

The CEO Report

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September 23, 2025

Government

Departments

Residents

Business

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS) recognizes:
National Suicide Prevention Week: September 7–13
World Suicide Prevention Day: September 10
Suicide Prevention Month: All of September

Each year, Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS) honors these observances with a proclamation and community awareness efforts. This month is a powerful reminder that everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention whether through education, support, or simply starting a conversation.

BHRS is committed to raising awareness, sharing life-saving resources, reducing stigma, encouraging open conversations, and supporting individuals and families affected by suicide. The official Suicide Prevention Awareness Ribbon is purple and teal, symbolizing hope and remembrance.

Here are 5 steps you can take to help:

1. **ASK** — Don't be afraid to ask directly, "Are you thinking about suicide?" Research shows that asking this question does not increase risk, it can save lives.
2. **BE THERE** — Be present. Listen without judgment. Showing you care can make a difference.
3. **KEEP THEM SAFE** — Reduce access to lethal means. Ask if they have a plan and help create a safety strategy.
4. **HELP THEM CONNECT** — Encourage connection to mental health services. Save the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline number (call or text 988).
5. **FOLLOW UP** — Stay in touch. Ongoing support especially after a crisis or discharge from care can be crucial.

24/7 Crisis Line: [855-838-0404](tel:855-838-0404)

Warm Line for Non-Crisis Emotional Support: [\(707\) 472-2311](tel:707-472-2311) or Toll-Free: [833-955-2510](tel:833-955-2510)

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Call, Text, or Chat online anytime 24/7 at 988lifeline.org

Mendocino County Strategic Plan

In May 2022, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors approved the first five-year strategic plan that will help guide the critical decisions the Board of Supervisors will face over the next five years with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life for County residents. Departmental reporting will align with the strategic plan.

Click [HERE](#) to download the Strategic Plan.

Departments and Divisions

Agriculture

Mendocino County's Agriculture Department is providing an update on two key programs that support the region's agricultural economy and marketplace fairness. The Pest Detection Program monitors and traps invasive pests threatening crops such as wine grapes, pears, apples, and timber, enabling early detection and rapid response to protect local agriculture. Meanwhile, the Weights & Measures Program ensures accurate and equitable commercial weighing and measuring, supporting fair trade and consumer confidence across the county. Both programs continue to adapt and improve, safeguarding Mendocino County's agricultural and economic health.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Animal Care Services

The Animal Care Services program areas include Shelter, Clinic and Animal Protection Services. These programs provide animal education outreach, adoptions, volunteer opportunities, fostering, lost and found services, feral cat trap-neuter-release programs, dog licensing, low cost spay and neuter, veterinary care, animal health education, rabies vaccinations, micro-chipping, impounding of lost and stray animals, responding to injured, ill, and suspected cruelty complaints, and promoting responsible pet ownership.

This month has been a period of significant activity and progress for our Animal Care Services program. Our dedicated team has continued to provide essential services to the community, ensuring the well-being of animals and promoting responsible pet ownership.

Spotlight on Coconut

Say hello to Coconut-a big, beautiful snow queen with a heart as soft as her coat! She is a 10-month-old, spayed female who is a loving, playful, and affectionate girl just looking for someone to help her become the best version of herself. She's sweet, sociable, and loves being around people, whether it's cuddling on the couch or romping around the yard.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...



Behavioral Health & Recovery Services

September 14 is National Sober Day

BHRS observed this day to support individuals in recovery, celebrate the benefits of sober living, and promote open conversations and healthy coping strategies. It also served as a reminder that help and resources are available. You are not alone on the journey to recovery.

For Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services, call [855-765-9703](tel:855-765-9703)

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Cannabis

In August 2025, the Mendocino Cannabis Department ("MCD") reviewed and granted local authorization for 14 active Cannabis Cultivation Business License ("CCBL") applications. In addition, the Department executed one (1) Local Equity Entrepreneurial Program ("LEEP") direct grant agreement with a local cannabis business operator, distributing \$48,000 to the qualified equity applicant.

