



Kensington Community Services District

February 26, 2026

## **Overview**

The Kensington Ember Exclusion Program (KEEP) is a community wildfire protection and public awareness initiative developed by the Kensington Community Services District (KCSD) to address one of the most significant and often misunderstood wildfire risks: wind-driven embers.

Wildfire research and post-incident assessments consistently show that homes are most often lost when embers enter structures or ignite receptive fuels near homes—creating spot fires that multiply ember production and accelerate fire spread. KEEP is designed to help residents understand this risk and take practical, achievable steps to reduce vulnerability at both the individual household and neighborhood level.

## **Program Purpose and Approach**

KEEP focuses on two core objectives:

- Preventing embers from entering homes, particularly through vents and other openings; and
- Reducing the conditions that generate embers and spot fires, including hazardous vegetation and flammable materials near structures.

At its core, KEEP is an education-first program. The distribution of materials is intentionally used as a catalyst to generate awareness, conversation, and cooperation among neighbors—reinforcing a shared responsibility for community safety.

## **Mesh Distribution Pilot**

As part of its pilot phase, KEEP introduces a vent mesh distribution initiative, supported by \$15,000 in KCSD-approved funding, to provide ember-resistant mesh to qualifying Kensington residents. While not all residents will apply for or receive materials, the program is structured so that all residents benefit from the education, messaging, and awareness generated by the initiative.

To support this pilot in a way that is responsible, sustainable, and transparent, KEEP proposes using a single, integrated platform and product provided by Wildfire Defense Mesh (WDM)—a vendor currently supporting similar municipal programs, including the City of Berkeley.

## **Portal-Based Model**

The Emergency Preparedness Committee and KEEP subcommittee carefully considered multiple program structures. Through these discussions, it became clear that the administrative effort required to manually size, track, order, reimburse, and distribute materials would create a substantial and largely invisible workload—drawing time and attention away from broader emergency preparedness efforts that benefit the entire community.

The portal model:

- Reduces administrative burden on staff
- Creates consistency and fairness in how requests are received and processed
- Allows the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to focus on education, outreach, and preparedness rather than on building a new tool to support this pilot program.

## **Program Development**

KEEP was developed through a subcommittee of the Emergency Preparedness Committee, which conducted research, evaluated options, and held collaborative work sessions to shape this pilot phase. These sessions emphasized practicality, sustainability, and the importance of building a program that can evolve over time rather than overextending resources in its initial launch.

## **Program Scope and Future Expansion**

KEEP is structured as a suite of ember-exclusion and home-hardening topics. While this pilot phase focuses on vent protection, future iterations may expand to include:

- Gutters
- Decks and attached wooden features
- Siding, roofs, and windows
- Other structural vulnerabilities associated with ember intrusion

Potential future outreach and collaboration efforts may include:

- Co-branded educational retail displays developed with Kensington Ace Hardware and Firesafe Kensington (FSK)
- Home-hardening vendor showcase events
- Firewise-led neighborhood gatherings focused on defensible space and home hardening through neighbor-to-neighbor collaboration

## **KCSD Role and Program Boundaries**

KEEP operates under a material-only assistance model. KCSD serves as the program funder and steward but does not provide labor, installation services, warranties, or performance guarantees. Residents are responsible for installation and any related home retrofits.

KCSD does provide neutral education on available options—including information on the advantages and tradeoffs between 1/8-inch and 1/16-inch mesh—so residents can make informed decisions based on their individual circumstances.

## **Implementation Overview**

Following KCSD Board approval, the program will proceed with:

- Launch of a public outreach and education campaign
- Online resident application intake
- Site visits conducted by the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to validate applications
- Subcommittee review and recommendation to advance qualifying applications
- KCSD Board approval of qualifying applicants
- Ordering and distribution of materials
- Follow-up and program reporting

## **Building a Culture of Preparedness**

KEEP complements KCSD's Hazardous Vegetation Removal Reimbursement Program, which has successfully encouraged neighbor-driven action and collaboration across the community. Together, these programs help initiate conversations, reduce wildfire risk, and strengthen community ties—recognizing that wildfire resilience is built not through single actions, but through shared awareness and collective effort.

