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GENERAL MANAGER

Sonoma Water | Santa Rosa, California

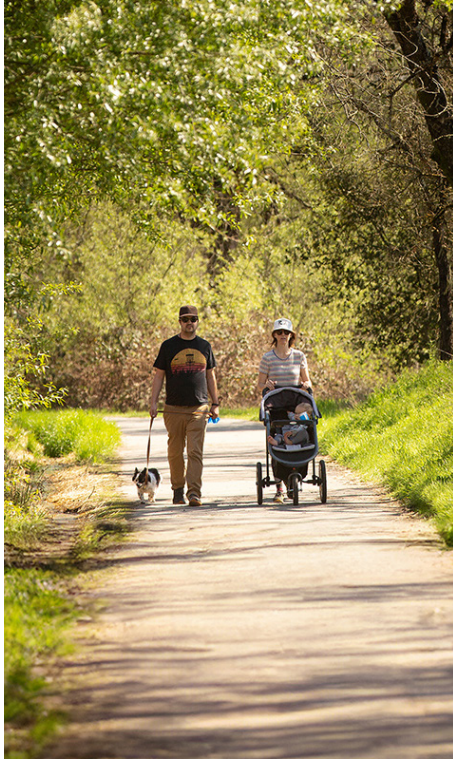
ANNUAL SALARY: $301,588–$366,602 DOE/DOQ

SONOMA WATER IS SEEKING an innovative and collaborative General Manager to lead a nationally recognized agency at the forefront of water resource management and environmental stewardship. Serving more than 600,000 residents across Sonoma and Marin counties, the Agency plays a vital role in protecting essential resources and delivering critical water, wastewater, and flood protection services. Reporting directly to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors who serves as the Agency Board, the next General Manager will build upon Sonoma Water's strong foundation, navigate evolving water resource challenges, and make a lasting impact on the communities it serves. The ideal candidate possesses a strong understanding of complex water systems, infrastructure management, and regulatory environments, with the ability to translate technical challenges into effective strategies. This is an exceptional opportunity for an innovative, dynamic, people-centered executive who brings strategic vision, sound judgment, and the ability to inspire a talented workforce and foster a positive organizational culture. **Apply today to advance innovative solutions for a sustainable water future!**

Sonoma Water











THE COMMUNITY

NESTLED IN THE HEART OF SONOMA COUNTY'S RENOWNED WINE COUNTRY, Santa Rosa, California, offers an exceptional blend of natural beauty, vibrant culture, and modern amenities. As Sonoma County's largest city, Santa Rosa is home to approximately 180,000 residents and spans 42.5 square miles, serving as the region's economic, cultural, and commercial hub. Surrounded by rolling vineyards, majestic redwoods, and scenic landscapes, the city offers abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, biking, and exploring popular destinations such as Spring Lake Regional Park and Howarth Park. Its lively downtown features boutique shopping, exceptional dining, art galleries, and year-round festivals and community events. Home to the renowned Charles M. Schulz Museum, Santa Rosa also boasts a thriving arts and cultural scene, family-friendly attractions, and a welcoming community. The city's economy is supported by healthcare, education, technology, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, and professional services. Ideally situated approximately 55 miles north of San Francisco, with convenient access to the Pacific Coast, Napa Valley, and world-class wineries, Santa Rosa offers an exceptional quality of life, making it an inviting place to live, work, and explore.



THE AGENCY

ESTABLISHED IN 1949, SONOMA WATER is a leader in water resource management, providing essential water supply, wastewater management, and flood protection services while protecting the natural environment. Headquartered in Santa Rosa, California, Sonoma Water operates as a regional, multipurpose agency governed by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, working collaboratively with County leadership and departments while maintaining responsibility for its own water resource operations. The Agency supplies naturally filtered Russian River water to nine cities and water districts, serving more than 600,000 residents across Sonoma and Marin counties. With 266 employees and a FY 2026–27 budget of approximately $367 million, Sonoma Water manages more than 100 miles of water transmission pipelines, sanitation services, flood protection infrastructure, and watershed restoration initiatives.

Recognized for its commitment to innovation and environmental stewardship, Sonoma Water has operated a carbon-free water supply system since 2015 and pioneered advancements in forecast-informed reservoir operations, climate resilience, and regional water recycling. Through strategic partnerships and significant state and federal funding, the Agency continues to strengthen critical infrastructure and advance sustainable water resource management, offering a dynamic, mission-driven environment for professionals committed to serving their communities.

