



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



April 21, 2026

ITEM TITLE

Grant Acceptance: Accept Grant Funding for the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program from the California Governor's Office of Service and Community Engagement/California Volunteers

Report Number: 26-0113

Location: No specific geographic location

Department: Fire

G.C. § 84308 Regulations Apply: No

Environmental Notice: The Project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act State Guidelines Section 15301 Class 1 (Existing Facilities) and Section 15304 Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land).

Recommended Action

Adopt a resolution accepting grant funds in the amount of \$1,499,974.31 from the California Governor's Office of Service and Community Engagement/California Volunteers #CaliforniansForAll Youth Service Corps Grant to support the Fuels Crew as part of the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program.

SUMMARY

The Chula Vista Fire Department applied for an additional cycle of funding from the Governor's Office of Service and Community Engagement/California Volunteers #CaliforniansForAll Youth Service Corps Grant to continue a workforce development program and support wildfire mitigation efforts. Accepting this grant award would provide \$1,499,974.31 over 12 months to support the Fuels Crew as part of the City's Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program, resulting in reduced wildfire risk to the community and job opportunities and job readiness training for youth ages 16 to 30.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed activity has been reviewed for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and it has been determined that the project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 Class 1 (Existing Facilities) and Section 15304 Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land), because the proposed project would not result in a significant effect on the environment, create a cumulative impact, damage a scenic highway, or cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Thus, no further environmental review is required.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Not Applicable.

DISCUSSION

The City of Chula Vista (“City”) has prioritized reducing wildfire risk by addressing hazardous vegetation in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), fire hazard severity zones, evacuation corridors, and mutual threat zones throughout the City. These areas contain dense grass, brush, and chaparral that contribute to rapid wildfire spread and threaten homes, critical infrastructure, and evacuation routes when left untreated. Through the Fire Department’s Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program, the City is taking proactive steps to reduce wildfire risk while also creating meaningful workforce development opportunities for youth in the South Bay region.

The City owns and manages more than 3,200 acres of WUI consisting primarily of grass, brush, and chaparral located within canyons and open space areas throughout the community and in mutual threat zones across South San Diego County. Historically, many of these areas did not receive consistent vegetation management and, in some cases, have gone decades without exposure to natural fire cycles or fuels treatment. Cycles of severe storms followed by prolonged drought across Southern California have further contributed to dense, highly contiguous fuel loads, increasing wildfire risk. Recognizing these conditions, the Fire Department established the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program (the “Program”) in 2023 to begin systematic fuels reduction in priority areas, including open space within fire hazard severity zones and along critical evacuation routes.

To support the Program, the Fire Department established a specialized vegetation fuel management crew (the “Fuels Crew”) to reduce wildfire risk to the community. Since its inception, the Fuels Crew has made measurable progress in reducing wildfire risk throughout the community. The Fuels Crew has completed fuels reduction work across multiple canyon and open space areas, improved defensible space along key evacuation routes, and assisted with fire prevention and community outreach activities. These efforts have helped reduce hazardous fuel loads, improve firefighter access in high-risk areas, and enhance overall wildfire preparedness in neighborhoods located adjacent to open space.

Through the California Volunteers Youth Service Corps grant opportunity, the Fire Department has expanded the Program Fuels Crew to add additional members and increase the amount of vegetation treated. In addition to wildfire mitigation, the Program Fuels Crew also provides a pathway to careers in fire and emergency response services. Participants on the Fuels Crew gain valuable work experience while receiving training and certification opportunities, including Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training and coursework required for Wildland Firefighter Type 1 and Type 2 certifications. Fuels Crew members also receive mentorship from Fire Department suppression personnel to support their continued education, certification, and career advancement. Several current and former Fuels Crew members have already taken steps toward careers in emergency services as a result of their participation.

The Program Fuels Crew prioritizes recruiting participants ages 16 to 30 from underserved South Bay communities, including at-risk youth, individuals facing economic hardship, the unemployed or underemployed, justice-involved individuals, and those experiencing housing insecurity. By investing in local youth and providing meaningful career pathways, the City is addressing wildfire risk while strengthening the regional workforce.

The continued success and expansion of this Program and the Fuels Crew reflect the City's strong commitment to public safety, wildfire preparedness, and programs that create long-term benefits for the Chula Vista community.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

Staff has reviewed the decision contemplated by this action and has determined that it is not site-specific and, consequently, the real property holdings of the City Council members do not create a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under the Political Reform Act. (Cal. Gov. Code § 87100, et seq.)

Staff is not independently aware and has not been informed by any City Council member of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision-maker conflict of interest in this matter.

CURRENT-YEAR FISCAL IMPACT

There is no current year fiscal impact. The grant period begins next fiscal year.

ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of the resolution will accept \$1,499,974.31 in grant funding from California Volunteers. This grant does not require a City cost share and will have no fiscal impact to the General Fund.

This award represents a second allocation of funding under the California Volunteers program initially awarded to the Fire Department in July 2025. The current grant funds are budgeted through December 31, 2026. The additional funding will become available once the existing grant funds are fully expended and is anticipated to extend program operations for approximately twelve months, through December 31, 2027.

Funding for this project will be incorporated as part of the annual budget development process in fiscal year 2026-27. All program expenditures will be limited to the grant award amount unless additional funding sources are identified, secured, and appropriated.

ATTACHMENTS

1. City of Chula Vista YSC Award Letter
2. Agreement

*Staff Contact: Chris Manroe, Fire Chief
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