



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 2/25/2025

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**To:** Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Sonoma County Water Agency  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Kristine Loomis 707-524-1165  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Maintenance and Development of E-Commerce and Association Management Software for Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper Program

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to execute the First Amended and Restated Agreement for Maintenance and Development of E-Commerce and Association Management Software for QWEL Program with Community Servers, Inc., in substantially the form as the draft presented to this Board. The amended agreement expands the scope of work to include development of an e-commerce database and web portal and fee collection for no additional cost to Sonoma Water and no change to end date of June 30, 2025.
- B) Adopt a Resolution establishing QWEL Program professional certification annual renewal fees for the Sonoma County Water Agency effective February 25, 2025.
- C) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to adjust the professional certification annual renewal fee charged to QWEL Certified Professionals, as needed.
- D) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to accept fees collected by Community Servers, Inc. in association with the QWEL Program.

**Executive Summary:**

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) is expanding its Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) Program (Program) database to include the collection of fees from certified professionals. To help offset the increased Program costs, ongoing participation in the Program will be fee-based and require continuing education units (CEU) to maintain status as a QWEL Certified Professional. This item requests authorization for Sonoma Water to amend the agreement with Community Servers, Inc. (Consultant) to accommodate these Program changes and accept fees collected for participant certification renewals for the Program.

**Discussion:**

**HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND**

The Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership's (Partnership) QWEL Program is recognized as a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense labeled Professional Certification Program. Sonoma Water administers the QWEL Program on behalf of the Partnership.

Organizations that adopt the QWEL Program and are approved are eligible to promote the QWEL Program as a WaterSense labeled Professional Certification Program. Irrigation professionals certified through an approved

QWEL Program are listed on the WaterSense website as Certified Professionals. Certified Professionals are required to complete and submit CEUs annually to maintain their certification status in the program.

In 2017, Sonoma Water upgraded its QWEL Program database to accommodate the growth of the Program, including tracking and organizing the expanding participant information. This work included website and database development, maintenance, and website hosting. As the Program has continued to expand, the Partnership concluded that a nominal certification renewal fee of \$20 dollars annually, collected from QWEL Certified Professionals when submitting CEU requirements, would help to offset maintenance costs.

For the Program to accept fees from its participants, website and database development for e-commerce is required.

Sonoma Water and Consultant first entered into an agreement for maintenance and development of association management software for the QWEL Program, dated July 1, 2023, in the amount of \$50,000.

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

A competitive selection process for the original agreement was not completed because the database originally developed for Sonoma Water's QWEL Program is a proprietary application developed by Consultant exclusively for Sonoma Water and requires a maintenance agreement to continue operation. The sole source was within Sonoma Water's General Manager's authority.

### **SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED**

Under the amended agreement, Consultant will continue to provide monthly website hosting, maintenance, and development as requested by Sonoma Water, as well as develop e-commerce software for online fee collection on behalf of the Partnership and distribute the fees to Sonoma Water.

This First Amended and Restated Agreement expands the scope of work to include added services and the collection of Program fees, with no change to the term end date of June 30, 2025. There is no additional cost to Sonoma Water.

Board authorization is needed for Sonoma Water to receive fees collected under the expanded scope of work.

Under the amended agreement, the General Manager shall have the ability to extend the term of the agreement for up to two additional years by providing written notice to the other party thirty days in advance of the expiration date. The extension shall be formalized in an amended agreement or amendment signed by the parties.

### **County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment:**

N/A

### **Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment**

Goal 3: Environmental Stewardship

Strategy 3.4: Provide regional leadership in salmonid species recovery and improving watershed health through partnerships on technical and policy-related initiatives

Action 3.4.3: Continue to provide technical support to regional partners through drought response activities.

The QWEL course dedicates an entire section on Sustainable Landscaping practices which includes a

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thoughtful approach to watershed health and endangered species protection, including but not limited to the protection of salmonid species.

Goal 6: Community engagement

Strategy 6.2: Build collaborative partnerships, trust, and long-term relationships with the community through proactive communication and education

Action 6.2.3: Continue partnerships with organizations such as Russian River Watershed Association and Sonoma Clean Power to provide education programs to students outside Sonoma Water’s water supply service area.

The QWEL program has a reach that goes beyond the Sonoma Water service area and has made valuable connections and relationships with outside organizations and municipal partners.

**Racial Equity:**

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

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

N/A

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY24-25 Adopted</b>	<b>FY25-26 Projected</b>	<b>FY26-27 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>			

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

No additional appropriations are required.

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

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**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: Amended Agreement with Community Servers, Inc.

Attachment 2: Resolution to Establish Fees for QWEL Program

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

None.