”

The California Wildfire Mitigation Program (CWMP) was established through the passage of Assembly Bill 38 in 2019. The legislation directed CAL FIRE and Cal OES to enter into a joint powers agreement to administer a program to encourage cost-effective structure hardening and retrofitting, and fuel modification activities that create optimal defensible space. The pilot initiative will focus on socially vulnerable communities and provide financial assistance for low- and moderate-income households to complete home hardening and create defensible space. The purpose is to aid communities that have been identified as vulnerable to wildfire, including impacts by future climate risk, and have populations that have a greater risk of wildfire.

Projects developed for these communities will leverage federal funds through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program with matching state dollars allocated by California’s Wildfire & Forest Resilience Budget Package. In August, FEMA awarded the first three pilot communities in Lake, Shasta, and San Diego Counties, funding to begin retrofitting following the completion of all necessary environmental reviews. The second round of pilots were recently awarded funds to begin the first phase of program development in El Dorado and Tuolumne Counties. Siskiyou County was added as the 6th pilot with a defensible space only pilot using state funds.

“We were selected due to the County’s high risk of severe fire, other vulnerabilities, and our early creation of the Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience,” said Tiffany Schmid, El Dorado County Chief Administrative Officer. “Over the next three years, this grant will help harden hundreds of homes in the Weber Creek drainage area south of U.S. Highway 50 through defensible space and ignition-resistant construction retrofits.”

The CWMP is partnering with six pilot communities to develop and implement the program framework. The first site work is expected to begin by Fall 2023.

Dulzura, San Diego County

Project Management – San Diego County
Funding - \$12,688,600 (FEMA \$9,516,450 & State \$3,172,150)
Deliverables – Defensible Space and Home Hardening for 229 homes

Kelseyville Riviera, Lake County

Project Management – North Coast Opportunities, Inc. (NCO)
Funding - \$22,182,530 (FEMA \$19,964,277 & State \$2,218,253)
Deliverables – Defensible Space and Home Hardening for 500 homes

Whitmore, Shasta County

Project Management – Shasta Fire Safe Council
Funding - \$9,302,135 (FEMA \$6,976,601 & State \$2,325,534)
Deliverables – Defensible Space and Home Hardening for 144 homes

Weber Creek/ Placerville, El Dorado County

Project Management – El Dorado County
Funding - \$1,337,650 (FEMA \$1,203,885 & State \$133,765)
Deliverables – Defensible Space and Home Hardening

Ponderosa Hills, Tuolumne County

Project Management - Tuolumne County
Funding - \$931,200 (FEMA \$838,000 & State \$93,200)
Deliverables - Defensible Space and Home Hardening

West Mount Shasta, Siskiyou County

Project Management - Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District
Funding - \$3,598,000 (State)
Deliverables - Defensible Space and Home Hardening

To learn more about Defensible Space and Home Hardening, visit readyforwildfire.org or the CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal [website](#).
Learn more about [California Office of Emergency Services](#).

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