

**Ready Nevada County** is a multimedia campaign coordinated by the Office of Emergency Services to raise awareness in the community to prevent and prepare for wildfire.

According to CAL FIRE, most Nevada County residents live in the high to very-high wildfire severity zone. With immediacy, residents drew the connection between the likenesses of the recent deadly Camp Fire and our County as both areas have similar topography and volumes of hazardous vegetation.

In February 2019, **Ready Nevada County** was formed to serve as a one-stop shop for residents seeking wildfire prevention and emergency preparedness information, as well as act as a facilitator to bring together wildfire prevention stakeholders at the community, local, state and federal levels to more creatively streamline coordination.

**Ready Nevada County** has enhanced the level of citizen participation by creating an accessible framework of resources which meet people where they are, whether that be online, over the radio, in person, or on the road. First, Nevada County with the help of a media consultant, developed the **Ready Nevada County** logo to serve as an easily recognizable graphic which represents the multifaceted partnerships within Nevada County, as well as trusted and vetted information. Next, we developed a one-stop-shop website, [ReadyNevadaCounty.org](http://ReadyNevadaCounty.org), and created a Nevada County Office of Emergency Services social media strategy for Facebook and Twitter accounts. Through these mediums, we shared our Ready Nevada County events such as wildfire specific town halls, our Wildfire Prevention and Preparedness Speakers Series to name a few. These events were produced in coordination with subject matter experts and community leaders. More recently the Ready Nevada County Team developed the Ready Nevada County Dashboard as an interactive informational tool to be used before, during and after a major event. This tool provides real time updates on Red Flag Warnings, Evacuation Warning & Order Areas, Community Reverse 911 messages, weather, Public Safety Power

Shutoff information and much more. The Ready Nevada County Dashboard proved critical during the late August Jones fire and was lauded by community leaders, first responders and the public as a key resource during a potentially catastrophic fire.

- Since the launching Ready Nevada County, opt-in early alert and warning CodeRED emergency notification enrollments have increased by 33%.
- County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services social media reach has grown 55% since the launch of Ready Nevada County
- Ready Nevada County, in 2019 supported the certification of 26 Firewise Communities which represent nearly 3,000 improved parcels and 41,500 acres.
- In the summer of 2020, free residential green waste was provided to constituents. This resulted in more than 500 tons of green waste being removed from around homes and along key evacuation roadways.

The **Ready Nevada County** model is a roadmap for other counties in that it follows a framework of citizen engagement, branded outreach tools, ease of access and subject matter expert inputs. These concepts while developed for Nevada County can be modified by anyone to carry safety messaging to their residents.

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ReadyNevadaCounty.org

ReadyNevadCounty.org/Dashboard

## Abstract

*In approximately 200 words or less, summarize the program include the program description, the purpose and outcomes.*

**Ready Nevada County** is a multimedia awareness campaign coordinated by the County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services to raise awareness and mobilize the community to prevent and prepare for wildfire. Through increased planning, strategic partnerships, improved communication, quarterly stakeholder meetings, and robust public engagement we expand Nevada County's wildfire readiness, increase funding for special projects, and engage our community in the disaster preparedness and prevention efforts.

By engaging the whole community, **Ready Nevada County** enhances citizen participation, improves constituent services, and fosters intergovernmental cooperation and coordination. **Ready Nevada County** serves as both a signpost and trusted source of information for Nevada County residents, highlighting the concept; fire heeds no boundary, so Nevada County must exercise creativity and tenacity as we work with partners at the community, local, state, and federal level to maximize resources and advance public safety.

## The Problem or Need for the Program

*Discuss the problem or need that prompted the development of the program and the county's legal obligation, if any, to take action. Approximately ¼ pages.*

In November 2018, California experienced the deadliest and most destructive fire on record, in which 85 people perished and nearly 19,000 structures were destroyed. The Camp Fire, driven by furious winds, damaged the region in ways that were previously unimaginable. The impact of the Camp Fire was felt viscerally by Nevada County residents who live just 50 miles, as the crow flies, from the epicenter of the tragedy. The billows of black smoke could be seen rising from the West and families could be heard on social media feeds and the nightly news praying for safety from their vehicles as they fled the flames. According to CAL FIRE, most Nevada County residents live in the high to very-high wildfire severity zone. With immediacy, residents drew the connection between the likenesses of the two areas due to the region's similar topography and volumes of hazardous vegetation.

