



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 12/9/2025

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): University of California Cooperative Extension

Staff Name and Phone Number: Lauren Cartwright, 707-328-7596

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Local Agreement Renewal for the Provision of the University of California Cooperative Extension Program in Sonoma County

Recommended Action:

Authorize the County Executive Officer to execute the updated Local Agreement with the Regents of the University of California Cooperative Extension for the Provision of the University of California Cooperative Extension Program in Sonoma County effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2030.

Executive Summary:

On January 24, 2017, with approval by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, the County Administrative Officer executed the third and current Memorandum of Understanding (Local Agreement) with the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) for continued operation of Cooperative Extension programs in Sonoma County. The updated agreement primarily clarifies the role and responsibilities of the newly established UC Cooperative Extension Area Director leadership model.

Through this long-standing partnership - mirrored in every county across California - UCCE researchers and educators provide locally relevant, science-based research and educational programs that help residents address challenges and create opportunities in agriculture, natural resources, community health, and youth development.

The current MOU expires on December 31, 2025. Renewal will reaffirm the County's partnership with the Regents of the University of California and support continued collaboration in advancing research-based solutions that align with both local priorities and the University of California's broader vision for sustainable, thriving communities.

For reference, as of the adopted FY 2025-26 County Budget, the Board of Supervisors support the UCCE with \$1,444,148 which covers 6.0 FTE position allocations, dedicated office space, equipment and supplies, and county vehicles, which enable UCCE employees to execute programs and conduct official business in Sonoma County.

Discussion:

Section 32330 of the California Education Code authorizes County Boards of Supervisors to appropriate County funds for the support and maintenance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics in

cooperation with the Regents of the University of California for the benefit of their respective counties.

On May 16, 1967, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 19317, requesting that the University of California establish a Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service (now referred to as the UC Cooperative Extension, or UCCE) in Sonoma County. Subsequently, on June 9, 1967, the Board approved and executed the first Memorandum of Understanding (now referred to as the Local Agreement) establishing Cooperative Extension Services within the County. A second local agreement was approved on January 24, 2017.

For more than five decades, this partnership between the County of Sonoma and the Regents of the University of California has provided vital, science-based programs that address local challenges and opportunities in agriculture, natural resources, community health, and youth development. Through this cooperative framework, local needs are met with university expertise, ensuring that the benefits of UC research and education extend directly to residents, producers, and communities across Sonoma County.

UCCE programs draw upon the statewide network of UC researchers and specialists to deliver practical, evidence-based solutions that improve agricultural productivity, steward natural resources, enhance resilience to wildfire and climate impacts, and foster youth leadership. Locally, UCCE administers major programs in Local Food Systems, Integrated Pest Management, Livestock and Natural Resources, Dairy, Fire Science, Specialty Crops, and Viticulture. UCCE also manages two large and thriving volunteer programs - 4-H Youth Development and Master Gardeners - and is working to further strengthen and expand its existing Master Food Preservers program. These programs collectively advance education, health, and community engagement throughout the County.

As the current agreement approaches expiration, staff have conducted a comprehensive review of the document and recommend approval of a renewed Local Agreement with the Regents of the University of California. The updated agreement primarily clarifies the role and responsibilities of the newly established UC Cooperative Extension Area Director leadership model.

The Area Director serves as the University's designated representative responsible for local programmatic and administrative decision-making. This individual leads the UC Cooperative Extension Department within the County and is the primary point of contact for all matters related to the Local Agreement. The Area Director provides leadership and oversight for UCCE programs across Sonoma, Marin and Napa Counties, operating within a regional framework designed to coordinate research-based education while remaining responsive to local priorities. The Area Director's time is proportionally allocated across the three counties based on programmatic priorities, staffing levels, and administrative responsibility. While the specific allocation may fluctuate throughout the year to meet shifting needs, the general distribution is approximately 50% in Sonoma County, 35% in Marin County and 15% in Napa County. The 50% allocation for Sonoma County reflects several key factors, including that the Area Director is headquartered in Sonoma County; the County's larger employee headcount (16.0 full-time equivalents, comprising 10.0 UC and 6.0 Sonoma County position allocations); the scope of local programs; and historical alignment with the previous County Director's 50% time allocation.

Sonoma County benefits from this regional leadership model through:

- Improved coordination and alignment of regional program delivery, staffing strategies, and joint

funding opportunities;

- Strengthened cross-county collaboration, fostering innovation, operational efficiency, and enhanced community engagement and impact; and
- Provision of consistent regional leadership for all academic, programmatic, and administrative personnel to ensure coordinated and efficient use of resources, compliance with applicable policies, and effective delivery of applied research and extension programs.

In addition to an Area Director, the University of California also provides and funds university academics and other personnel, currently ten full-time equivalents, for the operation of UCCE in Sonoma County. In turn, Sonoma County staff, currently six full-time equivalents, provide programmatic, administrative, and other assistance to UCCE. Sonoma County also provides office space, equipment, supplies, and fleet services.

Renewing this Local Agreement reaffirms the County's commitment to collaborative, science-driven problem-solving through Cooperative Extension. It ensures continued access to the statewide resources of the University of California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) and positions Sonoma County to benefit from emerging research and innovation guided by UC ANR's Strategic Vision 2040 - a framework that emphasizes sustainable food systems, healthy environments, thriving communities, and equitable access to knowledge. By maintaining this cooperative partnership, the County and the University of California will continue to jointly address local and regional needs while contributing to the long-term resilience and prosperity of Sonoma County.

With the Board of Supervisors' approval, the renewed Local Agreement will be effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2030, with the option to extend for an additional five (5) years with written approval of both parties.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

1. January 24, 2017 - Updated Local Agreement with the Regents of the University of California Cooperative Extension for the Provision of the University of California Cooperative Extension Program in Sonoma County
2. May 24, 1994 - Renewed Memorandum of Understand for Agricultural Extension Service
3. June 9, 1967 - Established Agricultural Extension Service in Sonoma County

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$1,444,148		
Additional Appropriation Requested			

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Total Expenditures	\$1,444,148		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$1,444,148		
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$1,444,148		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The proposed Local Agreement includes \$1,444,148 of existing general fund appropriations in the adopted FY 25-26 budget, which allows both County and UC staff to execute programs and conduct official business in Sonoma County. General fund appropriations cover 6.0 FTE position allocations, dedicated office and warehouse space, equipment and supplies, and county vehicle access and usage.

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

- A. Local Agreement between the Regents of the University of California Cooperative Extension and Sonoma County
- B. 2025 County Spotlight Report

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

None.