Below are several key accomplishments of MCD in August 2025:

- Issued and renewed approximately 92,000 square feet (2.11 acres) of commercial cannabis cultivation.
- Published the [Mendocino County Cannabis Equity Assessment](#) update.

- Completed 9 physical inspections of proposed or existing CCBL sites.

Department Fiscal Updates

- The Department collected 19 fees, totaling \$19,863.
- Fee revenue helps offset staff time dedicated to specific, fee-related tasks
- Staff time is allocated based on time studies conducted for each individual task.
- MCD is reviewing current costs for a fee schedule update, with Board consideration anticipated in September.

For more information on MCD's Monthly Activity, please click [HERE](#).

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Employee Benefits

This year's annual Health Plan Open Enrollment period will run from **October 20 through November 7**—click [HERE](#) to learn more and view webinar dates highlighting the upcoming change to Navitus for pharmacy benefits in 2026.

Environmental Health

The Environmental Health team is progressing on strategic initiatives to digitize Land Use, Solid Waste, and Consumer Protection files, which will improve efficiency and service delivery. Digitizing these files will significantly benefit staff, the public, and regulated community by improving efficiency, organization, and accessibility. Staff will save time with quick searches and retrieval capabilities and customers will receive faster responses for record requests.

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Executive Office - Budget/Fiscal

To balance the Fiscal Year 25/26 Budget, \$6 million dollars in anticipated attrition savings was assigned to each County department. This attrition savings was based on a salary and benefit calculation and the average turnover rate across all County General Fund departments. The CEO's Office has been monitoring the progress made toward realizing the \$6 million attrition savings and has determined that the budget is on track to save approximately half of the \$6 million savings projected. The CEO's Office recommends the County continue to follow the Strategic Hiring Plan and existing hiring freeze to avoid losing anticipated savings and to realize further savings over the course of the 25/26 Fiscal Year. The CEO Budget team will continue to monitor and provide regular status reports through the CEO and Quarterly Budget Reports.

Fiscal Year 24/25 Non-Departmental revenue is expected to come in higher than originally projected, with final actuals pending Auditor year-end close. The

1st Quarter Report for FY25/26 will include information on the potential impacts of the increased revenue and CEO recommendations for use of the potential funds.

The CEO's Office will be working with County Departments starting at 1st Quarter to track funding sources more accurately for each County employee. This improved fund accounting will help in understanding which funding streams fund which positions and create greater opportunities for utilization of grant and reimbursement funding.

Update from the State Controller's Office

On September 1, 2025, State Controller Malia M. Cohen released her [monthly cash report](#) covering the state's General Fund revenues, disbursements and actual cash balance for the fiscal year through August 31, 2025.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Executive Office - Contract Unit

The Contract Unit works directly with departments Countywide to execute contracts and amendments to ensure alignment with County Policy. Since April of 2024, the Contract Unit has administered review processes for over 2,150 contract items, including over 350 items with effective dates on or after July 1, 2025. Additionally, the Contract Unit processed contracts for distribution of funding to the twenty-one local fire districts/agencies that receive funding from Measure D, Measure P, and Prop 172. These contracts distribute Q3 funding for Fiscal Year 2024-25. Finally, the Contract Unit continues to work closely with the CEO, the Purchasing Agent, the Auditor-Controller's Office, County Counsel, and other County staff to revise the County's Leasing and Contracting Policy (Policy No. 1).

PUBLIC RESOURCES:

Mendocino County maintains a publicly accessible portal where fully executed contracts can be viewed. The initial search screen of the portal allows users to search all County contracts by Department, Contract Number, Approving Authority, Contractor, and/or Keyword. The list generated by the initial search request can be further refined if needed.

