

Quality and Productivity Commission
33rd Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Empowering Innovative Solutions"

2019 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: DISASTER RELIEF FOR VICTIMS OF NATURAL DISASTERS

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: 12-01-2017 TO 05-31-2019

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2018)

PROJECT STATUS: X Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes X No


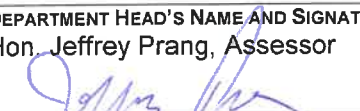
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 *The Office of the Assessor, consistent with its mission of delivering exceptional service*
 2 *to the public, conducts proactive public education and outreach campaigns year-round*
 3 *to ensure constituents across the County are knowledgeable of the assessment process*
 4 *and the tax-saving programs available to them. Among these is re-assessment due to*
 5 *misfortune or calamity ("M&C"), which typically results in an assessment reduction and*
 6 *consequently lower taxes. As natural disasters strike, the Office mobilizes specifically to*
 7 *reach affected constituents regarding M&C relief and to assist with claim submissions.*
 8 *These potentially substantial savings help alleviate the financial hardships that affected*
 9 *property owners may already be experiencing due to the loss of a home. Assessor staff*
 10 *conduct these efforts through a mix of traditional and innovative methods, including*
 11 *utilizing social and traditional media, visiting evacuation centers, staffing disaster relief*
 12 *centers, and making site visits. In instances such as the Woolsey fire, where entire*
 13 *neighborhoods were destroyed, the Office goes a step further and proactively begins*
 14 *the M&C relief process so as to ensure timely assistance and expedited processing for*
 15 *displaced constituents with more immediate needs, such as food and shelter.*

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS County of Los Angeles Office of the Assessor 500 West Temple Street, Room 320 Los Angeles, CA 90012		TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-3101
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Jennifer Budzak Director, District Appraisals		TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-3121 EMAIL JBudzak@assessor.lacounty.gov
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Dara Smith Administrative Deputy 	DATE 06/27/2019	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-3101 EMAIL DSmith@assessor.lacounty.gov
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Hon. Jeffrey Prang, Assessor 	DATE 06/27/2019	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-3101

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project to the County. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success and specify assessment time frame. Use Arial 12 point font.

CHALLENGE: Natural disasters are common to the Southern California landscape, yet a vast majority of Los Angeles County’s approximately 2½ million property owners are rarely forced to confront the challenges that these wildfires, floods, mudslides and earthquakes present. The small fraction of property owners who *are* affected by these disasters and may have lost their homes face almost insurmountable hurdles as they struggle to meet immediate and long-term needs. They are unlikely to concern themselves with the assessed values of their damaged or destroyed homes as they seek medical help, food, shelter, and vital records such as birth certificates and drivers’ licenses. Yet the property tax process will continue to move forward, placing these constituents at risk of becoming delinquent on their property tax bills, coupled with the repercussions of such an event. State Law allows Assessors to reappraise property following natural disasters, but proactive steps must first be taken by property owners notifying Assessors of the damage. The complexity of our property tax system makes such notification by displaced constituents unlikely. In addition, given more immediate needs, even a well-informed property owner is unlikely to have the ability during such a time to locate and print the necessary forms and mail them to the Assessor’s office. The Creek, Rye, Skirball and Thomas fires of December 2017 and the fatal Woolsey fire of November 2018 scorched neighborhoods, prompted emergency declarations by the Governor and the President, and stretched thin already scarce resources. In all these instances, properties were significantly damaged or destroyed within days of the first installment of the annual property tax bills, further exacerbating the ability of affected constituents to address their most immediate needs.

SOLUTION: As natural disasters such as wildfires, floods, and mudslides in Southern California have become more prevalent and destructive, the Assessor’s office has redoubled its efforts to educate constituents throughout the year about disaster relief, working in concert with other agencies, community groups, non-profit organizations, and traditional as well as emerging media sources. However, given the more pressing needs of affected constituents, the Assessor’s office realizes that reassessment claim forms will lag and possibly miss the state-imposed 12-month deadline. Therefore, as natural disasters strike, the Assessor now considers proactively reassessing affected properties, especially in instances where whole sections of neighborhoods have been damaged or destroyed – in lieu of waiting for individual claims to be submitted before this process can begin for each property. Also, a disaster relief hotline is now advertised, and callers are greeted by a live staff member of the Assessor’s office. During this time, the office closely monitors first-responders’ progress, gathers new information and aerial images from local, state, and federal agencies (e.g., FEMA, CalFire, LA County Fire Department, LA City Fire Department, other municipal fire

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departments), and – in conjunction with its public awareness efforts – begins the reassessment process. Once it is deemed safe to enter affected areas, appraisers make site visits to verify the new information provided by other agencies and finalize their work, which is then passed on to the Auditor-Controller for processing, followed by the Treasurer and Tax Collector.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY: These new procedures by the Assessor’s office mean consistency in the reassessment process (as compared with ad hoc reassessments over a longer period of time), improved coordination and efficiency among the County departments involved in this process, and quicker as well as more precise reporting to the Chief Executive Office, the Board of Supervisors, and other governmental entities involved (e.g., cities). Moreover, projections of the disaster’s impact on the annual assessment roll are not only improved but become available sooner, allowing both the County and any affected cities to plan ahead. For constituents who have lost their homes, their livelihoods, and possibly even beloved pets or loved ones, the proactive steps by the Assessor’s office mean they no longer have to rush to find a printer, complete a claim form, and mail or hand-deliver the document with a wet signature. Instead, they can tend to more pressing needs in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, serving to bolster confidence in local government.

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Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12 point font.

The enhanced disaster relief efforts of the Assessor’s office fall within Goals I and III of Los Angeles County’s Strategic Plan. Specifically, by proactively beginning the reassessment process following a devastating natural disaster, constituents are afforded early intervention and support. Those at risk of becoming reliant on the assistance of the County or others, or altogether homeless, are able to regain their footing and become once again financially stable as assessments are lowered to account for the damage or destruction caused by the disaster (I.1.5 and I.1.8). Moreover, these proactive efforts by the Assessor’s office enhance the delivery of “comprehensive and seamless services,” thereby ensuring housing security for vulnerable constituents (I.2.1). From a public service efficiency and innovation perspective, these efforts serve to maximize County assets by replacing an ad hoc process involving multiple departments with a streamlined process that also improves consistency and accuracy in reassessment and allows for earlier and more precise reporting (III.3.2). In so doing, there is also more data that becomes available and can be published, thus supporting information sharing and public policy research (III.4.2).

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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