



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 5/19/2026

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Executive's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Maggie Luce 707-565-1796, Andrew Sturmfels 707-565-8565

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Designation of Authority to the County Executive's Office to Approve Administrative Policies

Recommended Action:

Authorize and designate the County Executive's Office (CEO) as the approving authority for County administrative policies that are not otherwise required by law or ordinance to be approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Executive Summary:

On February 27, 2024, the Board approved a comprehensive modernization of Sonoma County's leadership structure through the creation of a formal County Executive model. This model strengthens organizational accountability and clarifies executive authority across County operations. As part of implementing this governance structure, staff recommends formal delegation of authority to the County Executive's Office to adopt and approve Countywide administrative policies for departments under the supervision of the County Executive, except in cases where state or federal law, County Code, or Board-adopted policy or ordinance specifically require Board approval.

Discussion:

In 2024, the Board adopted a leadership framework that renamed the County's top administrative role as the County Executive and consolidated strategic leadership responsibilities under this position. The new model clarified reporting relationships, centralized executive oversight of Countywide administrative systems, and strengthened the Board's ability to focus on policy-level decisions while delegating day-to-day operational management to the County Executive.

Under the prior County structure, responsibility for adopting and maintaining administrative policies was not centralized. These policies govern internal operations, business processes, and administrative functions across departments, yet the processes for developing, revising, and approving them have been unclear. Although the Administrative Policy Manual includes more than 40 policies, inconsistent adoption practices and the absence of a defined review structure have left many of the County's administrative policies significantly outdated.

To strengthen the County's administrative operations, staff recommends designating the County Executive's Office (CEO) as the authority responsible for adopting and approving administrative policies for departments under the supervision of the County Executive, except where state or federal law, County Code, or Board-adopted policy or ordinance requires Board approval.

In 2025, the County established two cross-departmental committees to provide strategic oversight and coordination for Countywide administrative policy development. The Administrative Policy Steering Committee is advisory to the County Executive and is responsible for identifying policy needs, reviewing draft policies for consistency and legal compliance, and recommending which policies should be elevated to the Board for approval. The Administrative Policy Review Committee provides structured departmental-level review of draft administrative policies. This Committee evaluates policies for clarity, operational feasibility, and implementation impacts. To date, the Admin Policy Review Committee has reviewed and provided feedback on five new or updated policies. Additionally, the County Executive’s Office launched an online Administrative Policy Hub with training and resources to assist departments in submitting policies to the Review Committee.

Under the proposed structure, both committees will support the CEO’s policy adoption authority through a coordinated review process. Centralizing policy approval with the County Executive, backed by structured input from both committees, will strengthen oversight, promote timely policy updates, and result in standardized policy formats.

Strategic Plan:

This item directly supports the County’s Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

Pillar: Organizational Excellence

Goal: Goal 1: Strengthen operational effectiveness, fiscal reliability, and accountability

Objective: Objective 4: Streamline routine administrative procedures and workflows and delegate more signature authority to department heads in order to re-direct work force resources to more strategic priorities.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

March 21, 2023: Departments and Agencies Appointment and Oversight Structure <<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6065792&GUID=33EB010C-FEDD-4FC9-AE29-3F31FA48D0E7&Options=&Search=>>

March 26, 2024: Sonoma County Code Revision to the County Administrators Duties and Responsibilities <<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6583908&GUID=98569A6F-1B2A-43FB-A2C3-52D60E3E42CD&Options=&Search=>>

April 16, 2024: Ordinance to Modify Sonoma County Code and Revise the County Administrators Duties and Responsibilities <<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6631089&GUID=676F0EF0-734C-424A-9D19-1DA4AB66D574&Options=&Search=>>

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			

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Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

There are no direct fiscal impacts associated with this action.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

There are no direct staffing impacts associated with this action.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A