





Sonoma County

Citizens' Report

Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020





Prepared by the Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office

Inside the Citizens' Report

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What is the Citizens' Report?

The Citizens' Report is prepared annually by the Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector's office (ACTTC) in order to provide important County financial data to taxpayers in a format that is both informative and suitable for those who are not finance professionals.

The ACTTC is dedicated to promoting transparency and fiscal accountability within local government. This Citizens' Report serves an important role in that mission by continuing to provide our taxpayers and stakeholders with access to County financial information.



Covered in the Report

The Citizens' Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020, provides insight into the County of Sonoma's financial situation over the preceding twelve months, hereafter referred to as fiscal year 2019-20.

Data Sources

The financial data in this report is drawn from the County's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), a more detailed and complete presentation of the County's finances.

The CAFR was prepared in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and audited by a team of independent auditors that presented the County with an unmodified (clean) opinion.

Interested parties can obtain the CAFR and Citizens' Report at <u>https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/ACTTC/General-</u> Accounting/Financial-Reports/ or by visiting our office.



Sources

The following sources were used to compile the nonfinancial data in this report:

California Employment Development Department, California Department of Finance, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, CA Association of Realtors, Bay Area Real Estate Information Services, Inc., Sonoma County CAFR 2020, and the Sonoma County Employees' Retirement Association (SCERA) CAFR 2019.

A Message from the ACTTC

Presenting the Citizens' Report



It is my pleasure to present to you the Sonoma County Citizens' Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020. Over the past year Sonoma County has continued to strive for resiliency in the face of challenges arising from flood, fire, public safety power shutoff events and now the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of these events on our community are unprecedented and ongoing. The onset and spread of COVID-19 has added to the County's core responsibilities in ways that were unimaginable a year ago. Through health orders, testing, financial assistance, housing support, senior resources, and mental health and wellness services, the County response to this crisis has touched each of us in the community.

Employment figures remained strong through most of the year, but weakened significantly due to the effects of COVID-19. As of June 2020, the County's unemployment rate increased to 11.6% from 2.8% in June 2019. Housing prices increased by 5.7% over the previous year, which raised the median home price to \$650,000.

The lodging industry, already adversely affected by wildfires, was further impacted by the COVID-19 shutdown implemented in March. The shutdown also negatively impacted retail sales. As a result, the County's transient occupancy tax decreased by 27.7%, local sales tax decreased by 3.4%, and Prop. 172 public safety sales tax decreased by 5.7%. The County's largest revenue source, secured property taxes, increased by 6.4%.

The County continued the effort to maximize public disaster response and recovery reimbursements from State and Federal sources. As of June 30, 2020, the County received \$57.9 million of the estimated \$104.8 million in reimbursable disaster related costs.

In July 2020, the County was awarded an additional \$50.6 million in Federal CARES Emergency Funding to support expenses that promote public health and safety in response to COVID-19. In fiscal year 2019-20, the County incurred related expenses of \$14.5 million that are eligible for reimbursement from this funding source.

The General Fund ended the fiscal year with a total fund balance increase of \$3.4 million and the governmentwide net position increased by \$137.2 million. Changes in net position are indicative of the overall fiscal health of the County and fiscal year 2019-20 is the tenth consecutive fiscal year that the County experienced an increase in net position.

The financial impact of COVID-19 is expected to continue well into fiscal year 2020-21 and key revenue streams are projected to gradually recover over the next several years. In fiscal year 2020-21, the County has allocated \$8.5 million to restore reserves that were used in the aftermath of the 2017 fires. The current financial policy follows the best practice to fund the general reserve.

Over the last three and a half years, Sonoma County has experienced six disaster events including the current pandemic. The County continues to make recovery and resiliency a high priority, and is maximizing the use of externally funded grants as a primary mechanism to finance critical projects in these areas.

In July 2020, the County received a PG&E settlement of \$149.3 million for damages related to the October 2017 fires. The County will use these funds to make strategic project investments with input from the community.

To the citizens of Sonoma County, thank you for your continued support of this office. I am humbled by how quickly things can change and look forward to supporting the recovery effort.