# Kensington Ember Exclusion Program (KEEP)

## Terms and Conditions

The Kensington Ember Exclusion Program (“KEEP”) is administered by the Kensington Community Services District (“KCSD” or “District”) to reduce wildfire risk by distributing ember-resistant mesh materials to eligible properties within Kensington. Participation in this program is subject to the following terms and conditions.

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### 1. Program Purpose and Scope

KEEP provides ember-resistant metal mesh materials intended solely to reduce the risk of embers entering ventilation openings. The program provides materials only and does not include labor, installation, repairs, inspections, design assistance, or cost reimbursement.

### 2. Eligibility Requirements

1. The subject property must be located within the jurisdictional boundaries of KCSD.
2. The applicant must be the property owner or an authorized representative of the property owner.
3. Materials are limited to existing primary residential structures and ADUs.
4. Participation is limited to one application per parcel, unless otherwise approved by the District.
5. Ineligible Participants:

The following individuals are not eligible to participate in KEEP, either directly or indirectly:

- Members of the KCSD Board of Directors
- Members of the KCSD Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Immediate household members of the above, where participation would result in a direct or indirect benefit or conflict.

### 3. Nature of Assistance – Materials Only

1. KEEP provides mesh materials only.
2. KCSD does not provide labor, installation, retrofits, repairs, measurements, inspections, or code compliance verification.
3. All labor, installation, permits, repairs, additional materials required to complete the installation, and associated costs are the sole responsibility of the property owner.

### 4. Measurement and Installation Responsibility

1. Applicants are solely responsible for:
  - Accurate measurements
  - Proper selection of quantities and specifications
2. KCSD relies exclusively on applicant-submitted information and:
  - Assumes no responsibility for incorrect measurements
  - Improper measurement or installation shall not constitute grounds for additional distribution.

### 5. Material Use Restrictions

1. Materials:
  - Are intended solely for ember exclusion purposes on vents
  - Must be installed only on the approved Kensington parcel
2. Materials may not be sold, transferred, exchanged, or returned for monetary value.
3. KCSD will request verification of installation.

# Kensington Ember Exclusion Program (KEEP)

## Terms and Conditions

### 6. Per-Parcel Limits

1. Mesh distribution per parcel shall not exceed the amount reasonably necessary to cover the existing ventilation openings on the property.
2. KCSD may cap material distribution based on square footage, number of openings, or wildfire exposure.
3. Requests exceeding limits may be reduced or denied, ensuring equitable distribution.

### 7. Funding Availability and Prioritization

1. Applying for this program does not guarantee a material award.
2. Distribution is subject to district-approved budget limits, inventory, and administrative capacity.
3. KCSD reserves the right to prioritize applications that provide the greatest community-wide wildfire risk-reduction benefit, based on factors including, but not limited to, Fire Hazard Severity Zone designation, defensible space conditions, and completion of Zone Zero mitigation measures by the property owner.

### 8. No Warranty; Limitation of Liability

1. KCSD takes no responsibility for the condition of materials.
2. KCSD makes no representation regarding performance, code compliance, or insurance eligibility.
3. KCSD shall not be liable for property damage, personal injury, or wildfire loss.

### 9. Indemnification and Hold Harmless

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the applicant agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless KCSD, its directors, officers, employees, agents, committee members, and volunteers from and against all claims, demands, damages, losses, liabilities, costs, or expenses, including attorneys' fees, arising out of or related to participation in KEEP.

### 10. Program Modification or Termination

KCSD reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate KEEP at any time for funding, policy, or operational reasons.

### 11. Applicant Certification

By submitting the following application, the applicant certifies that all information provided is accurate and agrees to be bound by these Terms and Conditions.



*Kensington Ember Exclusion Program*

***KEEP***

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***COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RESILIENCE***

# CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

01

Increase community awareness of how wind-driven wildfire embers ignite homes—often without direct flame contact.

02

Educate residents on the benefits of installing ember exclusion mesh over soffit, attic and foundation vents.

03

Implement a targeted ember-resistant mesh distribution program to strengthen wildfire resilience.

