

COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

California

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Recruitment Services Provided by
Ralph Andersen & Associates

LEAD WITH PURPOSE WHERE IT MATTERS MOST

Mendocino County stands at a pivotal moment. Like many local governments nationwide, the County faces unprecedented fiscal pressures as federal funding streams shift under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (also referred to as “H.R. 1”) and, more specifically, as recent and future funding reductions in California take effect. With limited local revenue sources and expanding needs across health, human services, infrastructure, and public protection, every policy decision, in the short and long term, will shape the future of this rural community.

This environment calls for leaders who see this challenge as an opportunity—strategic thinkers who can build smarter systems, strengthen essential services, and stretch every public dollar to its fullest potential. The Board of Supervisors is seeking a top-tier professional for the CEO position that will bring creativity, integrity, collaboration, and a deep commitment to public service in today’s rapidly changing world.

Joining the Mendocino County team means being part of a government that wants to reimagine fiscal stewardship—driving innovation in efficiency, leveraging partnerships and technology, and empowering staff to do their best work even in lean times. In Mendocino County, leadership isn’t about managing scarcity; it’s about creating impact where every resource counts and every person matters.

If you’re ready to make a measurable difference, to bring solutions that balance compassion with sustainability, and are anxious to guide and shape a resilient future for Mendocino County, the Board invites you to seriously consider this career opportunity.

We invite you to explore this beautiful region of Northern California and be prepared to lead with enthusiasm, passion, and a strong commitment to implementing effective solutions.

MENDOCINO REGION

Mendocino County, from its southern border 90 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge, to its northern border 80 miles south of Eureka, in the heart of wine and redwood country, is one of the most picturesque areas in the State of California. The County’s 3,510 square miles comprise a beautiful Pacific coastline, rugged mountain peaks, and fertile inland valleys.

The County’s approximately 87,841 residents enjoy many local arts organizations, talented theatre companies, including civic and light opera, as well as abundant outdoor recreational activities. Quaint historic villages along the rugged coastline are home to many inns, art galleries, boutiques, and restaurants. The northern part of the County draws outdoor enthusiasts eager for adventures in hiking, canoeing, fishing, and more, amongst the giant redwoods. The inland area is best known as wine country, producing some of the finest vintage California wines.

The incorporated cities within Mendocino County include:

- *Fort Bragg*
- *Point Arena*
- *Ukiah*
- *Willits*

Unincorporated communities include:

- *Coastal Areas: Gualala, Elk, Mendocino, Westport.*
- *Inland/Valley Areas: Comptche, Dos Rios, Laytonville, Covelo (Round Valley), Hopland, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley.*

MENDOCINO REGION *continued*

Mendocino County's economy is based on agriculture (particularly grapes), timber, tourism, and a growing retail and service center. The weather in the County is generally mild. Fog and sea breezes usually keep the coastal areas cool, while inland temperatures can reach the high 90's during the summer months.

Ukiah, the County seat, is nestled in the beautiful Yokayo Valley, surrounded by rich grape vineyards, pear orchards, and the northern coastal mountains. Ukiah, about an hour drive from the Mendocino Coast and located near spectacular redwood forests, invites recreational and cultural pursuit. For more information about Mendocino County, please visit: mendocinocounty.gov.

COUNTY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Board previously adopted the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) model in 2005, which established the CEO as the primary conduit between the Board of Supervisors, department heads, and elected officials.

As a general-law county with a Board-Executive form of government, the five-member Board of Supervisors selects and appoints the CEO. In Mendocino County, each Board member is elected by voters within their respective districts to serve a four-year term.

The Board of Supervisors is responsible for adopting the County budget and for enacting and enforcing all ordinances, resolutions, and other legal actions of the County. Twenty (20) departments and fifteen (15) special districts provide County services. The County has a budget of \$694.4 million and employs approximately 1,092 staff.

