



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 8/12/2025

To: County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Health Services
Staff Name and Phone Number: Nolan Sullivan, 707-565-4774
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

10:15 A.M. Department of Health Services Fees

Recommended Action:

- A) Adopt a Resolution rescinding Resolutions 25-0330, 25-0331, 25-0332 and 25-0333 establishing new and amended fees to recover the reasonable costs of providing services associated with Animal Services, Environmental Health, Public Health Laboratory, and Driving Under the Influence Program services.
- B) Adopt a Resolution reading the title and waiving further reading of a proposed ordinance titled "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective October 1, 2025, for Sonoma County Animal Services," pursuant to Sonoma County Code Chapter 5, Section 5-4. (First Reading)
- C) Adopt a Resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover the reasonable cost of providing services associated with Environmental Health and Safety for the Department of Health Services, effective September 1, 2025, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325.
- D) Adopt a Resolution reading the title and waiving further reading of a proposed ordinance titled "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective October 1, 2025, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services Public Health Laboratory," pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325. (First Reading)
- E) Adopt a Resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover the projected costs of providing Driving Under the Influence Program services for the Department of Health Services, effective September 1, 2025, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325.

Executive Summary:

On July 8, 2025, the Board adopted Resolutions 25-0330, 25-0331, 25-0332, and 25-0333, to establish new and amended fees to recover the reasonable costs of providing services associated with Animals Services, Environmental Health, Public Health Laboratory, and Driving Under the Influence Program services. However, insufficient Public Hearing Notice was provided, necessitating their rescission. To be consistent with the County's intent to provide proper notice prior to the adoption of all new and amended fees, the Department of Health Services (hereinafter, "DHS" or "the Department") is asking the Board of Supervisors to rescind Resolutions 25-0330, 25-0331, 25-0332, and 25-0333. Moreover, Resolutions 25-0330 and 25-0332 were utilized to establish new and amended fees for Animal Services and Public Health Laboratory services which

were previously established by ordinance. Because fees established by ordinance may only be amended through the adoption of a subsequent ordinance, it is necessary to rescind Resolutions 25-0330 and 25-0332 to allow DHS to propose ordinances that properly establish new and amended fees for these services.

DHS is proposing new and amended fees effective September 1, 2025, for services associated with the Environmental Health and Safety and Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Program services, and October 1, 2025 for services associated with Sonoma County Animal Services and Public Health Laboratory. The Board of Supervisors is authorized to establish fees to recover the reasonable cost of providing certain services. Fees are imposed for a specific benefit conferred or service provided directly to the payor that is not provided to those not charged, and which does not exceed the reasonable cost to provide the benefit or service. Fees are also imposed for reasonable regulatory costs including enforcement inspections, investigations, and audits.

Adding or revising Sonoma County Animal Services and Public Health Laboratory fees requires Board adoption of an ordinance (Attachments 3 and 12). This item includes resolutions to read the title and waive further reading of the proposed ordinances (Attachments 2 and 11). The Department will return to the Board on or after August 26, 2025 for the second reading to request adoption of the ordinance for Sonoma County Animal Services fees and Sonoma County Public Laboratory fees. Fees associated with Environmental Health and the Driving Under the Influence Program may be approved by the Board via adoption of fee resolution (Attachments 9 and 19) and do not require a second reading. As such, these fees may be adopted today and are proposed to be implemented September 1, 2025.

The Board may update fees associated with Environmental Health and the DUI program via adoption of a resolution (Attachments 9 and 19), pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325. Pursuant to Title 9 of the California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, fees associated with DUI Program must also be approved by the California Department of Health Care Services prior to the fee increase going into effect.

Discussion:

Sonoma County Animal Services

Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) provides sheltering and field services to areas within their jurisdiction, including unincorporated areas of the County, the City of Santa Rosa, and the City of Healdsburg. SCAS is also responsible for rabies control for the entire County. SCAS services a geographic area of approximately 1,575 square miles, comprised of nearly 500,000 residents, and includes an animal shelter that serves nearly 2,500 animals annually.

Program Fees

The Department is proposing fee revisions to all SCAS fees. In addition, four new fees have been included in the recommended fees and charges schedule to recover costs and process deposits.

