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**Proposed Principles for Safety Net Programs**


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<b>Setting Priorities</b>	
<b>The Board shall:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop priorities in consultation with the Departments</li> <li>2. Respond to questions and seek input from constituents regarding policy priorities</li> </ol>	<b>The Departments shall:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Provide input to the Board on what policies will most benefit Sonoma County residents</li> <li>4. Develop and share with the Board a roadmap of how they plan to achieve the policy priorities set out by the Board</li> <li>5. Provide a strategy to serve all regions and communities according to their need</li> </ol>

<b>Funding Recommendations</b>	
<b>The Board shall:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Work with Departments to determine the funding sources and amounts necessary to achieve the stated policy priorities</li> <li>7. Follow established Federal, State, and County laws and regulations related to procurement and recommend use of non-competitive processes only when appropriate</li> <li>8. Review the proposed contracts brought forward by the Departments and approve when appropriate, subject to the Board's ultimate authority regarding contract award</li> <li>9. Encourage vendors to follow the County's processes for obtaining a contract</li> <li>10. Refer requests for funding for specific vendors to the relevant Department(s)</li> <li>11. Support efforts to streamline contracting and procurement processes countywide</li> <li>12. Follow established protocols for rapidly distributing emergency funding in response to a crisis or natural disaster</li> </ol>	<b>The Departments shall:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Provide input to the Board as to the funding levels needed to achieve their priorities</li> <li>14. Follow established County procurement protocols to ensure they are creating a fair, open, and competitive process for selecting vendors to provide services</li> <li>15. Follow established County procurement protocols for when to use alternatives to competitive procurement such as sole sourcing</li> <li>16. Provide the Board with regular reports on spending, broken out by priority and regional needs when possible</li> </ol>

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<b>Contract Management and Implementation</b>	
<b>The Board shall:</b> 17. Support countywide efforts to promote better performance management 18. Refer questions from providers regarding management practices to the Departments 19. Review and respond to performance reports provided by the Departments	<b>The Departments shall:</b> 20. Track the performance of providers against the pre-specified outcome metrics 21. Identify underperforming providers and contracts and, at the discretion of the department, provide feedback and direction in order to help them improve their performance 22. Highlight successes and best practices from high performing providers 23. Provide the Board with regular performance reports that include progress on outcome metrics and performance indicators, broken out by policy priority, region, and other subgroupings of interest to the extent available

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### Board of Supervisors Principles – Setting Priorities

1. **Develop priorities in consultation with the Departments:** One of the Board’s primary roles is to set the overall policy and priorities for the County. Priorities could include policy items such as reducing homelessness or food insecurity, and administrative items such as supporting the development of small local providers. The Departments should play a key role in this process, given their knowledge of the situation on the ground and subject area expertise. The Departments recommend that the Board create an annual “ranking” of their priorities based on input from the Departments to help guide decisions about how to allocate funding.
2. **Respond to questions and seek input from constituents and other stakeholders regarding policy priorities:** In addition to the Departments, constituents and other stakeholders such as community providers can provide valuable insights as to challenges facing the community. The Board will serve as the primary conduit for community engagement, and will review community input with the Departments to help shape policy priorities.

### Department Principles – Setting Priorities

3. **Provide input to the Board on what policies will most benefit Sonoma County residents:** The Departments will provide the Board with information on the needs of Sonoma County residents and their recommendations as to what should be prioritized in the next budget. To the extent the data is available, Departments will provide the Board with information about the County’s overall expenditure on priorities.
4. **Develop and share with the Board a roadmap of how they plan to achieve the policy priorities set out by the Board:** The Departments will share their plan and roadmap for how the services they suggest will lead to better outcomes for Sonoma County residents. This will help the Board better understand the strategic vision of the Departments.
5. **Provide a strategy to serve all regions and communities according to their need:** The Departments agree to develop a plan that will ensure that residents throughout the county have reasonable and appropriate access to the resources and programs necessary to help them thrive, with the understanding that services in remote parts of the county may look different from the services in more urbanized parts of the county due to the availability and capacity of providers and/or the available funding and staffing resources available to the Departments.

### Board of Supervisors Principles – Funding Recommendations

6. **Work with Departments to determine the funding sources and amounts necessary to achieve the stated policy priorities:** The Board is responsible for making funding appropriations, and should do so in consultation with the Departments to make sure they are fully informed as to the requirements and limitations of how different funding streams (including state and federal dollars) can be used, and where there might be gaps that

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County funds could fill. In the event that a given program or initiative does not utilize all of its budget allocation toward the end of a fiscal year, the Board will endeavor to rely on the expert judgment of the Departments to determine how any excess funds should be utilized.

