

**Illegal Disposal Site Abatement Grant Program****Name of Applicant: County of Lake – Code Enforcement Division**

**Substantiation of Threat to Public Health and Safety and/or the Environment (15 points):** *Describe the project(s) and efforts taken to demonstrate the threat, including documentation such as site investigation reports and regulatory inspections, investigations, and enforcements orders.*

Illegal dumping poses a significant threat to public health and the environment, with particularly severe consequences in disadvantaged, rural communities that often lack the necessary county resources, such as Lake County. In Lake County, illegal dumping has dire ramifications. It leads to the release of harmful substances and pollutants into the environment, threatens our fragile water table, and elevates the risk of disease. These consequences can pose lasting health risks for our residents, who have little access to healthcare or means to address health concerns.

Lake County faces significant challenges when it comes to illegal dumping and other code enforcement issues due to a complex interplay of socioeconomic factors. Our communities grapple with unemployment and financial instability, where residents often must prioritize basic survival over proper waste management, leading to illegal dumping or code violations on their properties. Seventeen of Lake County's 21 census tracts (encompassing 80% of the population) have median household incomes below the statewide median, and 15.9% of the population is living at or below Federal poverty levels (see the attached Disadvantaged Communities Map). The county is made up of 2 cities, and 8 townships, nestled around Clearlake – the state's largest all-natural lake and a critical resource for our region. The County of Lake, Community Development Department houses our Code Enforcement Division, which manages illegal dumping and site abatement cases for the unincorporated areas of county (including the 8 townships).

Due to the poor socioeconomics of the counties' residents, the County of Lake is under-resourced. Just seven years ago, the Code Enforcement Division was unfunded, due to lack of county resources – and is rebuilding with significant success and funding for vehicle abatements, cannabis enforcement (legal and illegal), and small site abatement projects. The division is working toward effective methods of cost recovery, such as citations, administrative fines, and liens. Unfortunately, large long-term abatement sites (illegal dumping and private property) have not been prioritized due to the large percentage of division resources they would require.

The project proposed – which would fund abatement projects in 6 townships (Nice, Lucerne, Clearlake Oaks, Lower Lake, Kelseyville and Middletown), where there is the most need or the most threat to the environment. Each abatement project is unique,

some of which are illegal dumping on public roadways/unused parcels (multiple sites close together) and others are long-term abatement cases, that have not been able to be resolved due to the size, scope, and lack of resources for the project. All the sites have been identified by the community, through code enforcement complaints, complaints to a County Supervisor, or identified at a town hall meeting. All sites have a long history of problems, with previous investigations, and some abatements completed, but no prevention measures in place. Site investigations and previous code enforcement orders are identified on Site Characterizations Forms (see attached).

Combining abatement, prevention measures (such as barriers and motion activated, lighted cameras and sign), and public awareness (including “free dump days”) will make the biggest impact on our community. Working to increase the efficiency of our cost recovery efforts will help make us sustainable. Addressing illegal dumping and site abatement is not just an environmental necessity but a critical step towards safeguarding public health and promoting much-needed equity in these vulnerable regions.

**Substantiation of Financial Need for Grant Funds (15 points):** *Demonstrate the need for funding. Describe properties, property owners, availability of other funds to complete work.*

Lake County, as a disadvantaged community facing multiple challenges, is in dire need of the Illegal Disposal and Site Abatement Grant Program funds for several compelling reasons:

- Lake County struggles with economic hardship, limited educational resources, and reduced access to healthcare services. These challenges make it difficult for residents to address illegal disposal and site abatement issues effectively.
- Lake County, due to its limited financial resources and infrastructure, struggles to allocate sufficient funding for addressing illegal dumping and long-term site abatement. As a result, many of the most egregious sites have existed over many years.
- Lake County recognizes the importance of cost recovery efforts and continuous evaluation to assess the effectiveness of its efforts in reducing illegal disposal incidents, but has never had the resources to dedicate specifically to that effort.

We will focus project funds on area with the most need – Townships with the lowest socioeconomics, where large-scale, long-term site abatement cases exist; and townships with many paper lots and abandoned lots, where illegal dumping is most prevalent. The properties we will abate include private parcels and public roadways, all which have been long-term problems in the community.

Although no other county funds exist to abate sites of this scope, we will maximize our resources by utilizing existing staff to focus on the site assessments, clean-up and

prevention plans, cost recovery efforts, public awareness campaign, and evaluation. We will utilize AmeriCorps members as volunteers to assist with site cleanup and restoration, as well as the creation and distribution of public education materials (see NCO - Letter of Support attached). The Sheriff's Department will assist with serving of inspection warrants and any abatement sites with uncooperative owners (see LCSO – Letter of Support). These additional resources will assist us in completing our work.

By securing the grant funds, Lake County aims to mitigate the immediate environmental and health hazards posed by illegal dumping and long-term site abatement cases while also addressing the underlying socioeconomic challenges. The County's goal is to make the program self-sustaining through cost recovery efforts and to ensure that its initiatives are continually evaluated and refined for the long-term benefit of the community. This funding will be instrumental in uplifting Lake County, protecting its environment, and improving the quality of life for its residents.

