



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0505, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma
Staff Name and Phone Number: John Mack, (707) 565-1233
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

FEMA HMGP Grant, Structural Hardening Assessor Contract Award for Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County Grant Projects

Recommended Action:

Authorize the Director of Permit Sonoma to execute a professional services agreement with Wildfire DefenseWorks ending July 11, 2025 in an amount not to exceed \$361,034 to provide structural hardening assessments in pre-identified project locations.

Executive Summary:

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors accepted two (2) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grants totaling \$2,625,769.80 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) titled "Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County Part 1-Phase 1 (DR4344-0701)" (\$2,256,680) and "Wildfire Adapted Part 2-Phase 1 (DR5293-0057)" (\$369,089.80). The Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County grants allow some project tasks to be completed by contractors, including the structural hardening assessment task in both grants. After a competitive bidding process completed in accordance with local, state, and federal procurement requirements, Permit Sonoma is proposing to award a contract to [Wildfire DefenseWorks <https://www.wildfiredefenseworks.com/>](https://www.wildfiredefenseworks.com/), a Napa, CA located wildfire resiliency assessment company, to perform a minimum of 250 and a maximum of 1,000 structural hardening assessments (with work awarded in allotments of 250 assessments at the direction of Permit Sonoma) in an amount not to exceed \$361,034.

Discussion:

The awarded grant funds will finance projects managed by Permit Sonoma staff to perform approximately 7,000 Defensible Space Assessments and 1,650 opt-in Structural Hardening Assessments. Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County Part 1-Phase 1 is to be completed by April 2, 2023, and Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County Part 2-Phase 1 is to be completed by July 26, 2023. The "house-outward" mitigation approach utilized in the grants informs residents of the benefits of defensible space and/or structural retrofit activities that could reduce the ignitability of structures. Defensible Space Assessments address the vegetation within 100 feet of structures. Defensible Space Assessments are delivered to all improved and unimproved parcels within the project area footprints. Extra Help Fire Inspectors in the Fire Prevention Division of Permit Sonoma have completed more than 5,000 of those assessments to date, and will begin the final 2,000 within the next weeks.

Opt-in Structural Hardening Assessments provide critical information about building elements that are vulnerable to wildfire ignition. Structural Hardening Assessments are a voluntary activity for the residents

within the project area footprints, provided at no cost to the resident; property owners must sign up to receive a free Structural Hardening Assessment. During the Defensible Space Assessments, Fire Inspectors noted which residents were interested in receiving a free Structural Hardening Assessment. In addition to this existing “opt-in” data, Permit Sonoma staff will reach out to property owners within the project area footprints through US Mail, email blasts, and local groups such as Fire Safe Councils to invite residents to sign up.

As allowed by the grants, the Structural Hardening Assessments can be completed by a contractor. After a competitive bidding process completed in accordance with local, state, and federal procurement requirements, Permit Sonoma staff are proposing to award a contract to [Wildfire DefenseWorks <https://www.wildfiredefenseworks.com/>](https://www.wildfiredefenseworks.com/), a wildfire resiliency assessment company, to perform a minimum of 250 and a maximum of 1,000 Structural Hardening Assessments (with work awarded in allotments of 250 assessments at the direction of Permit Sonoma) in an amount not to exceed \$361,034. Permit Sonoma staff will use a combination of Fire Inspectors from the Fire Prevention Division and this contract with [Wildfire DefenseWorks <https://www.wildfiredefenseworks.com/>](https://www.wildfiredefenseworks.com/) to complete the 1,650 Structural Hardening Assessments in order to increase the capacity, skills, and knowledge of our own Fire Inspectors.

In addition to the above grants, Permit Sonoma staff applied to the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program in December 2020 to fund the Wildfire Resilient Sonoma County Project (BRIC project) (\$48.8M). This grant application is still under review by FEMA. If funded, the BRIC project would complement and scale up the activities, capabilities, and systems currently being developed by Permit Sonoma staff through implementation of Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County Part 1-Phase 1 and Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County Part 2-Phase 1. The BRIC project also includes Defensible Space Assessments and Structural Hardening Assessments, as well as site identification for wildfire hazardous fuels vegetation management projects. The BRIC project has three pre-identified project area footprints that predominantly do not overlap with the project area footprints of Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County Part 1-Phase 1 or Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County Part 2-Phase 1, in order to provide these services to new areas of the county. One of the most important elements in each of these projects is to provide residents free Structural Hardening Assessments that use the best available science to deliver accurate and prioritized assessments of structural vulnerability to wildfire. Permit Sonoma staff reached out to CalOES in early August 2022 for a status update on the BRIC project, and were informed that it is still under review by FEMA.

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County’s Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

Pillar: Climate Action and Resiliency

Goal: Goal 1: Continue to invest in wildfire preparedness and resiliency strategies

Objective: Objective 1: Provide educational resources to the community that promote and facilitate carbon neutral and fire hardening construction for new and existing homes.

Prior Board Actions:

February 2, 2018 authorization by the Board of Supervisors to apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Funds.

January 29, 2019 Adopted Resolution 19-0028, authorizing the Director of Emergency Management or County Administrator to be the authorized agent signature authority for the County for federal financial assistance

provided by and/or sub-granted through the State of California and/or the federal Department of Homeland Security.

April 21, 2020 Adopted Resolution 20-0133 authorizing the County Administrator and/or the Assistant County Administrator, the Director and/or the Deputy Director of the Department of Emergency Management, the Director and/or the Deputy Director of the Information Systems Department, the Director and/or the Deputy Director of Permit Sonoma, and the Director and/or the Deputy Director of Transportation and Public Works to be the authorized agent signatory for the County for financial assistance provide by and/or sub-granted through the State of California and/or the Department of Homeland Security.

April 21, 2020 Adopted Resolution 20-0132 authorizing execution of grant agreements for a FEMA HMGP award, "Advance Assistance: Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County (DR4344-0701)," administered by the California Office of Emergency Services.

May 3, 2022 Adopted Resolution 22-0184 authorizing the execution of grant agreements for FEMA HMGP award, "Wildfire Adapted Part 2-Phase 1 (DR5293-0057)," administered by the California Office of Emergency Services.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$361,034		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$361,034		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$90,259		
State/Federal	\$270,775		
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$361,034		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Sufficient appropriations funded by the "Wildfire Adapted Sonoma County Part 1-Phase 1 (DR4344-0701)" and "Wildfire Adapted Part 2-Phase 1 (DR5293-0057)" FEMA HMGP grants are included in the Permit Sonoma FY 22-23 adopted budget (26010122-10005-51429). Federal portion is 75% and local match is 25%. The local match will be met by monies previously set aside and allocated by the Board for the match commitment on these grants.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Notice of Intent to Award

Attachment 2: Contract

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A