Sincerely.

Erick Roeser Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector County of Sonoma

County of Sonoma Information

Susan Gorin, District 1 Supervisor



David Rabbitt, District 2 Supervisor



Shirlee Zane, District 3 Supervisor



James Gore, District 4 Supervisor



Lynda Hopkins, District 5 Supervisor



About the County

Location and Population

Sonoma County is located about fifty miles north of San Francisco, in a community recognized as one of the premier wine-grape growing regions in North America. The county covers more than one million acres of comfortable urban living, sprawling vineyards, rolling hills, protected wetlands, and pristine outdoor recreation areas.

Over a third of the County's 492,980 residents live in the city of Santa Rosa, the County seat; another third reside in the County's eight smaller towns and cities; and the final third are spread throughout unincorporated county land.

Those citizens residing in unincorporated areas of the County are represented in local government by the members of the Board of Supervisors and receive many of their municipal services from the County.

Overview and Administration

Sonoma County policymaking and legislative authority is vested in the County Board of Supervisors (the Board). Board members are elected for staggered four-year terms, and each member represents one of the County's five districts.

A County Administrator is appointed by the Board to assist in managing, directing, and coordinating the operations of all County departments.

Four County departments: the Sheriff-Coroner, District Attorney, Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector, and the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor-Registrar of Voters, are led by elected department heads. Other department heads are appointed by the Board or the County Administrator.

Staffing, Resources, and Services

The County employed 3,872 full-time equivalent employees during fiscal year 2019-20 (including extra help) in order to provide a full range of services to its

residents. The number of full-time equivalent employees increased by 37 since last year.

Citizens residing in unincorporated areas of the County receive most of their municipal services from the County, including law enforcement, land use and zoning, building permits, local road building and maintenance, and animal care. In addition, most services performed by the County are provided for all residents, regardless of whether residents live in cities or unincorporated areas.

The County's principal functions include seven major areas: general government, public protection, public ways and facilities, health and sanitation, public assistance, education, and recreation and cultural services. Every County resident, directly or indirectly, benefits from these services.

Demographics and Economy

Population Growth

Sonoma County's population was 492,980 in fiscal year 2019-20, a decrease of 7,695, or 1.5%, from the previous year, continuing a downward trend from prior year.

Median Family Income

The County's estimated median family income during the year was \$102,700. This represents an increase of \$9,400, or 10%, over the \$93,300 reported last year, and places Sonoma ahead of national and state and averages, but below that of neighboring Napa and Marin Counties.



Median Family Income (Dollars in Thousands)

Median Home Prices

Sonoma County home prices increased in 2019-20, with the median home price standing at \$650,000, a 5.7% increase over the prior year.

Sonoma County Median Home Prices (Dollars in Thousands)



Sonoma County home prices are slightly above the California median home price, but below that of neighboring Napa and Marin Counties in fiscal year 2019-20.

Median Home Price Comparisons (Dollars in Thousands)



Unemployment

The County's unemployment rate increased to 11.6% from 2.8% as of June 2020, due to the effects of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.



Unemployment Rate (June 2020)

Financial Summary and Trends

Overview

The information in this section provides insight into how the County utilizes its resources to provide services.

Inside the Statement of Net Position

Assets: Listed assets represent anything of value (cash, equipment, real estate) owned by the County.

Deferred Outflows and Inflows of Resources: The outflow (consumption) or inflow (acquisition) of resources in the current period applicable to future reporting periods.

Liabilities: Represent all debts and future obligations of the County.

Net Position: The sum of the County's assets and deferred outflows of resources less its liabilities and deferred inflows of resources.

The Statement of Net Position

The Statement of Net Position below presents the County's financial position from a long-term perspective.

Important elements from the Statement of Net Position are explained in greater detail later in this section.