After the Camp Fire, there was an increased level of anxiety and a sharpened focus on immediate action. In December 2018, County of Nevada hosted a wildfire town hall, which was attended by approximately 500 residents. The community asked for increased resources for fire preparedness, greater access to alert and warning systems. They also wanted to know how to safely evacuate, and requested more affordable methods for green waste material generated by defensible space clearing. In direct response, the County of Nevada Board of Supervisors further made wildfire preparedness a top priority, instructing staff to create innovative ways to become wildfire ready. In February 2019, **Ready Nevada County** was formed to serve as a one-stop shop for residents seeking wildfire prevention and emergency preparedness information, as well as act as a facilitator to bring together wildfire prevention stakeholders at the community, local, state and federal levels to more creatively streamline coordination.

## Description of the Program

*Provide a description of the nominated program including its objectives, time frame for development and implementation, clientele, the county's role in implementing the program and the contributions of any other partners where applicable (e.g. states and the federal government, consultants and private partnerships). Approximately 2 ½ pages.*

**Ready Nevada County** is a multimedia awareness campaign coordinated by the County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services to raise awareness and mobilize the community to prevent and prepare for wildfire. Through increased planning, strategic partnerships, improved communication, quarterly stakeholder meetings, and robust public engagement Nevada County's wildfire readiness is expanded, funding for special projects is increased, and our community is engaged in disaster preparedness and wildfire prevention efforts.

This program enhances citizen participation, improves constituent services, and fosters intergovernmental cooperation and coordination. **Ready Nevada County** serves as both a signpost and trusted source of information for Nevada County residents, as well as represents the idea, that just as fire heeds no boundary, Nevada County must exercise creativity and tenacity to work with partners at the community, local, state, and federal level to maximize resources and advance public safety.

This program serves the entire community with an emphasis on vulnerable populations including seniors, individuals with access and functional needs, and Spanish-speaking residents.

## Enhanced Level of Citizen Participation

**Ready Nevada County** has enhanced the level of citizen participation by creating an accessible framework of resources which meet people where they are, whether that be online, over the radio, in person, or on the road. First, Nevada County with the help of a media consultant, developed the **Ready Nevada County** logo to serve as an easily recognizable graphic which represents the multifaceted partnerships within Nevada County, as well as trusted and vetted information. Next, we developed a one-stop-shop website, ReadyNevadaCounty.org, and created a Nevada County Office of Emergency Services social media strategy for Facebook and Twitter accounts. Through these mediums, we shared our Ready Nevada County events such as wildfire specific town halls, our Wildfire Prevention and Preparedness Speakers Series, our *Wilder the Wild* film screening and partner panel discussion, and the Children's Health and Wildfire Safety Carnival. These events were produced in coordination with subject matter experts and community leaders including such partners as the University of California Cooperative Extension, Tahoe National Forest, Town of Truckee, City of Nevada City, City of Grass Valley, California State Parks, CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management, Nevada County Consolidated Fire Protection District, Truckee Fire Protection District, Fire Safe Council of Nevada County, the Nevada County Firewise Coalition, and Gold Country Kiwanis.

We know that people access news and information in many ways, so in addition to hosting our own events, we also participated in community cultural events to meet the community where they were such as at the Nevada City First Friday Art Walk, the Grass Valley Thursday Night Market, the Home and Garden Show, and the Nevada County Fair. The local media company Nevada County Media produced a Ready Nevada County trailer which was shown in the Sierra Theaters' network of local cinemas throughout the summer and fall of 2019. **Ready Nevada**

**County** ads were featured in local newspapers, and PSAs as well as weekly updates from Office of Emergency Services were run on the local radio stations KVMR and KNCO. A **Ready Nevada County** billboard advertised our early alert and warning system, CodeRED on the highly trafficked State Highway 49. Bus advertisements were also featured on the Gold Country Stage buses providing transportation throughout Western Nevada County.

