



The Case for Code Enforcement Funding

How Budget Cuts Impact California Communities

Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is the “thin line” between orderly development, maintenance of property values and environmental protection, and “land-use anarchy.”

While codes and regulations have been enacted that promote orderly development and neighborhood protection, unless there are professional individuals doing the heavy lifting of enforcement, the door is opened to a deterioration of all the land-based programs and policies that elected officials have worked so hard to put into place to encourage clean, safe and prosperous neighborhoods.

Code Enforcement Officers

Code enforcement professionals, certified by the California Association of Code Enforcement Officers (CACEO), are highly trained and qualified professionals who are required to obtain 16 hours each year of ongoing education to maintain their certification.

This certification ensures the officers are well versed in the rights of entry, officer safety, housing and building codes, vehicle abatement, citation and fine issuance, nuisance abatements, mediation, community development, neighborhood preservation, environmental protection, multi-media taskforce coordination, and many other skills that provide Californians with services that are not appreciated until they no longer exist.

The California Association of Code Enforcement Officers (CACEO), which represents more than 1,200 code enforcement officers throughout California, is a professional organization that promotes code enforcement professionalism, education, legislation, and certification.

The Effect of Budget Cuts on Code Enforcement

While elected officials are slicing the ever-shrinking budget “pie,” the hard-working, highly skilled individuals in code enforcement are **not facing a decrease** in their workloads.

Statewide statistics currently reflect an increase in code enforcement cases.

At the same time, budget cuts have resulted in code enforcement staff reductions as high as 60 percent in some jurisdictions.

“When I started eight years ago, there were about 100 cases and four positions which grew to five in the department. Now there are two of us, and we have 503 cases.”

Todd Barr, Code Compliance Officer, Calaveras County.

As history confirms, when the economy declines, land-based and building violations begin to increase resulting in visual blight, illegal or hazardous structures, and unresolved code infractions due to the high volume of cases.

Frustrated residents place the blame on code enforcement officers who are doing the best they can with limited staff, resources and funding.

It is vital for elected officials to maintain this unique form of public safety enforcement and staff it with individuals who have chosen to dedicate their professional lives to this difficult discipline.

To stave off environmental and neighborhood degradation—issues that have a direct impact to lower property values and more serious property crimes—urge your elected officials to consider increasing your local code enforcement budget rather than cutting it.