



# 2025 Wildfire County Coordinator (CoCo) **PROGRAM EVALUATION BRIEF**

Process and Early Outcomes Covering Q1-Q2 2025

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief summarizes evidence collected and analyzed about early implementation and results of the [2025 Wildfire County Coordinator Program](#). Findings reflect Quarter 1–Quarter 2 progress reporting (through September 30, 2025) and the County Coordinator (CoCo) workshop survey (November 2025). Long-term wildfire resilience outcomes (e.g., homes assessed/hardened) are expected to lag and are not yet directly measurable. Outcome-based reporting will be incorporated in the Program Extension.

## Impact at a Glance (Q1–Q2 2025, through Sept 30, 2025)

- **29** external grant applications approved (Q1–Q2)
- **\$23.24M** in grant dollars received (Q1–Q2)
- **364** wildfire-ready community events held (Q1–Q2)
- **74,659** event participants reached (Q1–Q2)
- **94,853** educational handouts and 1:1 outreach contacts (Q1–Q2)

## Key Findings

**CFSC implementation is strong.** CoCos report high satisfaction with California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) support and timely responses; statewide structures are being used as intended and the reporting system is functioning as a practical learning loop.

**County Coordinators are implementing the local activity set.** CoCos are convening partners, advancing planning and training that supports implementation readiness, strengthening public accountability, and expanding community engagement.

**Early outcomes are visible.** Counties report increased coordination routines, strong resident engagement, and major resource leverage; progress varies mainly by county capacity and timing constraints.

**Constraints are system-level, not misalignment.** The most consistent barriers are staffing/capacity, permitting/(CEQA), funding compliance requirements (eligible costs/local contribution documentation) and county procurement processes and timelines, and partner bandwidth.

## High-Priority Recommendations (for the next cycle)

- Stabilize CoCo capacity as ongoing county infrastructure (multi-year funding horizon; minimize gaps between cycles).
- Reduce predictable administrative and process barriers (misaligned timelines/documentation).
- Treat the CoCo role as integration staffing (support adequate FTE and, where warranted, administration/project support; invest in partner capacity such as local Fire Safe Councils).
- Strengthen shared tools and learning (a practical toolbox of templates and examples; structured peer learning and case spotlights; ensure consistent guidance across CFSC support staff).
- Improve data quality and comparability over time (clear definitions, quarterly vs. cumulative rules, and a small set of outcome-adjacent indicators that can be verified).

# 1. EVALUATION OVERVIEW

**Purpose:** Provide a rigorous, early assessment of (1) how the program is being implemented and (2) what early results are emerging. This is a mid-year snapshot; it emphasizes actionable findings for program improvement and funder decision-making.

**Data sources:** Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 progress reports submitted by County Coordinators and a workshop survey administered to CoCos and related staff. Most evidence is self-reported; IPA did not independently verify all county metrics or grant outcomes.

## 2. FINDINGS — IMPLEMENTATION (PROCESS)

### Finding #1:

#### **CFSC is implementing statewide program infrastructure effectively.**

Evidence indicates CFSC's core statewide functions—grants administration and compliance support, technical assistance, convening and shared learning, common reporting/data expectations, and alignment/oversight—are in place and actively shaping county work.

#### **Selected Evidence (survey + Q1/Q2 reports)**

- **92%** of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with CFSC support (4.4/5); 0% dissatisfied.
- **84.9%** agree/strongly agree CFSC staff respond in a timely way (4.5/5).
- Guidance clarity and consistency are rated solid (about 3.8–3.9/5) with a small minority signaling unevenness.
- Progress reports show CoCos organizing work around CFSC task structure and using reporting prompts to identify specific barriers and support needs (a practical learning loop).

### Finding #2:

#### **CoCos are implementing the local activity set substantially well overall.**

Across counties, CoCos are operating as the local hub—convening partners, advancing planning/training that supports implementation readiness, strengthening local accountability practices, and expanding community engagement. Variation reflects implementation maturity and local conditions more than program intent.

#### **Selected Evidence (survey + Q1/Q2 reports)**

- Survey ratings indicate the program enables cross-agency coordination and supports scaling from community work to countywide impact (both 4.1/5).
- Progress reports document standing coordination forums, CWPP/annex work, training translated into local practice, and public-facing outreach activities.
- County context matters: counties with stronger existing networks and stable staffing move faster; newer or capacity-constrained counties spend more time building foundations.

### Finding #3:

## Implementation is most constrained by system-level barriers.

CoCos are consistent about barriers that slow pace and consistency: staffing/capacity constraints, permitting/CEQA timelines<sup>1</sup>, funding match and procurement requirements, partner bandwidth, and geographic access challenges. These are structural conditions, not signals of program misalignment.