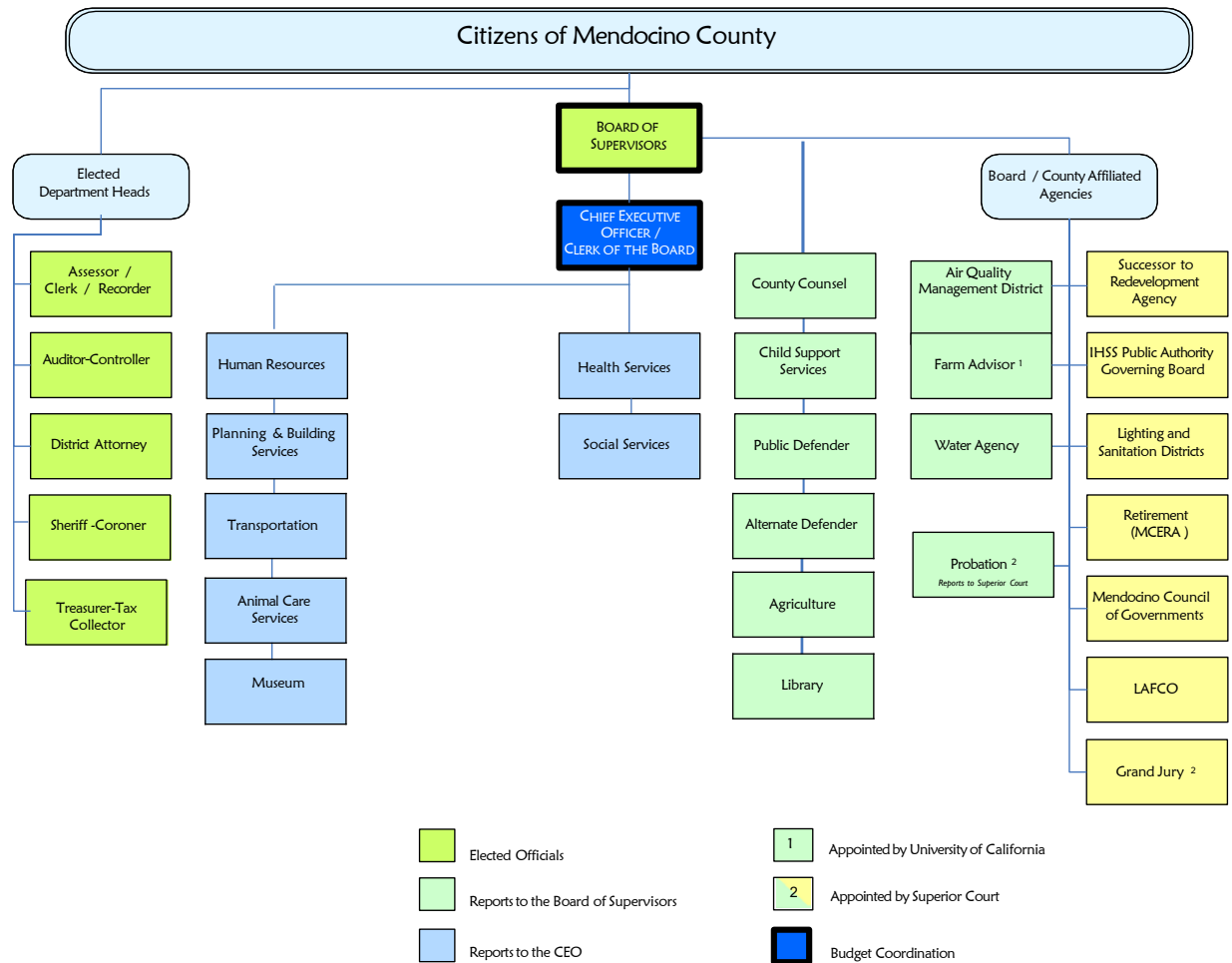
Five (5) departments are directed by officials elected by residents to four-year terms: Assessor-Clerk-Recorder, Auditor-Controller, Treasurer-Tax Collector, District Attorney, and Sheriff-Coroner.

Seven (7) officials are appointed by the Chief Executive Officer: Animal Care Director, Health Services Director, Human Resources Director, Planning and Building Services Director, Social Services Director, Museum Manager, and Transportation Director.