04

Identify common ember entry points in residential structures to reduce ignition vulnerability.

# PUBLIC MESSAGING

- Embers are the leading cause of home ignition during wildfires. Wind-driven embers can travel long distances and ignite spot fires throughout a community ahead of the main fire.
- When embers enter a home, the risk of structure loss increases dramatically.
- Embers that slip through vents or settle on dry vegetation, debris, or other receptive fuels contribute to structure ignition.



EMBERS CARRIED BY STRONG WINDS

EMBERS CAN TRAVEL SEVERAL MILES AHEAD of the main fire.

SPOT FIRES IGNITE WHEN EMBERS LAND IN DRY GRASS, MULCH, or on DECKS and ROOFS

EMBERS CAN TRAVEL SEVERAL MILES AHEAD of the main fire.

SPOT FIRES CAN RAPIDLY GROW.

# Wind-Driven Wildfires: The Ember Threat

- During wind-driven wildfires, embers can travel several miles ahead of the main fire. When these burning embers land on easily ignitable materials, they create small “spot fires” that allow the wildfire to spread rapidly and unpredictably.
- Most homes do not ignite from direct flames. They ignite when wind-blown embers enter attic or crawlspace vents and start fires inside the structure — often before the main fire ever reaches the property.
- Embers can also ignite dry vegetation, mulch, patio furniture, doormats, and other combustible items around the home. These small ignitions can quickly escalate, making homes far more vulnerable.
- **Understanding the ember threat is the first step in protecting your home.**

# Kensington Ember Exclusion Program (KEEP)

01

KCSD provides funds for mesh, approved \$15,000.

02

KCSD develops the program (resident input through the Emergency Preparedness Committee) and manages the program.

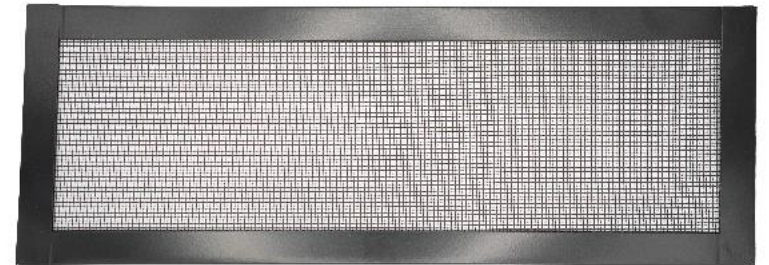
03

KCSD provides guidance to residents, leverages Firesafe Kensington for additional support and guidance.



**WILDFIRE**<sup>TM</sup>  
DEFENSE MESH  
U.S. Patent Pending

- Wildfire Defense Mesh is currently used in Berkeley & Moraga/Orinda
- Listed on the State Fire Marshal's Building Material List
- Is launching a robust community engagement platform for procurement
- Prefabricated with framing
- Black or white mesh choices available





## **NEW PROGRAM LAUNCH: Kensington Ember Exclusion Program (KEEP)**

Wind-driven embers are one of the leading causes of home ignition during wildfires — and now Kensington residents have a new way to reduce that risk.

The Kensington Ember Exclusion Program (KEEP) provides ember-resistant metal mesh materials to help residents protect vulnerable attic and crawlspace vents from ember intrusion.

**Applications open:** April 1, 2026 – May 31, 2026

**Eligibility:** Residential properties within Kensington

**Materials only** (installation is homeowner-managed)

Learn more and apply at:

[www.kensingtonfire.org/keep](http://www.kensingtonfire.org/keep)

# Public Education & Communication

- Mesh sizing pros and cons between 1/8” and 1/16”
- Labor Resources List provided through Firesafe Kensington
- Correct installation ensures a proper seal with fire-resistant caulk
- Residents should do their research on what is the best solution for their needs.
- KEEP provides information to assist residents with their decisions but does not encompass all the choices available.
- There is a growing variety of products available to residents.
- Safety messages: wear protective equipment, ladder safety

# Public Education & Communication

- Outlook ( April 2026)
- Fire Plug (April 2026)
- Email Announcement
- KCSD Newsletter
- Social Media
- Firewise / Firesafe Kensington Network Announcement

# Registration / Application Platform

Content on this page is a mock version of the platform- verbiage subject to change.