### Selected Evidence (survey)

- Top reported barrier: staffing/capacity **(71%)**.
- Other frequent barriers include funding match/eligibility rules, environmental/permitting constraints, community trust/engagement, and procurement timelines.
- About **40%** rate their top barrier as severe or blocking; over 90% rate it at least moderate.

## 3. FINDINGS — PROGRAM IMPACT (Q1–Q2)

At mid-year, the most defensible impact claims relate to outputs, reach, and early outcomes. Long-term wildfire resilience outcomes will require additional time and measurement design.

### Finding #4:

## The program is producing substantial outputs and reach by mid-year.

Output domain	What we can document now (Q1–Q2)	Notes
<b>Community engagement &amp; outreach</b>	High volumes of resident-facing engagement through events, campaigns, mailers, and online outreach.	Reach counts may include overlap of individuals across channels.
<b>Partner coordination</b>	Multi-agency convening and strengthened/created collaboratives that align priorities and activities.	Statewide de-duplicated partner counts are not yet available.
<b>Planning &amp; readiness</b>	CWPP updates/annex work and planning steps that position counties for fundable projects.	Definitions and maturity vary across counties.
<b>Resource mobilization</b>	Early grant wins and coordinated grant/pipeline activity.	Mid-year totals are partial; pipeline effects continue in later quarters.

<sup>1</sup> Environmental compliance (CEQA) and permitting timelines can be longer than the grant performance period, delaying implementation even when projects are ready to implement.

**Illustrative examples**

- Nevada County demonstrates multi-channel public engagement paired with structured delivery mechanisms (e.g., organized outreach support and tracking), helping sustain engagement beyond one-off events.
- Plumas County Fire Safe Council describes a youth/family preparedness campaign culminating in a large community event with extensive partner participation, illustrating how CoCo coordination can mobilize partners and reach residents at scale.

**Finding #5:**

**Early outcomes are emerging across counties.**

Across counties, early outcomes most visible in Q1–Q2 include stronger coordination routines, increased resident participation in preparedness activities, and improved readiness to pursue and manage larger mitigation and preparedness investments.

**How outputs and outcomes connect**



**Finding #6:**

**Longer-term impacts can be inferred cautiously but are not yet measurable.**

It is too early to measure downstream community wildfire resilience impacts (e.g., homes assessed/hardened). However, Q1–Q2 evidence indicates the program is building coordination capacity, community participation, planning readiness, and investment positioning, conditions widely recognized as necessary precursors to durable mitigation, prevention, preparedness, and resilience gains.

Long-term area	What we see now	What to track next
<b>Mitigation</b>	Coordinated pipelines; CWPP/annex work; grant wins.	Pipeline→funding→implementation conversion; completed work indicators.
<b>Prevention</b>	Expanded outreach; local education; strengthened local organizations and practices	Adoption of prevention behaviors; compliance/voluntary actions
<b>Preparedness</b>	Broad resident engagement; practical outreach formats.	Household preparedness indicators; repeat participation.
<b>Resilience capacity</b>	Standing coordination forums; more durable routines.	Continuity through turnover; partner commitments; governance integration.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CFSC AND STATE PARTNERS

The recommendations below prioritize actions most likely to improve pace, quality, and sustainability, based on repeated patterns in the survey and Q1/Q2 reports.

### 1) Stabilize capacity as ongoing county infrastructure

- Pursue multi-year, rolling funding with minimal gaps between cycles.
- Allow reasonable flexibility for administration, coordination, planning, and engagement while maintaining accountability.

### 2) Reduce predictable administrative and process barriers

- Align performance periods and milestones with common county procurement and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) timelines.
- Provide permitting/procurement/eligibility and cost documentation toolkit (what costs count, how to document contributions when required, and common pitfalls) and office hours or other forms of training with specialists; share sample scopes and documentation packages.

### 3) Strengthen the CoCo role as countywide integrators

- Make the integration function explicit in guidance and onboarding (coordination forums, shared priorities, countywide pipelines).
- Support CoCo full-time equivalent (FTE) and, where warranted, admin/project support; invest in partner capacity (e.g., FSC board/administration support).

### 4) Institutionalize shared tools and peer learning

- Build a practical 'CoCo Toolbox' (templates, reporting examples, outreach materials, and case spotlights).
- Standardize guidance across CFSC support staff to reduce ambiguity and improve consistency.

### 5) Strengthen the evidence base for funders

- Adopt a small set of outcome-adjacent indicators (pipeline readiness, repeat engagement, conversion to funded/implemented work).
- Clarify quarter-only vs. cumulative reporting rules and encourage basic artifact verification where feasible.

## 5. CONCLUSION FOR CFSC AND STATE PARTNERS

The mid-year evidence supports a clear conclusion—the program is generating strong early reach and resource leverage, while building the durable county systems needed for longer-term wildfire resilience outcomes.