In 2024, the Department engaged Wohlford Consulting to conduct an objective analysis of the full costs incurred by SCAS and associated fees to determine proposed FY 2025-2026 fees (Attachment 7). The studies reviewed annual volumes of each fee, the amount of time spent by staff on each fee activity and the annual costs of each staff member and the unit's overhead costs. During the fee study, it was determined that 70% of SCAS costs were attributed to salaries and benefits, and the remaining 30% to supplies and services. Fees are estimated to match full cost recovery, but the fees recommended to the Board here take into account additional policy considerations such as concerns that if some fees are set too high, this could discourage people from working through county channels for adoptions and reclaiming pets, ultimately resulting in overcrowding and associated costs. Based on the information from the 2024 fee studies, cost recovery is

weighed against affordability and review of fees from other local animal shelters. Maintaining market affordability and encouraging animal owner compliance with applicable laws will supersede full cost recovery in setting some of the fees. While the estimated revenue from setting fees at full cost recovery is \$1,503,014, the estimated revenue based on the proposed fees for FY 2025-2026 is \$639,515, which leaves a gap of \$863,499 in SCAS costs that the proposed fees will not recover. In addition to the SCAS General Fund allocation of \$2,173,837, the FY 2025-2026 Adopted Budget allocates \$542,363 of the Department's non-animal services annual General Fund allocation to cover these costs.

Fee Increases over 3% and New Fees

FY 2025-2026 Fee increases vary between 2% and 43%. Fees recommended for increases above 3% are recommended to recoup actual costs.

Four new fees were added to provide the public with private cremation options for their pets:

- Private Pet Cremations 3-49lbs: \$115.00
- Private Pet Cremations 50-99lbs: \$150.00
- Private Pet Cremations 100+lbs: \$235.00
- Private Pet Cremation Processing: \$17.00

SCAS estimated revenue based on proposed fee amounts is \$639,515, an increase of \$13,031 over current fee estimates.

Environmental Health and Safety

Environmental Health and Safety programs promote health and quality of life by preventing or controlling those diseases that result from interactions between people and the places they live, work, and play. Environmental Health programs employ several strategies to prevent health hazards including education, trend surveillance and analysis, routine inspections, response to citizen tips, sampling and posting, and enforcement where necessary. Environmental Health charges fees to recover its costs to provide services to members of the public who receive permits and benefit from Environmental Health's services. By implementing reasonable fees, Environmental Health ensures the sustainability of programs, supports staff and resources, and creates healthier living environments.

Environmental Health has a fee stabilization fund which was established to shield permit holders from extreme one-time rate increases that may be detrimental to their business operations. California Health and Safety Code authorizes Environmental Health to establish fees for service that cover the cost of services and the reasonable cost to run the program. Proposition 26 requires that all fees being charged to rate payers be for specific services and not services that provide a benefit for the entire community. As of December 2024, the fund balance is \$3,978,676 and has been sourced from penalties, unanticipated revenue, and other cost saving. It can be used to stabilize fees by offsetting costs charged to fees such as staffing, program improvements, education, technology, and other essential environmental health program services. The Department is proposing to utilize the fund balance in FY 2025-2026 to shield environmental health permit holders from the rising costs of providing services.

Program Fees

In 2024, the Department engaged Wohlford Consulting to conduct a comprehensive analysis of user fees for FY 2024-2025 (Attachment 10). The study utilized a unit cost build-up methodology to establish the full cost of

fee activities, considering factors like staff time and associated costs. By projecting annual service volume and revenue at full cost levels, the study ensured accuracy in fee determination.

The hourly rate is the primary factor in calculating Environmental Health service costs; this rate differs from the annual or monthly billing rate for the fee on the schedule. For FY 2025-2026, the full cost recovery hourly rate increased by 2.7% from \$261 to \$268. For FY 2025-2026, the Department is proposing to hold the fees the same as FY 2024-2025 and utilize the fee stabilization fund to cover any gap between revenues and expenditures. The estimated gap for FY 2025-2026 is \$76,970. For the future, the fund balance may continue to be used to offset the cost increases in a phased-in approach to minimize the gap and reduce the impact of full cost recovery rates.

New Fees

Three new fees were added:

- Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation program: \$1,044
- Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation w/waiver: \$688
- Solid Waste Non-Operational Site - 4/year fee: \$5,841

The Department will monitor fiscal impacts due to the new Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation program including the local waiver process allowing a reduced fee to qualifying small businesses and consider any adjustments that may be needed in the future.

For Environmental Health, the fee schedule for FY 2025-2026 (Attachment 9) recommends no fee adjustments due to recommending use of the fee stabilization fund balance.

Public Health Laboratory

The Public Health Laboratory provides clinical, environmental, and rabies testing. These fee-based testing services aid doctors, hospitals, acute care facilities, environmental health agencies, and Sonoma County Animal Services in diagnosing and performing enforcement duties.

Program Fees

The Public Health Laboratory Fee Schedule was last updated for FY 2023-2024. Because no fee increase was implemented in FY 2024-2025, the Department is proposing an approximate 8% increase to most Public Health Laboratory fees. Revised fees are requested to recover increased labor and supply costs that have been determined by Wohlford Consulting's fee study which was completed in 2025 (Attachment 17).