Statement of Net Position

	2019-20	2018-19	Change
ASSETS			
Current and other assets	\$ 872,082	\$ 824,402	\$ 47,680
Capital assets	1,505,697	1,472,760	32,937
Total assets	2,377,779	2,297,162	80,617
Deferred outflows of resources	119,341	237,861	(118,520)
LIABILITIES			
Current and other liabilities	192,305	165,775	26,530
Long-term liabilities	900,155	1,178,131	(277,976)
Total Liabilities	1,092,460	1,343,906	(251,446)
Deferred inflows of resources	176,413	100,083	76,330
NET POSITION			
Net capital assets	1,443,754	1,401,903	41,851
Restricted	298,607	277,234	21,373
Unrestricted	(514,114)	(588,103)	73,989
Total net position	\$ 1,228,247	\$ 1,091,034	\$ 137,213
(Dollars in Thousands)			

Capital Assets

Capital assets indicate the value of land, buildings, equipment, vehicle fleets, etc., owned by the County. In fiscal year 2019-20, capital assets increased by \$32.9 million to \$1,505.7 million from \$1,472.8 million.

The current year increase is due to increased spending on roads improvement projects, Open Space easement acquisitions, Transit bus purchases, and improvements to the Airport Terminal building.



Long-Term Debt

In fiscal year 2019-20, the County's long-term debt of bonds, loans, certificates of participation and other long-term debt totaled \$475.4 million, a decrease of \$50.0 million, or 9.5%, from prior year. This reduction in total debt was largely due to Pension Obligation Bonds repayments of \$31.0 million.



The County debt shown above does not match the liabilities indicated on the Statement of Net Position because certain estimated liabilities, such as net pension and net OPEB, are excluded (see the Postemployment Benefits and Liabilities section Page 10).

Net Position

The County's total assets and deferred outflows of resources decreased by \$37.9 million. Liabilities and deferred inflows of resources decreased by \$175.1 million. Total net position for fiscal year 2019-20 was \$1,228.2 million.

During fiscal year 2019-20, total net position increased \$137.2 million.



Net Investment in Capital Assets

In fiscal year 2019-20, the County's net investment in capital assets was \$1,443.8 million. Net investment in capital assets is the largest component of the County's net position. The County's capital assets themselves cannot be used to pay County debt or other operating costs; resources needed to pay these obligations must be provided from other sources.

Restricted Net Position

In fiscal year 2019-20, \$298.6 million, or 24.3%, of the County's net position was restricted. A restricted resource is subject to external regulation on its use. An example of a restricted resource would be a grant given to the County to improve public safety.

Grantors, contributors, laws and regulations, constitutional provisions, or legislation passed by federal, state, or local governments can impose regulations on restricted assets.

The final component of net position is unrestricted net position. Unrestricted net position represents resources that can be used to meet ongoing obligations to citizens or creditors. In fiscal year 2019-20, the County reported a \$514.1 million deficit in unrestricted net position. This deficit is due to the County's net pension and other postemployment benefit liabilities reported as required by GAAP standards (see the Postemployment Benefits and Liabilities section Page 10).

The Statement of Activities

The following table compliments the Statement of Net Position by providing additional details about the activities that impacted the net position.

Statement of Activities

FISCAL YEAR	2019-20	2018-19
REVENUES		
Program revenues:		
Charges for services	\$ 138,541	\$ 142,140
Operating grants and contributions	529,243	518,223
Capital grants and contributions	7,500	6,573
General revenues:		
Property taxes	274,643	259,239
Documentary transfer taxes	6,817	5,585
Transient occupancy taxes	16,234	22,377
Unrestricted grants and gov't revenues	55,566	53,018
Unrestricted investment earnings	16,994	25,041
Other	46,192	41,683
Total operating revenues	1,091,730	1,073,879
EXPENSES		
General government	120,051	93,172
Public protection	326,507	331,051
Public ways and facilities	52,321	43,324
Health and sanitation	124,539	134,918
Public assistance	213,416	220,590
Education	1,237	1,182
Recreation and cultural services	28,405	27,355
Interest on long-term debt	24,259	26,295
Refuse	4,971	6,706
Airport	10,844	9,941
Energy Independence Program	2,306	2,299
Transit	20,410	20,252
Fair	11,222	10,818
Marinas	2,678	2,734
Other	1,050	1,135
Total operating expenses	944,216	931,772
Special item	(10,301)	
Change in net position	137,213	142,107
Net position, beginning of year	1,091,034	951,062
Prior period adjustment		(2,135)
Net position, beginning of year, as restated	1,091,034	948,927
Net position, end of year	\$1,228,247	\$1,091,034