**7. Follow established Federal, State, and County laws and regulations related to procurement and recommend use of non-competitive processes only when appropriate:**

The Board will review and adhere to the established Federal, State, and County laws and regulations that govern the procurement process. Compliance with these laws and regulations is recognized as the best means of creating a fair, open, and competitive procurement process. The Board will recommend that the Departments utilize non-competitive procedures only in the circumstances described in the existing Sonoma County purchasing policies and procedures. These include but are not limited to:

- A needed service is available from only one contractor, and for the purchase of service there is no comparable competition (sole source)
- Continuity of service is less costly and/or beneficial to the County
- The purchase of a service where circumstances require a local service provider, which limits or eliminates competition
- Acceptable services are rendered by another governmental agency's service agreement
- An interim agreement is needed while the department is preparing for a competitive process

In the event that there is disagreement among Board members as to whether a given situation should be pursued through a non-competitive process, the Board will hold an informal vote with a 4/5<sup>th</sup> threshold required to move forward with the non-competitive process.

**8. Review the proposed contracts brought forward by the Departments and approve when appropriate, subject to the Board's ultimate authority regarding contract award:**

As has been standard practice in the County, the Departments bring forward to the Board for consideration the set of contracts they are planning to award to achieve the Board's priorities. One of the Board's responsibilities in the procurement process is to review and consider for approval contracts that are brought forward by the Departments. This is the primary mechanism by which the Board should engage in conversations regarding specific providers.

**9. Encourage vendors to follow the County's processes for obtaining a contract:** The Departments will identify the set of providers that can deliver on the Board's strategic priorities through a competitive procurement process or through a non-competitive recommendation when appropriate and otherwise permitted by law. The Board will endeavor to encourage vendors to follow the County's established procurement processes, to refrain from seeking funding outside of the standard process, and to comply with all laws and regulations. This will help increase the efficacy and integrity of the Departments'

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strategic plans for achieving the Board's priorities, and reduce uncertainty among providers as to how to obtain funding.

The County has established protocols to award special case contracts outside of the ordinary procurement process, such as through sole sourcing or in emergency situations. The Board will review and adhere to these policies, and endeavor to avoid off-cycle procurements.

- 10. Refer requests for funding for specific vendors to the relevant Department(s):** In some cases, the Board may be approached by individual vendors or community members with requests for funding. To preserve the integrity of the County's procurement process, contract award process and Departments' strategic plans, the Board will in general refer any questions on funding for specific vendors or projects to the relevant Departments. When appropriate, Department staff will work with the vendor or community members to understand the request and analyze the available options, and bring a recommendation to the Board at a future Board meeting, acknowledging that in some circumstances Departments may recommend not to move forward, or to utilize a different vendor or strategy from the one originally presented to the Board.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board shall refrain from making any decisions on allocating additional funding until a future noticed meeting so that there is time for staff to analyze and make public the proposed funding request.

Upon approval of these principles, the Departments will propose and work with the Board to develop a protocol for how these referrals should work to ensure the Board members are appropriately aware of the conversations that happen.

- 11. Support efforts to streamline contracting and procurement processes countywide:** As part of efforts to make the contracting process fair, open, efficient, and transparent, changes to established contracting and procurement protocols may occasionally be necessary. When possible and appropriate, the Board agrees to work with County Purchasing and the Departments to make reasonable changes to county procurement requirements to improve the overall procurement experience.

- 12. Follow established protocols for rapidly distributing emergency funding in response to a crisis, natural disaster, or other emergency:** In times of crisis, it may be necessary to push funds quickly out to vendors on a timeline faster than the standard procurement process. The Board will review and adhere to the established policies for emergency procurement, and consult with the Departments and other county procurement officials to ensure that they are following purchasing protocols that will allow the County to leverage State and Federal emergency relief funding.

Existing County policies define an emergency as "an unforeseen situation in which there is a breakdown of County service that requires immediate action be taken to restore such service, in order to avoid serious and adverse consequences affecting the life, health, welfare, or property of the citizens of Sonoma County. Emergency purchases/services are not valid for urgencies resulting from a lack of planning and organization." In the event that

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there is disagreement among Board members as to whether a given situation constitutes an emergency, the Board will hold an informal vote with a 4/5<sup>th</sup> threshold required to determine an emergency.