Public Health Laboratory fees (Attachment 15) are set at below full-cost recovery amounts and are subsidized with grants and 1991 Health Realignment funding. The subsidy is not based on a per fee rate, but on the overall Public Health Laboratory cost. In FY 2024-2025, Realignment funding subsidized a budgeted amount of \$727,000. Providing market-rate, subsidized services to the public and non-government organizations allows the Department to recover a portion of the cost of operating the laboratory by performing tests that meet a public benefit.

Fee Increases over 3% and New Fees

Public Health Laboratory fees will see an approximate 8% increase across all categories, due to the results of Wohlford Consulting's cost study. This includes substantial increases in the Clinical Molecular Laboratory, which will see a 31% increase in the Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2/Flu/RSV fee, correcting a prior fee calculation

error.

New Fees

Other significant fee additions include new tests for Matrix Assisted Laser Desorption/Ionization-Time of Flight (MALDI-TOF) Identification for bacterial and mycobacterial organisms, a variety of CDC Human Influenza panels, and wastewater surveillance services, such as SARS-CoV-2 and respiratory panels, along with sequencing services. Additionally, the Brucella species RT-PCR test, previously exempt under Biothreat Agent testing, will now be fee-based under the Clinical Molecular Laboratory because Brucella was removed from the Select Agent List.

Other new fees introduced cover specialized areas like algal toxin testing, with fees for Microcystins, Cylindrospermin, and Anatoxin-a; this is a new service being offered at the Sonoma County Public Health Laboratory. There are also new charges for tick identification (historically, a complementary service rolled into the Tick Test for Lyme), wastewater surveillance bundles (new service), and bacterial pathogen sequencing (new service). Some existing tests have been updated or removed, such as the Herpes Simplex Virus RT-PCR, and the Influenza assays have been replaced with those capable of detecting Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. These changes will impact several public health areas, including environmental health, clinical diagnostics, and emergency preparedness, generating new revenue streams across various laboratory services.

The overall increase in revenue for FY 2025-2026 Public Health Laboratory services is estimated at \$36,720.

Additional information specific to Public Health Laboratory fees is available in Attachment 16.

Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Program

The Department's DUI program is a state mandated program which includes court-referred programs for individuals convicted of driving under the influence offenses. Each year the DUI program serves approximately 3,300 distinct clients. The goal of the DUI program is to reduce the likelihood a client will experience further DUI violations. Program components are designed to provide structured education, prevention, and monitoring to assist in identifying and resolving alcohol or other drug related problems.

The Department's DUI program includes a 3-, 6-, and 9-month First Offender programs, an 18-month Multiple Offender program, and a 6-week Wet-and-Reckless program (a lesser charge usually applied in the case of reckless driving with a measurable amount of alcohol in the system).

Program Fees

In FY 2024-2025, the Department contracted Wohlford Consulting to conduct an analysis of the costs associated with DUI Program services and to determine proposed FY 2025-2026 fees (Attachment 21). This proposed fee increase has been developed in accordance with California law governing services to persons convicted of driving while under the influence of alcohol and other drugs (CCR Title 9, Division 4, Chapter 3).

The Department is requesting approval of a 35% increase to the current DUI Program fee structure (five fees total) as outlined in Attachment 19, to recover the reasonable cost of providing DUI program services. The proposed 35% fee increase for the DUI Program will be paid solely by clients who enroll after the new rates take effect. These clients, mandated to complete the program as part of regaining or retaining their driver's licenses following DUI convictions, fund approximately 65% of the program's costs through fees. While clients on General Assistance pay a reduced rate of \$5 per month, others pay between 20-50% at intake, with the remainder covered through payment plans adjusted for financial need. The increased fees will be used to offset rising expenses, including significant increases in staff salaries and benefits, higher operational and

facility costs, and expanded technology requirements for virtual service delivery.

The California Code of Regulations, Title 9, mandates explicitly that Driving-Under-the-Influence (DUI) programs must be self-sustaining and fully funded by participant fees. According to **Title 9, Section 9846(a)**: “The program shall be funded by participant fees only. The fees shall be based upon the actual cost of providing the program, including, but not limited to, staff salaries and benefits, program administration, space, equipment, and supplies.”

This regulation prohibits the use of county general funds or other external funding sources to subsidize DUI program operations. All direct and indirect costs, including staffing, facilities, administrative support, materials, and technology, must be covered by the fees paid by participants. Currently, our DUI program fees do not generate sufficient revenue to meet these operational requirements. This results in a structural deficit that places the County at risk of non-compliance with Title 9. To ensure regulatory compliance and program sustainability, a fee adjustment is necessary.

