

## FY 2023-2024 BUDGET QUESTION

### *Response to Request for Information*

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DEPARTMENT(S): Citywide

CBQ NO.: 036

REQUESTED BY: Kelly

DATE REQUESTED: 07/18/2023

DATE POSTED: 08/02/2023

**REQUEST:** Please provide an account of the funding allocated for Emergency Preparedness preparations for natural disasters. Include any training for the community in the breakdown, including CERT training, how many people are anticipated to be trained, and the number of classes proposed to be held.

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#### RESPONSE:

Austin Fire Department (AFD): The department has ongoing funding for Special Operations, Wildfire and the Fire Marshal's Office to address emergency preparedness and preparation for natural disasters.

The Special Operations budget currently totals \$1.9M. This includes funding to train firefighters for emergency events including natural disasters like flooding, winter storms, and earthquakes. Training certifications focus on hazardous materials mitigation, swift water rescue, confined space rescue, and structural collapse.

The Wildfire Division budget currently totals \$3.6M. The Wildfire budget has an on-going \$650K in funding for fuels mitigation contracts - removing vegetation to reduce the risk of wildfires. It also includes funding for wildfire mitigation and preparedness training. The Wildfire Division also plans to implement Situational Awareness/Evacuation software in FY 2024.

Wildfire holds community events and trainings with Firewise Adapted Communities and other neighborhoods to inform citizens on how to take ownership of wildfire mitigation and evacuation planning. Planned wildfire events in FY 2024 include:

- Wildfire Alliance meetings that will take place at least twice in FY 2024 (approximately 30 attendees).
- Homeland Security Emergency Management (HSEM) preparedness fairs. The FY 2024 schedule is pending, but Wildfire attends approximately six per year.
- A Wildfire Symposium/Forum scheduled for the first quarter of FY 2024 (approximately 45-50 attendees).
- Home Ignition Zone trainings and assessments as requested by community and Firewise neighborhoods (date and attendance are to be determined).

In FY 2021, the Fire Marshal's Office adopted the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) code and added 11 positions to review and inspect properties to ensure WUI code requirements are met.

Finally, AFD received \$20K in FY 2023 to start implementation of Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) software and training. This software will eventually allow for the centralized coordination of emergency responses, especially purchasing, across City departments.

Austin Police Department (APD): The department does not have funding for Emergency Preparedness preparations for natural disasters. These trainings are led by HSEM and funding is provided through them. CERT training is also provided by HSEM.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS): The department does not have funding for Emergency Preparedness preparations for natural disasters. These trainings are led by HSEM and funding is provided through them. CERT training is also provided by HSEM.

Homeland Security Emergency Management (HSEM): A Community Preparedness position was added to the HSEM budget in FY 2023. This position will develop CERT and a neighborhood approach to CERT training principles so neighborhoods can be better organized to respond to localized disasters. The training will harness state and federal resources and best practices. This position will establish the number of classes to be held, with a phased approach for CERT and additional types of preparedness training.

HSEM has a \$200,000 budget for Disaster Reservists (DRs). DRs assist with logistics support for the citywide Mission Ready Packages of emergency supplies and for community preparedness pop up events, disaster surge support, and a range of tasks that pop up such as providing water to vulnerable populations. Several of the DRs can provide preparedness training.

HSEM has dedicated Community Engagement Specialists (CES) working with communities on an inclusive and accessible emergency preparedness education. HSEM has developed a Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Guide that is part of the general education programming shared at monthly Emergency Preparedness Pop Up events. In addition to this programming, HSEM is also developing a 1 to 2 hour condensed emergency preparedness training class for families and individuals, aimed at providing basic level preparedness training. The goal is to have an innovative and tiered approach to preparedness training – basic training for individuals and families, training for how neighborhoods can organize to be more self-reliant (neighbor helping neighbor approach), and CERT courses. Curriculum and schedules are in development with the goal of launching a basic training pilot September 2023 and scheduling courses throughout 2024. The goal is to have all training materials available in English and Spanish.

FY 2023 included \$250,000 in one-time funding to develop the Get Ready Central Texas brand, website, purchase a year's worth of Emergency Preparedness Kit supplies and promote emergency preparedness in 13 languages reaching over 2.5 million people.