The County is also responsible for providing municipal programs and services in the unincorporated areas of the County, and its powers are limited to those granted by the State. The County budget includes many programs in the areas of health, welfare, and law enforcement, which are mandated, regulated, and mostly funded by the State. The Board of Supervisors has limited authority over the policy and administration of these programs. The County budget also includes funding to provide local services not affected by state laws, such as libraries, land-use planning, county road construction and maintenance, police protection, and a museum. There are four incorporated cities in Mendocino County that provide services to their residents, including the County seat, Ukiah. Most general government services are provided at the County Administration Center on Low Gap Road in Ukiah. The Sheriff's Office, County Jail, Probation Department, and Juvenile Hall are also located on the Low Gap campus.



COUNTY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE *continued*



The County organization is divided into seven (7) functional areas that represent general categories of service to the Mendocino County community:

- General Government
- Public Protection
- Public Ways & Facilities
- Health & Sanitation
- Public Assistance
- Education
- Recreation & Culture

These functional areas comprise twenty (20) separate departments.

Additionally, the Mendocino County Water Agency and the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District are dependent special districts and are not assigned a functional classification, even though they are County departments. The Water Agency is managed by the Department of Transportation, with the CEO, appointed by the Board of Supervisors, serving as the Agency General Manager. The Board of Supervisors serves as the District Board of Directors for the Air Quality Management District.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER SUPPLY IN THE REGION

Within the limitations established by regulatory jurisdictions outside the County's direct control, the CEO will still be asked to influence and support policymakers' efforts to continue to highlight the importance and urgency of a cost-effective water supply for the region (impacting both farmers and residents) and the need for major infrastructure improvements to the aging system. This will involve becoming familiar with the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission (IWPC), which was formed in 1996 to serve as a unified voice on water issues related to the Eel and Russian River watersheds, particularly the Potter Valley Project and regional water supply reliability. While IWPC does not itself hold or exercise all regional water rights, it actively advocates for and helps protect the water rights of member agencies and local users. Currently, the County actively participates through its Board of Supervisors and the County Water Agency, with a Supervisor serving as the County's Commissioner on the IWPC board and another Supervisor as the alternate. IWPC members include Mendocino County, City of Ukiah, Redwood Valley County Water District, Potter Valley Irrigation District, and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District.

THE POSITION

This career opportunity is the result of the upcoming retirement of the current incumbent, Ms. Darcie Antle, in June 2026.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is an at-will executive appointed by the Board and is responsible for the day-to-day administration of County affairs. The CEO oversees county government operations and implements decisions made by the Board of Supervisors. The Executive Office oversees the preparation, adoption, and administration of the County's budget and coordinates the activities of other county departments to ensure the effective accomplishment of the Board's directions and policies. The CEO's position was established by the Board of Supervisors in [Chapter 2.28](#) of the County Code. Duties include the responsibility to appoint, transfer, discipline, suspend, or dismiss, as appropriate, any non-elected department head who is not required to be appointed by the Board of Supervisors, after meeting and conferring with the Board.

The following are seven (7) Departments and three (3) Divisions that report directly to the CEO:

Departments:

- Animal Care Services
- Health Services
- Human Resources
- Museum
- Planning & Building Services

- Social Services
- Transportation

Divisions:

- Disaster Recovery
- Facilities & Fleet
- Office of Emergency Services

Integral to this position, and looking to the future, the CEO will continue to expand collaboration with local government agencies in the region, including school districts, to further align services, share information, and coordinate shared-use and planning efforts to better serve residents. Through these collaborative relationships, local government partner agencies may be able expand their combined resources and expertise to promote safety and resilience and create efficiencies and service-delivery opportunities across Mendocino County's communities.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors is seeking a new CEO who has:

- Exceptional Communication Skills – the ability to elevate communication with Board Members, Department Heads, employees, and the public.
- Proven Public Management Experience – a background and experience in local government, as a senior manager, Deputy/Assistant City or County CAO, CEO, or Manager.
- Experience & Knowledge in Policy Implementation – taking policy direction from the elected Board and transforming it into action.
- Outstanding Fiscal Management Skills – the ability to have a laser focus on budget and financial affairs, with a commitment to collaborative work toward implementing best practices in financial reporting and transparency by the CEO’s Office and the related departments.
- Ability to Articulate Vision – leadership quality in day-to-day operations, as well as the capacity to instill change and challenge.
- Collaborative Approach to Team Building – with a participatory style of management that is consistent and frequent with both appointed and elected department directors.
- Staff Delegation History – developing and utilizing staff resources to the maximum and empowering subordinates.
- Accessibility – an open-door management approach.
- Clarity in Correspondence – ability to prepare frequent memoranda, policy statements, and directives that are clear, concise, and effective.
- An Interest In The Amenities of Rural Living – and an appreciation of the same.
- A Sense of Humor – someone who fosters approachability, perspective, and positive working relationships.

EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

While a Master’s degree is desirable, a Bachelor’s degree in business administration or a closely related field is required. Candidates must have five (5) years of progressively responsible senior management experience in an administrative capacity of similar size and complexity.

Qualifications for Office: The CEO shall be chosen based on knowledge and skills in public administration, demonstrated administrative ability, and knowledge of public budgeting, personnel, finance, and organization. The CEO shall also be chosen based on the person’s executive and administrative qualifications, with a review of their overall career history. While knowledge of the region and California is beneficial, the Board is interested in conducting an extensive search and will consider candidates nationwide. Working in tandem with the Search Firm, the Board will review all resumes of qualified candidates.



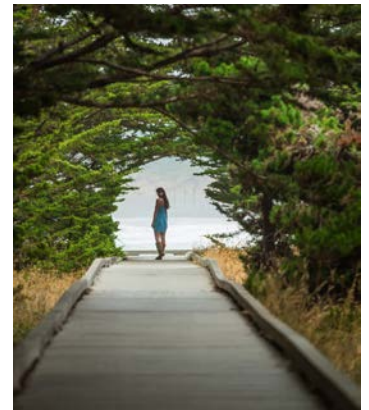
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The salary for this position will depend on qualifications and career experience. Candidates should be aware that compensation will be further evaluated during the selection process. Interested applicants are encouraged to share their compensation expectations with the Search Firm upon submittal. The incumbent earns an annual salary of \$250,000, as outlined in an employment agreement that also includes a negotiated severance clause.

The County of Mendocino offers a comprehensive benefit package including:

- Retirement benefits provided under the 1937 Act ***and*** enrollment in Social Security.
- Participation in a 457 deferred compensation plan with up to 4% of salary contribution matched by the County.
- Longevity increase of 2.5% increase to the base rate of pay after seven (7) years of continuous County employment. Then, upon completion of ten (10) years, fifteen (15) years, and twenty (20) years, for a total 10% increase to the base rate of pay.
- \$1,500 annually for education, training, and wellness expenses distributed quarterly.
- Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance coverage for employees and their dependents.
- \$50,000 group life insurance policy and \$50,000 AD&D.
- 11 paid holidays.
- 48 hours of paid management leave.
- Paid vacation beginning with two weeks, increasing periodically to five weeks after 15 years of service.
- Sick leave accrual at 15 days per year.

Additional benefits information is available [here](#).



THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

This is a confidential process and will be handled accordingly throughout all phases of this recruitment. It is important to note that all interviews conducted by the Board are held in an executive session to maintain candidates' confidentiality.

Closing date for receipt of interest is **Monday, April 6, 2026**. An electronic version of all submittals is required. Interested candidates should apply immediately by sending a comprehensive resume, a compelling cover letter, and notable accomplishments to apply@ralphandersen.com. References are not required at the time of submittal, and no contact will be made with references or current employers until a mutual interest has been established to ensure the utmost confidentiality.

Anticipated Recruitment Schedule

April 6 – Application Deadline

April 21 – Board Selects Candidates to Interview – Closed Session

May 6 – Board Interviews (In-Person) – Closed Session

June 2 – Negotiated Contract with Selected Candidate is Approved – Open Session

Late June – Limited Introductions / Key Meetings (Pre-Start Date) – With Outgoing CEO

July or August – Start Date for new CEO

Questions, nominations, and confidential inquiries regarding this position or the recruitment process should be addressed to: Ms. Heather Renschler at (916) 630-4900 or by submitting an email to heather@ralphandersen.com. Alternatively, a confidential discussion can be scheduled with Ms. Renschler by emailing scheduling@ralphandersen.com.

The County of Mendocino is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



www.mendocinocounty.gov