



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience

Subject: Approve Agreement with Santa Cruz Public Libraries

Meeting Date: June 24, 2025

Formal Title: Approve agreement with Santa Cruz Public Libraries for a term of three-years to support community resiliency during extreme weather and post-disaster events, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Approve agreement between the County of Santa Cruz Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience (OR3) and the Santa Cruz Public Libraries Joint Powers Authority (SCPL) to designate certain library branches for use as community resiliency or recovery centers during extreme weather and post-disaster events, for a term of three years; and
2. Authorize the Director of OR3 to execute the agreement and take related actions.

Executive Summary

OR3 seeks Board approval to formalize a partnership with SCPL. This agreement designates specific library branches as community resiliency or recovery centers during periods of extreme weather, poor air quality, climate-related emergencies, or other declared disaster events. The agreement supports equitable, geographically distributed access to safe indoor environments during emergency activations. The proposed agreement outlines shared responsibilities, site readiness protocols, and cost recovery terms.

Discussion

In recent years, Santa Cruz County has faced increasingly frequent and severe weather-related hazards such as heat waves, wildfire smoke, and power outages. These events can disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including the elderly, medically at-risk individuals, and those experiencing housing insecurity. In alignment with the County's resilience goals, OR3 has negotiated an agreement with SCPL to pre-designate multiple library branches for potential use as cooling, resiliency, or recovery centers.

Key provisions of the agreement include the following:

- **Designated Library Sites:** Four Santa Cruz Public Library branches—Boulder Creek, Felton, Scotts Valley, and Aptos—are identified as potential community resiliency or recovery center locations. Site activation will depend on the type and geographic scope of the emergency.
- **Activation and Coordination Protocols:** OR3 will provide SCPL with as much notice as possible (at least 72 hours when feasible) prior to activation. Both parties will jointly conduct pre- and post-use inspections using standardized Red Cross facility forms to document site conditions.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - OR3 will oversee operations during activations, including deployment of supplies, security, cleaning services, and public messaging.
 - SCPL will make facilities available when feasible, secure sensitive equipment, and coordinate with OR3 on readiness assessments (e.g., ADA access, power supply, HVAC capacity).
- **Cost Recovery and Funding:** SCPL will not bear operational costs. OR3 is responsible for expenses related to security, cleaning, and any other use-based impacts. These expenses will be paid from OR3's contingency disaster response budget.
- **Liability and Insurance:** The agreement includes mutual indemnification provisions. OR3 must ensure that any vendors engaged for services (e.g., security) meet insurance and indemnification requirements that protect SCPL.
- **Term and Termination:** The agreement will remain in effect for three years and may be terminated by either party with 30 days' written notice.

The partnership ensures coordinated, rapid deployment of community-based facilities and leverages the accessibility and geographic distribution of library infrastructure to support public health and safety. This agreement formalizes protocols that have been informally used in past responses and enhances the County's preparedness posture for future extreme events.

Financial Impact

Execution of this agreement will not result in any immediate cost to the County General Fund. The agreement establishes a framework for future use of designated library sites during extreme weather or post-disaster events, but no expenditures are triggered by the agreement itself. Any costs incurred during a specific activation—such as cleaning, security, or supply deployment—will be paid from OR3's contingency disaster response budget (GL 302150). No additional appropriations are requested at this time.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework - Community Voices & Partnership
Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

Submitted By:

David Reid, Director

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.