<https://contracts.mendocinocounty.org>

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Executive Office - Economic Development

In July and August 2025, the Economic Development Division met with stakeholders to advance projects developed from industry sector meetings, provided technical assistance to local businesses, met with EDA staff and stakeholders regarding the future of SMEDD, and held the Agriculture Sector

Meeting (7/17) and the Forest Health Sector Meeting (9/17). Visit the [Economic Development Division](#) page for more details.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Executive Office - Grants Unit

In August, the Grants Unit provided significant support to County departments, helping to advance projects that align with the County's strategic plan. The unit assisted the PRRM Division in promoting major wildfire resilience initiatives, including the ongoing development of the \$9,500,000 Sherwood Corridor Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project. Additionally, the staff is developing applications for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Income, as directed by the Board during the public hearing on July 29th. They also assisted Social Services and the Mendocino County Continuum of Care with their application for homelessness funding in HHAP Round 6. In the fiscal year 2025-26, the Grants Unit, in collaboration with various County departments, submitted two grant applications totaling \$1,882,435. It is currently assisting in managing 15 active grants worth over \$16.2 million for the Executive Office.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Facilities and Fleet

Facilities and Fleet Mission: To provide an accessible, efficient, safe, clean and comfortable working environment for all employees and the general public who use our buildings and properties.

Facilities and Fleet maintains vital infrastructure and related services that enable County employees to serve the citizens of Mendocino County.

The SB844 Jail expansion and Psychiatric Health Facility projects are progressing, with both expected to finish in early 2026. Library upgrades include roof work in Willits expected to wrap up in September and entry improvements coming soon to the Ukiah branch.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Human Resources

Human Resources is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace for all employees. As part of this commitment, we continue to support professional development and compliance with key workplace standards.

This report highlights mandatory anti-harassment training for both supervisory and non-supervisory staff, as well as specialized training aimed at strengthening our workforce. Together, these initiatives reflect our dedication to continuous learning, legal compliance, and the well-being of County employees.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Human Resources - Leadership

In October, the Leadership Program, along with the Employee Engagement and Retention Team, will launch the **2025 Employee Engagement Survey** underscoring the County's continued dedication to engaging employees, enhancing workplace culture, and improving service to the community.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Human Resources - Wellness

As we head towards fall, Mendocino County Working on Wellness (MCWOW) is offering County employees and their spouses or domestic partners covered on the County health plan a variety of wellness opportunities. Participation in these programs not only supports physical, emotional, and mental well-being but also allows employees to earn Wellness Incentive Points!

- Starting on **September 15th**, MCWOW presents *Good Nurtured*, a **6-week challenge** that turns small acts of kindness into lasting wellness habits, while offering staff an opportunity to earn **3,500 Wellness Incentive points**. Through fun, personalized activities, participants strengthen well-being, resilience, and connection across the County workforce.
- MCWOW is partnering with the County Department of Public Health to offer **FREE flu vaccinations** for employees and covered spouses or partners. Clinics begin in **late September** at multiple locations across Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Willits. Employees receiving a flu shot also earn **2,000 Wellness Incentive points**.
- The Personify Health wellbeing platform offers Incentive Point earning opportunities via the **Nutrition Guide**. The Nutrition Guide helps employees and their covered spouses or partners to explore their eating style, receive personalized tips, access healthy recipes, and **get the tools needed to stay on track with their nutrition goals**.
- **Only two MCWOW biometric screening events** remain this year, providing employees and their covered spouses or partners a convenient way to check in on their health. So far, over 400 County employees have participated in 10 events, gaining valuable health insights. This activity is worth **20,000 Wellness Incentive points** and is **required** for employees to earn the **Wellness Incentive Reward** of up to \$500 off their 2026 County health plan premiums.

County employees can earn points for participation in the Wellness Incentive Program through the **November 15th Incentive Reward deadline**; click [HERE](#) to learn more about the fall MCWOW offerings!