The image shows a mockup of a registration page for a wildfire protection program. The page has a dark background with a subtle image of a forest. At the top left, there is a logo for Kensington CA and the text "EVENT HOSTED BY Kensington CA". At the top right, there is a logo for Wildfire Defenders and the text "In official partnership with Wildfire Defenders™". Below the logos, there is a button that says "Community Program Open". The main heading is "Protecting communities from wildfires, together", with "together" in red. Below the heading, there is a paragraph: "Wildfire Defense Mesh is on a mission to empower Kensington, CA with the tools and resources to confront wildfire threats — and strengthen community resilience." To the right of the text is a video player showing a group of diverse people shaking hands, with a play button in the center. Below the video player is the text "Watch: How Community Protection Works". At the bottom left, there is a counter that says "20 Neighbors Joined" and a red button that says "Join Now" with a downward arrow. At the bottom center, there is a small icon of a padlock.

EVENT HOSTED BY  
Kensington CA

In official partnership with Wildfire Defenders™

Community Program Open

## Protecting communities from wildfires, together

Wildfire Defense Mesh is on a mission to empower Kensington, CA with the tools and resources to confront wildfire threats — and strengthen community resilience.

20  
Neighbors Joined

Join Now ↓

Watch: How Community Protection Works



EVENT HOSTED BY  
**Kensington CA**



In official partnership with **Wildfire Defenders™**

TAKE ACTION

# Register Your Home Today

Protect your home and help protect your neighbors.



## Program Open

Registration now open

### ● EVENT DETAILS



Date & Time  
Date TBD



Location  
Kensington, CA

### What You'll Receive

- ✓ Discounted ember-resistant mesh materials
- ✓ Expert installation guidance
- ✓ Protection for your home and neighborhood

## Register Your Home

Enter your details to calculate materials needed.

Step 1 of 3

Contact

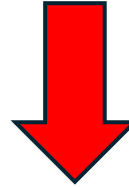
Your Name

Email Address

Phone Number (optional)

# KEEP Development & Launch Timeline

WE ARE HERE



JAN 22

FEB 26

MAR 12



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT



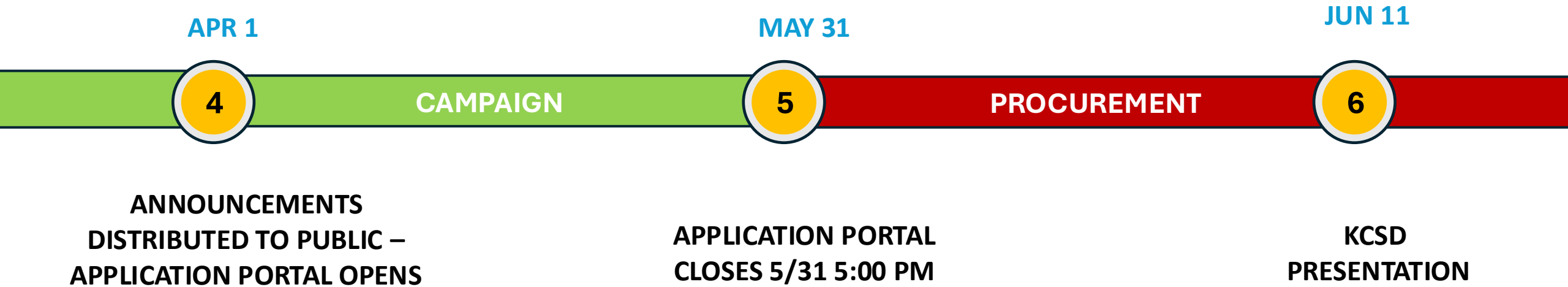
CAMPAIGN

PROGRAM  
"FIRST LOOK"

EP COMMITTEE REVIEW FOR KCSD  
CONSIDERATION

PRESENTATION TO  
KCSD BOARD

# KEEP Development & Launch Timeline



# KEEP Development & Launch Timeline