In May of 2019, County of Nevada created a handbook which offered resources based on the National and International Fire Chief's Association *Ready, Set, Go!* Model. The handbook was mailed to Nevada County residents and provided a framework for home hardening, the implementation of defensible space, free green waste disposal resources, and family emergency preparedness. This handbook was also translated and made available in Spanish and became the foundation for an emergency preparedness toolkit which included a checklist for what to include in a Go Bag, information on outlining and practicing evacuation routes, how to register for county early alert and warning emergency notifications, and how to ready and harden a home for wildfire. The Office of Emergency Services receives calls year-round from Firewise Communities and neighborhoods organizing at the grassroots level looking to share this toolkit with their neighbors who want to learn more about wildfire preparedness.

Now, in the era of the coronavirus pandemic, our outreach and education has required us to be nimble and flexible. We are reaching our community through online town halls, video recordings, social media, online content, and over the airwaves on radio.

### Improved Constituent Services

**Ready Nevada County** has spearheaded several improved constituent services by developing strong partnership with a broad cross section of the community. For example, in May of 2019, Office of Emergency Services partnered with the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County to produce a month-long program which offered free residential green waste to Nevada County residents. In one month's time, more than 1,000,000 pounds of green waste were removed from around homes and roadways creating greater access for firefighters to safely defend homes. In addition, Office of Emergency Services partnered with Fire Safe Council of Nevada County to support the certification of 15 new Firewise Communities.

**Ready Nevada County** also supported the Gold Country Community Services who assists seniors with hazardous vegetation removal and firewood for home heating. Via a sponsorship, **Ready Nevada County** provided materials for the volunteers who make the Senior Firewood Program possible, such as safety equipment, chainsaws, and wheelbarrows.

Lastly, **Ready Nevada County** has partnered with a cohort of community-based organizations that serve the most vulnerable in Nevada County by providing direct one on one emergency preparedness support to individuals with disabilities, seniors, and those who are low-income. These community partners include the Center on Disability, FREED Independent Living Center, the Foodbank of Nevada County, 211 Connecting Point, the Sierra Foothills Village, Gold Country Community Services, and Nevada County Neighborhood Arts Council.

### Promote Intergovernmental Cooperation and Coordination

A major component of the work of **Ready Nevada County** has been ongoing coordination efforts between all agencies and community organizations that are working on wildfire prevention and preparedness efforts in Nevada County. This includes hosting facilitated quarterly wildfire stakeholder meetings with land managers, water purveyors, land trusts,

environmental organizations, the United State Department of Agriculture, Tahoe National Forest, the local media, Nevada County Firewise Coalition, the 10 local fire districts and departments, and the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County. These meetings provide an important platform for each of these siloed organizations to share the important work they are doing and identify ways to collaborate and leverage limited resources for maximum benefit in Nevada County.

A major case study which represents a strong example of how **Ready Nevada County** partners with agencies to bring resources to the community is the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone, which is a shaded-fuel break for which the Office of Emergency Services received grant funding. In the summer of 2019, Nevada County was awarded \$3,500,000 million from CAL FIRE to complete a 1,200-acre shaded fuel break to help protect the historic City of Grass Valley and the surrounding communities of Rough and Ready and Penn Valley. This project is underway with Project Management support from the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County, CAL FIRE, the California Native Plant Society, and more approximately 150 private property owners. This project has been an incredible demonstration of how successful public private partnerships can be.

Throughout 2019, and into 2020, Office of Emergency Services has been innovating and exploring new ways to reduce the risk of local wildfire and the effects of wildfire on life, property and the environment by providing leadership and support to community partners, pursuing State and Federal funding, implementing county policies and programs, and assisting the public to be “wildfire ready.” Through collaborating with trusted partners and engaging new ones, Office of Emergency was able to achieve ambitious initiatives through **Ready Nevada County**.