#### **Department Principles – Funding Recommendations**

- 13. Provide input to the Board as to the funding levels needed to achieve their priorities:** The Departments agree to lend their policy area expertise and knowledge of the situation on the ground to help inform decisions as to what programs and funding levels are necessary to achieve the Board's priorities.
- 14. Follow established county procurement protocols to ensure they are creating a fair, open, and competitive process for selecting vendors to provide services:** The Departments shall adhere to established county procurement protocols and promote a fair, open, efficient, and competitive procurement process. This includes advertising Request for Proposal (RFP) opportunities broadly, writing RFPs in a manner that reduces administrative burden to the extent allowable and practicable, spelling out clear scoring criteria in the RFP, creating mechanisms to fairly incorporate past performance of providers into procurement decisions, and creating review panels that include representatives from external departments to reduce potential inadvertent biases. The Departments will endeavor to conduct procurements on regular schedules to improve the ability of vendors to engage in long term planning.
- 15. Follow established county procurement protocols for when to use alternatives to competitive procurement such as sole sourcing:** In some cases, competitive procurements may not be the most appropriate mechanism to identify a vendor. This could include contracts for specialty services where there are few qualified applicants, or services that need to be purchased quickly in response to a crisis or emergency. The Departments shall adhere to established county protocols for non-competitive procurements, and restrict the use of non-competitive procurements to only those scenarios that fall under the established criteria (or where otherwise allowed by law).
- 16. Provide the Board with regular reports on spending, broken out by priority and region when possible:** The Departments shall provide the Board with regular updates on how and where funds are being spent, and progress towards achieving the Board's priorities. These reports will show the spending and activities associated with the different priorities identified by the Board, and spending by regional needs to help address questions of fairness. The Departments acknowledge that some information may not be available at the priority or region level due to data constraints and budgeting practices.

#### **Board of Supervisors Principles – Contract Management and Implementation**

- 17. Support countywide efforts to promote better performance management:** County Purchasing and the Departments are the key partners essential for ensuring performance

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management of providers. The Board will support countywide efforts to improve performance management systems, which may include lending support for decisions to sanction or reduce funding of providers that routinely underperform even after receiving feedback and guidance. Dedicated funding may also be necessary to build out a robust, countywide performance management system.

**18. Refer questions from providers regarding management practices to the Departments:**

Providers may approach the Board directly with questions about performance management practices or decisions. The Board will in general refer questions from providers, especially when they pertain to the specific circumstances of an individual provider or set of providers, to the Departments. Upon approval of these principles, the Departments will propose and work with the Board to develop a protocol for how these referrals should work to ensure the Board members are appropriately aware of the conversations that happen.

**19. Review and respond to performance reports provided by the Departments:** The Board agrees to review performance reports provided by the Department, and provide input and reactions when needed. This will ensure that the Board is aware of and aligned with the Departments on any performance issues, and give the Board a forum to discuss performance improvement plans with the Departments.

### Department Principles – Contract Management and Implementation

**20. Track the performance of providers against the pre-specified outcome metrics:** The Departments will work with County Purchasing to establish a standardized, countywide system for measuring the performance of providers against a set of predetermined process indicators and outcome metrics. These metrics will be developed with appropriate input from providers, and may be written into future contracts. Upon approval of these principles, the Departments will work with County Purchasing and the Board to develop a process for developing outcome metrics for contracts, giving proper consideration to the metrics required by state and federal regulations.

**21. Identify underperforming providers and contracts and, at the discretion of the department, provide feedback and direction in order to help them improve their performance:** By tracking the performance of providers, the Departments will be able to determine which providers and contracts are underperforming relative to expectations and contract requirements. The Departments will focus on two types of challenges: implementation, and impact. Implementation challenges will explore whether the provider's program model has been implemented with fidelity, if the provider has the right staffing levels, whether referrals and handoffs are being made in a timely and effective manner, and other operational questions. Impact challenges will explore whether the contracted services that were provided (assuming they were implemented with fidelity) actually resulted in better outcomes for service recipients. The goal of the Departments is to provide efficient services that deliver excellent outcomes at a reasonable cost.

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When appropriate, the Departments will work with providers to better understand downward trends in performance and develop corrective action plans, with the understanding that in some cases underperformance may be caused by factors outside of the control of the provider. The Departments will also explore how county policies may be contributing to underperformance, and develop plans for internal process improvements to increase performance. When necessary, the Departments will also suggest policy changes to the Board that could help improve performance.

When appropriate, the Departments will endeavor to help underperforming providers improve by developing corrective action plans and recommending to them to technical assistance resources. In the event of significant or persistent underperformance, the Departments may choose to reduce or reallocate funding during the next contract renewal or procurement, in addition to exercising contractual cure and termination options as appropriate.

**22. Highlight successes and best practices from high performing providers:** Performance management involves not only identifying areas for improvement, but also highlighting successes to help inform best practices. The Departments will engage high performing providers to learn what strategies and practices may be contributing to their success, and create mechanisms to share these learnings broadly.

**23. Provide the Board with regular performance reports that include progress on outcome metrics and performance indicators, broken out by policy priority, region, and other subgroupings of interest to the extent available:** The Departments will gather the findings of their performance analyses into regular reports to the Board. These reports will help supplement the spending reports, and provide greater detail as to what results the county is achieving from its spending.