



**NORTHERN
SONOMA COUNTY**
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

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Press Release

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Air District launches the Sonoma County Biomass Business Competition

Healdsburg - The Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District is partnering with state and local business and forestry leaders to launch the Sonoma County Biomass Business Competition, or BioBiz.

The competition will award two local entrepreneurs with \$32,500 of startup funds plus select technical support services to implement their winning biomass business concepts.

BioBiz seeks to turn wildfire risk in Sonoma County into an economic development opportunity. Forested areas need widespread and direct attention. The Napa-Sonoma Small Business Development Center, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Sonoma County Economic Development Board, CAL FIRE, Sonoma Clean Power and a coalition of support partners are investing in local entrepreneurs and existing small businesses to launch wood products businesses to incentivize forest health in Sonoma county.

The goal is for the winning projects to actively work with state, local and regional entities to support and provide a high-value end use from excess forest biomass materials. The removal and utilization of biomass will help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and harmful air pollution caused by wildfire smoke.

The competition does not require applicants to provide a completed business plan, but rather a well-thought-out business concept demonstrating that it can achieve necessary criteria for implementation. An interdisciplinary panel of judges will score the submissions and the Napa-Sonoma Small Business Development Center will provide free workshops to help applicants develop their business concepts.

All professionals, age groups and institutions that will operate as a small business are eligible and encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to small businesses operating in Sonoma County. For additional information and to sign up for email updates, visit the BioBiz website at www.Biomass.Biz.

Important BioBiz events begin January 27, 2021, with a series of four free workshops sponsored by the Napa Sonoma Small Business Development Center to help applicants develop a business concept plan. Applicants can sign up for the workshops on the [SBDC website](#). A Request for Proposals will be open to receive business plan submissions from February 1 through March 26, 2021. The competition has two phases of review and awards will be presented in July 2021.

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