## The Cost of the Program

*Describe both the operating and capital costs incurred in developing and implementing the program. List all costs that would be incurred by a county attempting to replicate the program. Approximately ¾ to 1 page.*

Much of the work of Ready Nevada County is ongoing and, while some expenses are one-time, the majority represent annual costs. Below are estimations of category expenses and generally represent what it would cost to produce this program over a one-year period.

National Certification for 15 New Firewise Communities	\$28,000
Free Residential Green Waste Disposal	\$50,000
Graphic Designer	\$10,000
Media Ad-buys	\$15,000
Media Consultant	\$45,000
Printed Outreach and Educational Materials	\$10,000
Ready Nevada County Billboard	\$7,500
Ready Nevada County Bus Ads	\$1,500
Ready Nevada County Handbook Mailed to Residents Countywide	\$30,000
Ready Nevada County Short Films	\$11,000
Stakeholder Meeting Facilitation	\$2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$210,500</b>

## The Results/Success of the Program

*Provide a description of the results and the success of the program in meeting its objectives. Include specific examples and outcome measures. Approximately ¾ to 1 page.*

### Enhanced Level of Citizen Participation

- Since the launching Ready Nevada County, opt-in early alert and warning CodeRED emergency notification enrollments have increased by 33%.
- County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services social media reach has grown 55% since the launch of Ready Nevada County

### Improved Constituent Services

- Ready Nevada County, in 2019 supported the certification of 26 Firewise Communities which represent nearly 3,000 improved parcels and 41,500 acres. The communities to receive certification were: Greenhorn (District 1), You Bet (District 1), Bear River (District 2), Sierra Knolls (District 2), Foxwood (District 3), Cedars (District 3), Wolf Mountain (District 3), Ananda (District 4), Upper Rough & Ready (District 4), Juniper Hills (District 5), Dalmatian Drive (District 1), Echo Ridge (District 1), Harmony (District 1), Washington/Hill (District 3), 6B Ranch and Friends (District 4), Bitney Springs (District 4), Robinson-Byron-Brem (District 4), Cruzon Grade (District 4), Kentucky Flat (District 4), Squirrel Creek Ranches HOA (District 4), West Sages (District 4), Donner Lake Woods (District 5), Pine Forest (District 5), Scotts Flat Pines Neighborhood (District 5), and Washington (District 5).
- In the summer of 2019, free residential green waste was provided to constituents. This resulted in more than 1,000,000 pounds of green waste being removed from around homes and along key evacuation roadways.

### Promote Intergovernmental Cooperation and Coordination

- In 2019, Nevada County secured \$3.5 million dollars to complete the Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone Project, which is a shaded fuel break. In partnership with the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County, CAL FIRE, and the California Native Plant Society, 50% of the project is now complete, with 624 of the 1,237 acres having been treated.

### Worthiness of Award

By creating a holistic approach to wildfire and emergency planning, Ready Nevada County was able to meet all Program Criteria and bolster our county's ability to plan for, recover from and adapt to disasters, both natural and man-made.

Northern California has consistently felt the physical, economic and social impacts of wildfire; however, we are now faced with educating our community about a new normal and planning based on lessons learned. Modeling collaboration, innovative planning, old-fashioned neighborly outreach in all we do, has energized people to become part of the solution rather than critics from afar. Additionally, we were able to mitigate the spread of bad information by making ourselves available during community events and creating a unified brand to share information, projects, and initiatives. New services like the Free Green Waste Program, the Ready Set Go! County-wide mailer and free residential green waste disposal events were met with great responses and will continue into 2020.

At the heart of much of our planning and programming is the call for citizen participation and understanding of County and stakeholder wildfire preparedness strategies. By creating a spirit of collaboration, we were able to make everyone aware of **Ready Nevada County** through events, print materials, advertising, newsletters, non-profit events, and outreach. From billboards to bus signs, movie trailers to the County Fair outreach, to radio spots, our community was contacted and informed with this important message.

With this increased level of community engagement and through our quarterly stakeholder meetings we were able to collect information that facilitated the breaking down of siloes and promoted intergovernmental cooperation to serve our community and bring new revenue to important projects.