

Fire District Sustainability Funding Plan

Implementation Procedures – Draft September 15, 2023

Purpose:

On April 18, 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved in principle a funding framework to support the long-term sustainability of Yolo County Fire Protection Districts. This document establishes policies and procedures to ensure clear and consistent implementation of the Fire District Sustainability Funding Plan.

Funding Framework:

On an annual basis, Yolo County will make available \$1.5 million in funding to support eligible Fire Protection Districts within Yolo County. Of this total, 60% will be allocated evenly across Fire Protection Districts, while 40% will be allocated based on a three-year average of call volume. Funding allocations shall only be calculated for direct-service Fire Protection Districts that are not subject to a Board-approved dissolution process as of July 1, 2023.

The allocations calculated for each Fire Protection District shall reflect the maximum amounts that each District may receive per fiscal year, subject to the eligibility criteria discussed below.

Eligibility:

Fire District Sustainability Funding is intended to match to new, additional revenues generated as part of a Proposition 218 process conducted after July 1, 2023. As such, only Fire Protection Districts with a new Proposition 218 assessment approved by district voters will be eligible for ongoing sustainability funding. Existing Proposition 218 assessments, including any cost-of-living adjustments, will not be eligible for matching funds. Cost-of-living-adjustments from new Proposition 218 studies will be eligible for matching funds up to the maximum amount calculated for each Fire District.

Fire Protection Districts that attempt a new Proposition 218 election after July 1, 2023 that fails are eligible to request a one-time grant of County Fire Sustainability Funds, up to the maximum amount, only after the Proposition 218 failure has occurred. Such requests shall include justification for the need and intended use of the funding, and will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval. Grant requests may be made for purposes in accordance with the eligible uses of funding specified below; however, Districts are strongly encouraged to use grant funding to address deficiencies in the Proposition 218 process, such as through enhanced public outreach and education. Grant requests may be made for two years unless a subsequent Proposition 218 election is held, at which point funding eligibility under this section will be reset.

Use of Funding:

Matching funds and one-time grant funds are intended to support Fire District sustainability and to assist Districts in providing the necessary staffing, equipment, and resources to ensure the safety of their communities. As such, authorized uses of matching and grant funds includes, but is not limited to:

- Capital improvement projects and deferred maintenance
- Efforts to ensure or increase firefighter safety
- Apparatus or equipment replacement
- Supplemental operating costs due to inflation and/or increased fuel costs
- Recruitment and training of reserve and volunteer staff

- Staffing costs
- Incentive programs for existing reserve and volunteer staff
- Implementation of mutual aid or joint operating agreements that provide for improved response times or staffing availability
- PPE, turnouts, SCBAs and similar equipment and supplies
- Critical equipment repairs or replacement
- Community outreach and education, including outreach related to a Proposition 218 election
- Matching funds for local, state, or federal grants

Matching funds and one-time grants shall not be used for any of the following purposes:

- Any political purpose, including lobbying activities or promotion of a local candidate, campaign, or committee
- Charitable contributions
- Purchase of alcohol or illicit substances
- Purchase of food or travel expenses in excess of federal per diems
- Personal expenses of any Fire District employee or volunteer
- Purchases that are frivolous, unnecessary, or not directly related to the needs of the Fire District
- Any use of funds that is in violation of state or federal laws or Fire District policy

Budgeting:

The County will establish a separate budget unit to appropriate and expend sustainability funding provided to eligible Fire Protection Districts. The budget unit will be in the Countywide department and managed by the County Administrator's Office.

The \$1.5 million total designated for Fire District Sustainability will not be automatically adjusted in future fiscal years. However, the Board of Supervisors retains the authority to modify funding levels at any time. In addition, in the event that Yolo County experiences fiscal hardships that require reductions to County services and staffing levels, the County Chief Administrative Officer may recommend to the Board of Supervisors an adjustment in the total amount of funding designated for Fire District Sustainability. The Board of Supervisors further retains the authority to modify the 60/40 split between equal division and call volumes if conditions warrant a change in the allocation methodology.

The maximum funding amounts currently calculated for each Fire Protection District using the 60/40 split between equal division and call volumes shall remain in place for a period of five years, notwithstanding any action by the Board of Supervisors to change the total amount of funding designated for Fire District Sustainability. Beginning in fiscal year 2028-29, and every five years thereafter, the maximum funding amounts for each Fire Protection District shall be recalculated based on updated call volume data.

Annual Funding Report:

Fire Districts that pass a Proposition 218 Study will be required as part of State Law to submit their direct charges to the Yolo County Department of Financial Services no later than August 10th of each year. The County Department of Financial Services shall calculate the amount of eligible matching funds that the district can receive based on the additional revenue generated by the enrolled new 218 charges and provide that information to the County Administrator's Office no later than September 1st.

The County Administrator's Office shall provide information to the Fire Districts that attempt a Proposition 218 election that fails on how to submit one-time grant requests to the Board of

Supervisors. In the first year after a Proposition 218 election fails, a district may submit a grant request within three months of the 218 failure. Grant requests in subsequent years shall be provided to the County Administrator's Office no later than August 31 in order to be included with the Adopted Budget in September.

As part of the Adopted Budget in September of each year, the County Administrator's Office shall provide the Board of Supervisors a summary of funding amounts for Fire Districts that are eligible or may become eligible for matching funds or one-time grants within that fiscal year. The Board of Supervisors will consider as part of the Adopted Budget new grant requests that have not been previously approved.

Payment:

The Department of Financial Services will disburse matching funds on a quarterly installment basis. These payments will be broken into one-quarter of the annual amounts and paid as follows:

- First quarterly installment (October 1)
- Second quarterly installment (January 1)
- Third quarterly installment (April 1)
- Fourth quarterly installment (June 30)

The timing of disbursement for approved grant funds shall be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature and intended use of the grant funding.

Performance Reports and Accountability

Each Fire Protection District receiving matching funds will be required to submit an annual performance report to demonstrate the results and benefits achieved from the financial assistance. The County Administrator's Office will prepare and distribute a performance reporting template to be used for the annual performance reports.

Performance reports detailing the prior fiscal year's accomplishments shall be due to the County Administrator's Office by July 31st of each year. The County Administrator's Office will compile and provide the performance reports to the Board of Supervisors for review and consideration. Any Fire Protection District that does not submit an annual performance report by the required deadline will be suspended from eligibility for either matching funds or one-time grants in the subsequent fiscal year.

Both matching funds and one-time grants are subject to review by the County's Internal Audit division. Any use of funding that is found to be in violation of the eligible uses, or any other provisions of this policy, shall be returned to the County.