

# INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

## July 2, 2025



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**To:** City Council  
**From:** City Manager Department  
**Prepared by:** Kristen Nelson, Administrative Services Manager  
**Subject:** **Approval of three-year Agreement with Riverside County Emergency Management Department for an Emergency Services Coordinator**

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **APPROVES** a three-year agreement for an Emergency Services Coordinator with the Riverside County Emergency Management Department for July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2028; and

**AUTHORIZES** and **DIRECTS** the City Manager to execute the Agreement and future renewals for the same, except when a change in service level is required; and

**FINDS** the action exempt from CEQA review under CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3).

### BACKGROUND:

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2015/16, the City contracted with the Riverside County Fire Department for a half-time Emergency Services Coordinator position. The contract position provides expertise for the establishment and coordination of the City's emergency services planning, response, and recovery. The position splits time with the City of Palm Desert, which pays for the other half of the position.

In 2015, Riverside County established a new Emergency Medical Services Department (EMSD), which is separate from the Fire Department. In order to best clarify the contractual relationship of the parties, City Staff requested that a new contract be executed with the Emergency Services Department detailing services provided. The agreement between the City and County EMD for this purpose has been its own, standalone contract ever since.

Since then, the City has continued to partner with County EMD for 0.50 FTE on a shared Emergency Services Coordinator, whose role covers all emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts for Indian Wells, including but not limited to writing and updating all emergency plans (such as the Emergency Operations Plan, Local

Hazard Mitigation Plan, Event Action Plans, and Concepts of Operations), training City staff for Emergency Operations Center (EOC) operations and overall preparedness, conducting community outreach and preparedness training for residents, grant management, managing exercises and drills, supporting the CERT program, and ensuring compliance with state and federal emergency management requirements. The City's current agreement, July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025, covers these same services and responsibilities.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Over the last decade, State law, EMD's scope of services, and the City's needs have understandably evolved.

New legislative requirements, such as mandates for inclusive planning, the integration of Access and Functional Needs (AFN), and compliance with AB 2140, which encourages the adoption of a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) into the City's General Plan Safety Element, to qualify for full reimbursement of disaster-related costs. SB 99 further requires jurisdictions to analyze evacuation routes for residential developments in hazard zones, especially those with limited points of egress. Additionally, legislation such as the California PETS Act (mirroring the federal PETS Act) mandates that local jurisdictions account for household pets and service animals in emergency planning, including provisions for co-located or pet-friendly sheltering during disasters.

These changes, combined with the increasing frequency and complexity of incidents such as wildfires, extreme heat, flooding, and public safety power shutoffs (PSPS), have heightened the City's reliance on specialized emergency management expertise and increased the need for a proactive, coordinated, and comprehensive approach to preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

The City has seen the implementation of comprehensive Emergency Operations Plans, Local Hazard Mitigation Plans, community training, staff training for EOC operations, coordination of emergency exercises and drills, and increased collaboration with local, regional, and state emergency partners.

As we move into the new Fiscal Year, EMD is also working to incorporate the integration of GIS mapping for situational awareness, creation of hazard-specific response protocols, and improved tracking of emergency resources and damage assessments.

## **Commission/Committee Recommendations:**

At their April 28, 2025, meeting, the Indian Wells Finance Committee recommended approval of the budget, which included sufficient funding to cover the increased EMD contract.

The City Council adopted the budget at their May 15, 2025, meeting, which included the increase associated with this change.

At their June 10, 2025, special meeting, the Indian Wells Public Safety Committee was provided a review of the City's Emergency Services Coordinator's efforts and agreed an expansion of our access to those services was essential to maintaining and expanding on the city's emergency preparedness efforts.

### **OPTIONS:**

The City Council can choose to:

1. Adopt the new three-year agreement, expanding the City's access of the County Emergency Services Coordinator from 0.50 FTE to 0.75 FTE; or
2. Provide alternative direction.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The Emergency Services Coordinator position was approved within the current fiscal year's budget at 0.75 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and is funded through the Fire Services Fund. This expenditure is not derived from the General Fund.

The total projected cost for the fiscal year 2025-2026 is estimated at \$150,000, reflecting an increase of \$39,700 compared to the previous year. In recent years, the City has also successfully secured grant funding to partially offset the costs associated with this position.

### **CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC GOAL:**

At the April 17, 2025, Council Strategic Planning session, Council assigned Staff and the Public Safety Committee to expand efforts to better prepare the community for an emergency (e.g., earthquake, fire, and flood) through partnerships (e.g., Cove Communities and local homeowner associations), education campaigns, and CalFire program to create defensible space around homes and businesses to protect them from a wildfire. To meet this Council Goal, staff is recommending adding contract hours for the City's Emergency Services Coordinator.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):**

The action is not a project within the meaning of Section 15378 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, directly or indirectly; and that the action is nonetheless exempt from the requirements of CEQA in that the activity is covered by the

general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. (15061(b)(3).)

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Emergency Services Agreement