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THE JOB

REPORTING DIRECTLY to the Agency Board/ Sonoma County Board of Supervisors**,** the General Manager serves as the chief executive of Sonoma Water, providing strategic direction and oversight of the Agency's operations, programs, and long-term priorities. Working closely with the County Executive and an experienced leadership team, the General Manager oversees Agency staff and guides organizational performance, fiscal stewardship, regulatory compliance, and intergovernmental relations while ensuring the reliable delivery of essential services. This leader advances long-term financial sustainability through sound budget management, responsible resource allocation, prudent financial planning, and strategic capital investments that support the Agency's infrastructure, operational needs, and evolving service demands. The General Manager also champions innovation, continuous improvement, and forward-thinking solutions to strengthen operational efficiency, modernize infrastructure and systems, and advance sustainable water resource management and climate resilience.

A central priority for the General Manager is fostering a collaborative, inclusive, and accountable organizational culture that respects diverse perspectives and working styles, strengthens communication, and unites employees across all divisions. They encourage innovative thinking, empower senior management through effective delegation, support and recognize the contributions of frontline staff, and promote alignment around shared goals. Serving as a trusted advisor to the Board and a visible representative of the Agency, the General Manager cultivates strong relationships with elected officials, regulatory agencies, tribal governments, wholesale water customers, and community partners, while advancing the Agency's interests through legislative advocacy.

UPCOMING PROJECTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Sonoma Water is advancing a wide range of initiatives guided by its **2024–2029 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**, supporting essential services, strengthening infrastructure, and addressing evolving water resource challenges. The next General Manager will have the opportunity to oversee significant investments, guide innovative projects, and help shape the Agency's long-term future. Highlights of key projects and opportunities include:

POTTER VALLEY PROJECT & WATER SUPPLY SECURITY. Navigate changes to the Eel River diversion and advance long-term water supply reliability for Lake Mendocino and Russian River communities.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE & RESERVOIR OPERATIONS. Advance forecast-informed reservoir operations (FIRO), improved weather forecasting, and strategies that strengthen drought and flood preparedness.

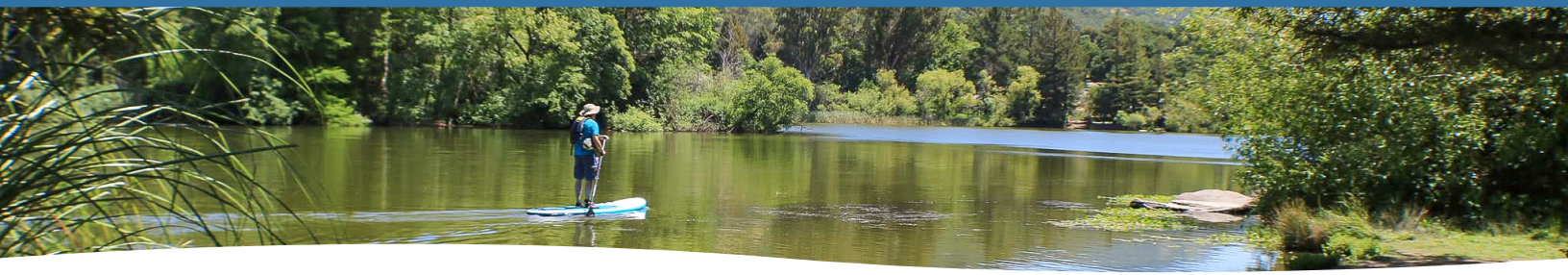
SANITATION INFRASTRUCTURE & FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY. Address aging wastewater infrastructure, evolving regulatory requirements, and the financial challenges facing smaller sanitation systems.

FLOOD PROTECTION & ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION. Strengthen flood management and emergency preparedness while advancing watershed restoration and environmental stewardship.

REGIONAL WATER RECYCLING & REUSE. Support the North Bay Water Reuse Authority's approximately $200 million in recycled water infrastructure initiatives, expanding opportunities for agricultural reuse and preserving drinking water supplies.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE IS A VISIONARY, COLLABORATIVE, and emotionally intelligent executive who brings strong leadership experience, a solid understanding of water resource management, and a proven record of leading organizational change and building alignment through complex transitions. An approachable and effective communicator, this leader listens actively, adapts their communication style to diverse audiences, and builds trust by valuing the perspectives and contributions of frontline staff and executive leadership alike. They empower teams through thoughtful delegation, mentorship, and transparent decision-making while demonstrating the confidence to address difficult challenges and hold themselves and others accountable. The ideal General Manager demonstrates political acumen, diplomacy, and sound judgment as they navigate competing interests, negotiate effectively, resolve conflict constructively, and build consensus. Leading with integrity, humility, and self-awareness, the successful candidate welcomes feedback, acknowledges challenges, and balances innovation with operational excellence and fiscal responsibility.