(Dollar amounts in thousands)

County Revenues and Expenses

Total Revenues

The County's total revenues for fiscal year 2019-20 were \$1.09 billion, an increase of \$18 million from the previous year. These revenues are derived from two broad sources: program revenues, which include items such as grants and charges for services, and general revenues, which include items such as taxes and investment returns.



Where the Money Comes From (As a percentage of \$1.09 billion)

Revenue Source	Amount	Description
Charges for Services	\$139 million	Charges for Services are revenues collected through charges to customers or applicants who purchase, use, or directly benefit from goods, services, or privileges provided. Charges for Services revenues decreased by \$3.6 million, or 2.5% less than the previous year.
Operating Grants & Contributions	\$529 million	Operating Grants & Contributions increased by \$11.0 million, or 2.1%, more than prior year. These funds are received from non-County parties, such as State or Federal governments, and are generally restricted to use by specific programs (such as public protection).
Capital Grants & Contributions	\$8 million	Capital Grants & Contributions increased by \$.9 million, or 14.1% more than the prior year. These funds are typically awarded by non-County governments for the purchase or creation of capital assets.
Property Taxes	\$275 million	Property Taxes are collected based on the assessed value of real property (i.e., buildings and improvements, land), business personal property (i.e., heavy equipment), and other property (i.e., boats) located within the County. These revenues increased by \$15.4 million, or 5.9%, from the previous fiscal year. The increase was largely attributable to strong growth in assessed values.
Other Grants & Governmental Revenues	\$56 million	Other Grants & Governmental Revenues are generally not restricted to specific programs. These revenues increased by \$2.5 million, or 4.8%, over the prior fiscal year.
Investment Earnings	\$17 million	Unrestricted investment earnings decreased by \$8.0 million, or 32.1%, due to lower average yield over prior year.
Other General Revenues & Taxes	\$68 million	Other General Revenues & Taxes decreased by \$.4 million, or .6% less than the prior year.

Total Expenses

The County's total expenses for fiscal year 2019-20 were \$944 million, an increase of \$12 million from the previous fiscal year. Expenses are classified by the function or service that they fund.



Where Your Money Goes (As a percentage of \$944 million)

Expense	Cost	Purpose
General Government	\$120 million	County operating costs, such as the Board of Supervisors, County Administrator, County Counsel, Human Resources, and the Registrar of Voters are considered general governmental expenses.
Public Protection	\$327 million	Community protection services consist of the Sheriff-Coroner, District Attorney, Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation, Public Defender, and Emergency Services.
Public Ways & Facilities	\$52 million	Consists of Transportation and Public Works and includes repairs and maintenance of public roads.
Health & Sanitation	\$125 million	Includes Public Health, Environmental Health, Behavioral Health, and Alcohol and other Drug Services.
Public Assistance	\$213 million	Consists of Human Service programs such as Economic Assistance, Employment and Training, Adult and Aging, as well as Child Support Services and In-Home Support Services.
Recreation & Cultural Services	\$29 million	Represents operations and maintenance of the County's regional and community parks, campgrounds, swimming facilities, and trails.
Interest on Long-Term Debt	\$24 million	Includes the indirect interest expense paid on general long-term debt incurred by the governmental functions.
Airport	\$11 million	Represents operations and maintenance of the Airport.
Transit	\$20 million	Represents operations and maintenance of the County's transit system.
Fair	\$11 million	Represents costs and maintenance for the County's Fair operations.
Other Program Expenses	\$12 million	Includes operations and maintenance for the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program, Refuse, Marinas, other enterprise districts, and education.