Library

This September, Mendocino County Library invites you to celebrate Library Card Sign-Up Month and discover how a single card can open the door to endless opportunities. With a library card, you can do more than check out books. From free programs and job resources to homework help, e-books, and Seed Libraries, today's libraries connect communities to information, inspiration, and

each other.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Office of Emergency Services

Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is the primary local coordination agency for emergencies and disasters affecting residents, public infrastructure, and government operations in the Mendocino County Operational Area (OA). The Mendocino County OA includes the county and its cities, towns, and special districts, in coordination with tribes.

The Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinated oversight of several emergencies in the recent past. A tsunami advisory and fires in the Covelo, Laytonville, and Potter Valley areas were kept to minimal damage. OES assisted with a tabletop exercise of the Emergency Operations Center at the City of Ukiah. The update to the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) commenced with kickoff meetings in all four cities of the county. OES attended a meeting of the Fire Chiefs Association reporting on the County EOC functional exercise and the upcoming update to the MJHMP. OES and other relevant stakeholders attended a meeting to identify, prioritize, and find funding for fire hazard mitigation projects in the greater Brooktrails area.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Planning and Building

The Department of Planning and Building Services (“Department”) honors Code Enforcement Officer Fernand Gandolfo, who passed away unexpectedly in early September, recognizing his dedication, mentorship, and positive impact on colleagues and the community.

The Department continues to track performance through monthly metrics, is managing staffing changes, and is working toward securing and implementing new permitting software to improve service efficiency. The Code Enforcement Division remains focused on life and safety priorities amidst rising complaint volumes, while Planning staff continue policy updates and community engagement efforts to support economic growth and resilience.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Prevention, Recovery, Resiliency, and Mitigation

In July and August 2025, the Prevention, Recovery, Resiliency, and Mitigation (PRRM) team continues to advance projects to mitigate disasters and develop community resilience, including the Fuels Reduction and Community Preparedness Project, East Hills Evacuation Planning, Wildfire Community

Resilience Project, Ignition Resistant Project, Fuel Abatement Ordinance and Enforcement Planning Project, 2025 Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Orr Springs Fuels Reduction Planning, and Flood Emergency Response Project. Staff is also working closely with key partners and the local CAL FIRE unit to develop projects for the new round of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Public Health

September 21-27 is Child Passenger Safety Week

This week, Public Health is raising awareness and sharing resources on how to properly install and use a car seat. Did you know that car crashes are a leading cause of death for children in the U.S.? The right car seat, used the right way, can reduce the risk of fatal injury by up to 71% for infants and 54% for toddlers.

Here's a few tips to keep our smallest passengers safe:

- Check your child's car seat for age, weight, and height limits. Use this tool: [nhtsa.gov/TheRightSeat](https://www.nhtsa.gov/TheRightSeat)
- Install it correctly.
- Get a free inspection. Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs) can help!
- Keep kids in the back seat until at least age 12.

Public Health has CPSTs and offers free one-on-one car seat safety appointments for Mendocino County residents with children ages 0-12.

Call to schedule your appointment at [707-472-2757](tel:707-472-2757) or email MCAH@mendocinocounty.gov

Learn more on www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats or www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/public-health/nursing/public-health

Click [HERE](#) to read more...

Social Services

The Mendocino County Department of Social Services (MCDSS) has successfully implemented time code training across the department, resulting in stronger utilization of previously underused funding streams. The full report highlights specific improvements within our Family & Children's Services division.

MCDSS leadership has also launched a new supervisor training series designed to support supervisors and managers. These trainings, along with the discussions they foster, will strengthen leadership capacity and enhance support for our teams.

In addition, the department continues to focus on collaboration and community engagement. Recent efforts include gathering feedback for the Mendocino County Regionally Coordinated Homeless Action Plan and hosting the Family & Children's Services Partner Convening and Peer Review—both important steps in advancing strategic planning and improving outcomes for the community.

Finally, this month MCDSS is sharing critical information regarding upcoming Medi-Cal changes effective January 1, 2026.

Click [HERE](#) to read more...



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