



Office of the City Manager

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CONSENT CALENDAR  
May 25, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager  
Submitted by: Abraham Roman, Interim Fire Chief  
Subject: Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Oakland for the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a Memorandum of Agreement and any amendments with the City of Oakland, as the “Sponsoring Agency” for the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System, operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security, acting through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), along with the State of California and local governments.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

There is no fiscal impact to this request.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The California Task Force 4 (CATF-4) of the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System supports the preparedness efforts of not only the Fire Department, but also those of the City for community partners. Fire staff’s participation in USAR teams is essential to the continued support of this effort.

The Berkeley Fire Department is an active member of the CATF-4, and FEMA requires all USAR teams have a MOA detailing the roles and responsibilities of all participants in order to receive federal cooperative agreement funding. FEMA also requires that existing or new participating agencies and affiliated personnel of CATF-4 sign updated agreements with the City of Oakland Fire Department that mirror this new MOA. The annual cooperative agreement funding is granted under the conditions specified in the MOA. The Agreement has no expiration date and will remain in effect unless terminated, and may be terminated by either party upon 30 days written notice.

BACKGROUND

Since the World Trade Center disaster on September 11, 2001, Congress has taken the National USAR program and funded it to a higher level. The 28 teams have broadened their mission capabilities from the handling of natural disasters (i.e. flood, earthquakes, etc.) to include weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and terrorist incidents. During the

early 1990's, the City of Oakland's Fire Department has sponsored one of these teams, California Task Force 4 (CATF-4).

In the past, CATF-4 has sent overhead personnel and/or responded with rescue teams to: Northridge California for its earthquake, Oklahoma City for the Federal Building bombing, New York City for the World Trade Center Bombing, West Texas for the Challenger Shuttle disaster, New Orleans and Biloxi for Hurricane Katrina, Houston for Hurricane Rita, Miami for Hurricane Wilma, North West Florida for Hurricane Ernesto, and Texas for Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The Berkeley Fire Department deployed rescue team personnel to assist in many of the disasters.

Deployment and overtime backfill costs were reimbursed to the City of Berkeley through the City of Oakland by FEMA. FEMA has reimbursed the maximum allowable costs for each of these deployments, and they have been the funding source for 28 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams nationally since the program's inception.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Task Force's cache of equipment and supplies is purchased and maintained by the Sponsoring Agency. Their procurement will be responsibly sourced, and participants are to use Task Force cache equipment and supplies only for authorized purposes and exercise reasonable care to protect and preserve the property against loss or damage to ensure future use.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of the FEMA USAR MOA is to allow each National USAR Task Force the opportunity to raise its standards and condition of operational readiness as an available FEMA, State, Regional and local resource.

As a participating agency of the CATF-4, Berkeley Fire Department is required to enter into the new, updated MOA with the City of Oakland Fire Department, the sponsoring agency of the National USAR Response System with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security acting through FEMA and the State of California. Unless USAR teams continue to equip and train per FEMA guidelines, they will not be a part of FEMA's national system and will lose federal government funding. As all USAR teams are first and foremost a local asset, it is imperative to have the ability to respond to WMD, natural disasters, or any other emergency incidents in Berkeley and other local jurisdictions.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Abraham Roman, Interim Fire Chief, (510) 981-5500

Attachments:  
1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM MEMORANDUM  
OF AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF OAKLAND

WHEREAS, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is the federal management agency; and

WHEREAS, the FEMA has been the funding source for 28 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams nationally since the program's inception in the early 1990's; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland, through its Fire Department, has sponsored one of these teams, California Task Force 4 (CATF-4); and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Fire Department is an active member of the CATF-4; and

WHEREAS, the FEMA requires that all 28 USAR teams have a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) outlining the roles and responsibilities of all participants in order to remain in the National USAR program; and

WHEREAS, the FEMA has updated the MOA and requires participants and participating agencies of CATF-4 to enter into new agreements to continue to receive federal cooperative agreement funding; and

WHEREAS, the FEMA USAR funding provides CATF-4 with specialized training and equipment to enhance operational readiness; and

WHEREAS, CATF-4 is a local asset and imperative in its ability to respond to WMD, natural disasters, or any other emergency incidents in Berkeley and other local jurisdictions.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a Memorandum of Agreement and any amendments with the City of Oakland, as the coordinating agency, regarding participation in the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security acting through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the State of California.