Component Units

Financial Highlights

Discrete Component Units

Included in operations are several component units that provide services within the County. These major legally separate discrete component units (DCUs) include the Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water), the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) and the Nonmajor DCUs include several sanitation districts, including Sonoma Valley, Russian River, South Park, and Occidental County Sanitation.

Community Development Commission

The CDC's total net position for fiscal year 2019-20 was \$121.0 million. CDC's unrestricted net position, available for programs and projects, was \$110.5 million.

The Commission's revenues are primarily derived from federally supported activities, which accounted for 71% of the current year's revenues.

The net position of CDC increased \$5.7 million during fiscal year 2019-20 primarily due to increased funding to the County Fund for Housing for shelters, congregate housing, leases and short term housing services.

Sonoma County Water Agency

Sonoma Water is a wholesale water provider, delivering potable water to 600,000 residents in Sonoma and Marin Counties as well as providing flood protection, recycled water, recreational opportunities, and wastewater treatment. Sonoma Water's total net position for fiscal year 2019-20 was \$366.1 million. Of this amount, \$57.2 million may be used to meet ongoing obligations to citizens and creditors.

Sonoma Water's net position increased by \$14.4 million as of June 30, 2020.

Sonoma Water revenues increased by \$9.5 million in fiscal year 2019-20 compared to prior year. Key revenue increases included an additional \$6.4 million in charges for services, \$0.6 million in operating grants and contributions, \$1.8 million in property tax revenue and

\$3.0 million in capital grants/contributions. These gains were partially offset by a decrease of \$2.4 million in investment earnings.

Sonoma Water's expenses decreased \$2.4 million in fiscal year 2019-20. Changes in expenses include a pension expense decrease of \$3.8 million as well as a decrease in Warm Springs Dam expenses of \$4.0 million, offset by increases in other areas. The decrease in Warm Springs Dam expenses was a result of decreased project costs for habitat restoration projects in Dry Creek.

Statement of Net Position

	:	Sonoma					
		Water	CDC		Nonmajor		
ASSETS							
Current and other assets	\$	215,528	\$	120,140	\$	38,900	
Capital assets		335,422		11,302		123,538	
Total assets		550,950		131,442		162,438	
Deferred outflows of resources		7,511		1,079		95	
LIABILITIES							
Current and other liabilities		18,425		4,601		1,585	
Long-term liabilities		164,093		5,513		23,635	
Total Liabilities		182,518		10,114		25,220	
Deferred inflows of resources		9,861		1,366		-	
NET POSITION							
Net capital assets		209,785		10,555		102,928	
Restricted		99,145		-		5,630	
Unrestricted	_	57,152		110,486		28,755	
Total net position	\$	366,082	\$	121,041	\$	137,313	

(Dollars in Thousands)

Statement of Activities

		Sonoma				
	Water		CDC		Nonmajor	
Revenues:						
Program revenues:						
Charges for services	\$	68,973	\$	282	\$	26,975
Operating grants/Contributions		6,554		64,854		1,099
Capital grants/Contributions		4,279		201		998
General revenues:						
Property taxes		30,730		-		-
Investment earnings		3,920		2,413		630
Total revenue		114,456		67,750		29,702
Expenses	_	100,074		62,018		24,075
Change in net position		14,382		5,732		5,627
Net position, beginning of year	_	351,700	_	115,309	_	131,686
Net position, end of year	\$	366,082	\$	121,041	\$	137,313
Net position, end of year	<u>\$</u>	366,082	Ş	121,0	41	<u>41</u> <u>\$</u>

(Dollars in Thousands)

Postemployment Benefits and Liabilities

About SCERA

Employees of the County of Sonoma are enrolled in the Sonoma County Employees' Retirement Association (SCERA), a multi-employer defined benefit pension plan (Plan) governed by a nine member Board of Retirement. The Plan is paid for through employee and employer contributions.

SCERA issues a report as of December 31 annually, available on the SCERA website at <u>www.scretire.org</u>.

Pension Benefits

The average SCERA annual pension benefit received in 2019 was \$34,800, a \$500 increase from the prior year.