Maintaining compliance with Title 9 is not optional. If participant fees are not aligned with the full cost of service delivery, the program will be financially unsustainable and out of compliance with state law. Therefore, the proposed fee increase is not discretionary; it is a regulatory requirement to ensure our program remains in good standing with the Department of Health Care Services and continues to serve our community.

Fee Increases over 3% A comprehensive cost analysis for the DUI program has not been done in years, despite steadily rising expenses driven by inflation, a shortage of certified Alcohol & Other Drugs (AOD) counselors, and increased charges from the State Department of Health Care Services. Between 2019 and 2024, salaries for key staff roles rose, and by 2024, personnel costs made up 83% of all program expenses. Additional cost pressures stem from increased DUI caseloads and investments in essential tools like virtual service software and updated curricula. Wohlford Consulting’s fee study (see Attachment 21), which detailed the costs of service delivery and determined full cost recovery fees-figures that exceed those currently proposed due to policy and affordability considerations. As shown in Attachment 19, the Department’s recommended 35% fee increase will not fully close the funding gap, which reached over \$1 million in FY 2023-2024, but will raise \$621,670 in additional revenue. For FY 2025-2026, projected revenues of \$2.75 million still fall short of the \$3,914,470 in estimated program costs, with the remaining deficit of \$1,161,359 to be covered by existing General Fund allocations.

Total increased revenue associated with the proposed adjustments to DUI Program services is expected to be \$621,670. Total revenue due to DUI Program fees is expected to be \$2,753,111.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

On July 8, 2025, the Board of Supervisors adopted resolutions establishing new and amended fees for Sonoma County Animal Services, Environmental Health, the Public Health Laboratory and the Driving Under the Influence Program. Today’s actions will rescind this adoption and replace it.

On May 14, 2024, the Board adopted an Ordinance titled “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, Adopting New Fees and Adjusting Fees Effective July 1, 2024, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Animal Services.”

On March 26, 2024, the Board adopted a resolution reading the title and waiving further reading of a proposed ordinance titled “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, Adopting New Fees and Adjusting Fees Effective July 1, 2024, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Animal Services” and adopted a resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover the reasonable cost of providing services associated with Environmental Health and Safety for the Department of Health Services, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325, effective July 1, 2024.

On April 19, 2022, the Board adopted an ordinance titled “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, Adopting New Fees and Adjusting Fees Effective July 1, 2022 for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services Public Health Laboratory and Animal Services.”

On July 12, 2016, the Board adopted a resolution establishing new and amended fees to recover projected costs of providing Driving Under the Influence Program services for the Department of Health Services effective July 12, 2016.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$671,421	\$671,421	\$671,421
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$671,421	\$671,421	\$671,421
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$671,421	\$671,421	\$671,421
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$671,421	\$671,421	\$671,421

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The fee adjustments included in this item are estimated to net to \$671,421 in additional revenue. Total forecasted revenues for Sonoma County Animal Services is \$639,515, Environmental Health is \$7,686,487, Clinical Laboratory is \$345,894, and Driving Under the Influence is \$2,753,111 for a total of \$11,425,007.

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

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Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Resolution rescinding Resolutions 25-0330, 25-0331, 25-0332 and 25-0333

Sonoma County Animal Services

Attachment 2 - Animal Services Resolution

Attachment 3 - Animal Services Ordinance - Clean

Attachment 4 - Animal Services Ordinance - Redlined

Attachment 5 - Animal Services Pre-Adoption Summary

Attachment 6 - Animal Services Fee Chart

Attachment 7 - Animal Services Fee Study Report

Environmental Health

Attachment 8 - Environmental Health Resolution

Attachment 9 - Environmental Health Fee Chart

Attachment 10 - Environmental Health Fee Study Report

Public Health Laboratory

Attachment 11 - Public Health Laboratory Resolution

Attachment 12 - Public Health Laboratory Ordinance - Clean

Attachment 13 - Public Health Laboratory Ordinance - Redlined

Attachment 14 - Public Health Laboratory Pre-Adoption Summary

Attachment 15 - Public Health Laboratory Fee Chart

Attachment 16 - Public Health Laboratory Additional Fee Information

Attachment 17 - Public Health Laboratory Fee Study Report

Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Program

Attachment 18 - DUI Resolution

Attachment 19 - DUI Program Fee Chart

Attachment 20 - DUI Fee Study Additional Information

Attachment 21 - DUI & Treatment Accountability for Safe Communities Program Fee Study Report

Attachment 22 - Presentation

Attachment 23 - Public Notice

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

None