The ideal candidate will demonstrate the following core competencies:

Organizational Change Management: Guides organizational transitions, strengthens alignment across divisions, implements effective processes, and prosmotes continuous improvement to enhance organizational performance.

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Investment: Anticipates long-term water resource needs, prioritizes critical infrastructure improvements, and advances sustainable solutions that strengthen water supply reliability and climate resilience.

Financial Management & Resource Development: Oversees complex budgets, evaluates financial risks, balances infrastructure investments with affordability and ratepayer impacts, and identifies opportunities to secure grants and external funding.

Intergovernmental Coordination & Policy Advocacy: Navigates legislative and regulatory processes, advances regional water priorities, and works across local, state, and federal agencies to secure support for critical initiatives.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of education, training, and experience that would provide the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and abilities listed.

- **Education:** Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in public administration, business administration, engineering, environmental studies, geography, economics, physical and biological sciences, or a closely related field.
- **Experience:** Extensive administrative and management experience, which would provide an opportunity to acquire the knowledge and abilities listed.
  - Six (6) years of professional management experience in a large public agency including water, wastewater, city or county government.

DESIRED

- **Education:** A bachelor's degree in civil engineering.
- **Experience:** Responsibility for the development and implementation of complex public works/utility projects, programs, goals, policies, and strategies.
- **License:** Possession of a valid certification of registration as a Professional Engineer issued by the State Board of Registration for Civil and Professional Engineers.
- Knowledge of California's legislative process, with experience in state and federal legislative advocacy, and familiarity with grant funding opportunities.
- Strong negotiation skills and the ability to navigate complex regulatory relationships.
- An understanding of rate structures and fiscal management within a wholesale enterprise fund.
- Systems thinking and the ability to navigate complex challenges involving multiple stakeholders and competing priorities.



SALARY & BENEFITS

Annual salary of **$301,588–$366,602 DOE/DOQ**. **PLUS** an attractive benefits package that includes:

Retirement: County Employees Retirement Law of 1937. Retirement is fully integrated with Social Security. New employees, as defined and eligible, will be PEPRA plan members and receive a 2.5% at 67 formula, or for those individuals who meet certain criteria, including establishing reciprocity eligibility, will be Legacy plan members and receive 3% at 60. Individuals who do not qualify for pension reciprocity pursuant to Government code section 7522.02(c), shall receive 2.5% of base hourly rate for each pay period with hours in a paid status.

Employee Assistance Program: County offered at no employee cost.

Post-Retirement Medical: County contribution to a Health Reimbursement Agreement to help fund postretirement employee health insurance/ benefits.

Incentive Retirement Savings Plan: A defined contribution 401(a) plan; a 3% County "foundation" contribution and voluntary IRS 457 plan Pre-Tax employee contribution up to IRS annual maximum, plus a 100% County match of employee contribution deposit into the 401(a) account (up to 1% of base salary).

Health Benefits: A range of health plans with several options in which the premium benefits cover 100% of the employee's cost; dental, vision, disability, life insurance, and more.

Paid Time Off: Competitive vacation accrual and additional management leave annually; 12 paid holidays, and an additional 8 floating holiday hours per year; generous sick leave accruals.

Relocation Reimbursement: May be authorized for the successful candidate. For out-of-area candidates, the expectation is for the General Manager to relocate to Sonoma County within a reasonable amount of time, if selected for the position.

Vehicle Allowance: $215 per two-week pay period.

Cell Phone Stipend: Optional monthly stipend of $50/month (if not assigned a County-issued phone).

Sonoma Water



HOW TO APPLY

For first consideration, apply by **DECEMBER 2, 2026 at:**

WBCP JOB BOARD

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INTERVIEW PROCESS. Round one interviews are anticipated to take place in **early JANUARY 2027**. Finalists will move forward to round two interviews that are anticipated to occur in **mid-JANUARY 2027**. Selected candidates must be available for both dates.

QUESTIONS? Please contact your recruiter, **Terri Maus-Nisich**, with any inquiries: **terri@wbcpinc.com**
866.929.9227 toll free | **541.664.0376** direct