### **Goals and Objectives (5 points):**

The County of Lake hopes to make a significant community impact by reducing threats to public health and the environment, while also improving the quality of life for our residents. Addressing illegal dumping and large-scale site abatement works directly for the long-term benefit of our residents. Through this project, we propose the following goals and objective, which will lead to our success:

#### **Goal 1: Efficient Site Cleanup and Reoccurrence Prevention**

Objective 1.1: Conduct site assessments and develop cleanup plans for identified sites, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and safety standards.

Objective 1.2: Successfully complete the cleanup and restoration of a minimum of 25 illegal disposal sites within the grant period.

Objective 1.3: Employ measures including barriers, signage and game cameras to prevent the reoccurrence of illegal disposal and large-scale abatements.

#### **Goal 2: Public Education and Awareness**

Objective 2.1: Develop and implement a comprehensive public education campaign to raise awareness about the environmental, health and aesthetic hazards associated with illegal disposal.

Objective 2.2: Fund and promote 6 Free Dump Days in areas where illegal dumping is a reoccurring issue.

#### **Goal 3: Cost Recovery and Sustainable Funding**

Objective 3.1: Establish a robust cost recovery program to identify responsible parties for illegal disposal and seek reimbursement for cleanup costs.

Objective 3.2: Recover costs from responsible parties with at rate of 50% over the grant period.

#### Goal 4: Monitoring and Evaluation

Objective 4.2: Regularly assess the effectiveness of the grant program in reducing illegal disposal incidents and promoting responsible waste management practices.

Objective 4.3: Use evaluation findings to make necessary adjustments and improvements to the grant program's strategies and initiatives.

#### **Work Plan (15 points): See Attached**

**Evaluation (5 points):** *Describe how the project will be evaluated against the goals, objectives, tasks, subtasks, measurable targets, and timelines set for the project. Includes at a minimum: evaluation of the resources used and methods and standards for inspecting, testing, and evaluating the work. Describe how the project benefitted from the grant and how the applicant will continue the efforts after funding has been used.*

Evaluating the project's progress and success against its goals, objectives, measurable targets, and milestones is critical for ensuring accountability and demonstrating the project's impact. In fact, we have set specific goals, objectives, and tasks related directly to our evaluation plan, to ensure quality tracking, analysis, reporting, and improvement of the project. We will:

- Measure the achievement of specific objectives through quantitative metrics. Including the number of project sites, number of people reached through public awareness efforts, number of "free dump days", and tracking of recovery costs.
- In addition to quantitative metrics, assess the qualitative aspects of each objective, such as the effectiveness of the public awareness campaigns through surveys and feedback from participants.
- Compare the project's progress against the goals and objectives outlined in the grant proposal to ensure alignment and identify any necessary adjustments.

Specifically, our Code Enforcement Program Supervisor will be responsible for leading the evaluation of this project. They will be responsible for the following assessments, plans, and reports over the course of the project:

1. For all goal and objectives, key indicators will be developed that will guide the evaluation process.
2. Thorough site assessment to determine scope of the cleanup, compliance with environmental and safety regulations, resulting in the site assessment report

prior to the start of each cleanup. Site assessments will also include the determination of the party responsible for the cleanup costs, for our cost recovery efforts.

3. Cleanup and prevention Plans will be created after the site assessments, but prior to the site cleanup being initiated, and will include the prevention measure needed to prevent the reoccurrence of the issue at the site.
4. At case closure, the project file will house the before and after photos of the site, as further evidence that work has been completed.
5. The public awareness campaign will be initiated and evaluated according to the key indicators developed, and will be evidenced through the strategy, materials, and distribution timeline.
6. The success of “free dump days” will be evaluated based on the number of people accessing the resource and lbs of trash disposed, compared to the cost of the events. This activity can be evaluated against the site cleanups to determine cost efficiency.
7. Cost recovery efforts will be analyzed regularly, tracking the number of citations, notices, and lien hearings conducted, plus the percentage of funds recovered. These number will be reported quarterly and at the end of grant cycle in the Final Cost Recovery Report.
8. Quarterly reports will evaluate all cleanups, public awareness activities, and cost recovery efforts regularly, analyzing efficiencies, challenges, success and improvements to be made in the next quarter. This is lead to continuous project improvement over the life of the grant.
9. The final report will determine the viability of the program for continuation beyond the grant term.

In summary, the project's evaluation will be systematic and comprehensive, focusing on quantitative and qualitative metrics related to goals, objectives, targets, and milestones. It will also include rigorous assessment, planning, and adherence to standards for work quality. Additionally, it's crucial to demonstrate the benefits derived from the grant and articulate a clear plan for sustaining project efforts beyond the grant's expiration to ensure lasting impact and success in addressing illegal disposal issues. Regular reporting to funding agencies and stakeholders will play a pivotal role in transparently communicating the project's progress and impact.

**Budget: See Attached**