Pension Obligation Bonds

As of June 30, 2020, the County held three Pension Obligation Bonds (POBs), issued in 2003 and 2010, with an outstanding combined balance of \$321.4 million. A POB is a bond obtained for the purpose of using borrowed funds to generate a higher rate of return than the cost of the debt.

Financial Summary

SCERA's membership as of December 31, 2019, was 10,685 members, including 5,250 retirees and beneficiaries, 4,040 active employees, and 1,395 inactive vested members.

SCERA's fiduciary net position as of December 31, 2019, was \$2.9 billion. Revenues for the year were \$525.4 million. This was comprised of \$65.1 million of employer contributions, \$44.7 million of member contributions, and net investment income of \$415.6 million.

Expenses for the year were \$186.3 million, an increase of \$10.2 million or 5.8% over the prior year. The majority of this increase was due to \$10.1 million in pension benefit payments.

The contribution requirements of Plan members and the County are determined by an independent actuary, approved by the SCERA Board of Retirement, and adopted by the County Board of Supervisors.

Other Postemployment Benefits

Sonoma County administers a single employer defined other postemployment benefit (OPEB) plan. The authority to establish and amend benefit provisions of the OPEB Plan resides with the County Board of Supervisors (Board). The Plan was closed to new participants on January 1, 2009. The OPEB Plan is funded by the County, employees do not contribute to the OPEB Plan.

Financial Summary

In fiscal year 2019-20 the total OPEB Plan membership was 8,230, including 4,247 retires receiving benefits and 3,983 members not currently receiving benefits. This updated membership count includes for the first time 2,398 employees that may receive an implicit subsidy, but no cash for retiree benefits.

Contributions to the OPEB Plan in fiscal year 2019-20 were \$27.6 million plus net investment income of \$2.2 million. Benefit payments were \$22.0 million, including 1.1 million in administrative expense. The increase in the OPEB fiduciary net position was \$7.8 million.

The OPEB Plan liability is determined by an independent actuary. OPEB Plan contribution requirements are determined by the County and adopted by the Board.

Net Pension and OPEB Liabilities

As of June 30, 2020, the pension and OPEB Plans were 92.8% and 26.5% funded, respectively, on a market value basis. Combined assets totaled \$3.0 billion compared to \$3.3 billion needed to pay future pension and OPEB benefits. The difference approximates the combined net pension and OPEB liabilities of \$432 million in fiscal year 2019-20.

Highlights

Your Tax Dollars at Work

The County of Sonoma is in the process of developing a Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan will provide the context to inform policies and projects that are funded for the next five years and align short and long-term objectives so actions reflect a clear sense of purpose as the County moves into the future with sustainable progress.

Since late 2019, County leaders and Board members have been engaged in developing the base framework for the Strategic Plan. The Board discussed the framework during its Strategic Planning Retreat in early 2020 where five Strategic Pillars were identified and discussed. As of this writing, County leadership is actively soliciting input from employees and community members. The feedback received will be used to help refine and finalize the Plan, which is expected to be adopted by the Board in late February 2021. The preliminary pillars and goals currently under review are listed below.

- Pillar I Healthy and Safe Communities Provide quality and equitable housing, health, and human services for all.
- Pillar II Racial Equity and Social Justice Achieve racial equity in County service provision and ensure a workforce reflective of the community we serve.
- Pillar III Organizational Excellence Be an innovative, effective, engaged, and transparent organization focused on quality programs and services.
- Pillar IV Climate Action and Resilience Make Sonoma County carbon neutral by 2030.
- Pillar V Resilient Infrastructure Enhance services to the community by investing in County facilities and infrastructure; including roads, buildings, communications, and flood protection.

For details see: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Board-of-Supervisors/Strategic-Plan/

Reporting Awards

Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has given an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting to the County of Sonoma for its Popular Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports.

In order to receive an Award of Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, a government unit must publish a Popular Annual Financial Report, whose contents conform to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability, and reader appeal.

An Award of Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is valid for a period of one year only. We believe our current report continues to conform to the Popular Annual Financial Reporting requirements, and we are submitting it to GFOA to determine its eligibility for another Award.

