



Job Opening: Chief Operating Officer

\$370,000 - \$480,000 Annually

For full details on the position:

<https://sonomacleanpower.org/job-opportunities>

About the Role

Sonoma Clean Power (SCP) is recruiting a full-time Chief Operating Officer (COO) for an in-person role based in our Santa Rosa office. This is a senior leadership position responsible for the day-to-day management of the majority of SCP's operations. Above all else, we are looking for someone who embraces our mission and is an exceptional people manager.

The successful candidate will bring a strong, grounded presence, the desire to bring teams together to collectively deliver on a vision, a genuine interest in developing others, the ability to readily receive and give feedback, the interest in learning and actively helping SCP evolve, and the judgment to make sound decisions under pressure. Energy-sector expertise is valuable, but the role also requires stepping beyond traditional utility norms because community choice agencies only create value when we go beyond what investor-owned utilities do.

About SCP

Sonoma Clean Power started service in 2014 as a not-for-profit Community Choice Aggregator (CCA) and the default electricity provider for Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. SCP is a Joint Powers Authority governed by an 11-member Board of Directors appointed by our member cities and counties. We serve approximately 230,000 customer accounts (roughly 200,000 residential and 30,000 commercial, industrial, agricultural and governmental) and a population of approximately 500,000 across both counties (excluding the municipal utility service areas of Ukiah and Healdsburg).

SCP's 2025 revenues were approximately \$260 million, projected to grow to roughly \$300 million by 2027. We employ 55 full-time staff plus a small number of part-time interns, supported by a network of contractors and consultants.

Sonoma and Mendocino Counties are a region shaped by wildfire, drought, and a deeply engaged public. Our customers have lived through successive major fires, along with recurring Public Safety Power Shutoff events and subsequent Fast-Trip events. This context shapes how our customers think about the grid, about resilience, and about their energy providers, and it shapes how SCP designs programs, communicates, and plans for the future.

SCP's mission centers on serving our communities with support for the ever-evolving energy needs of our complex world. In practice, this has meant we began with signing long-term contracts for developers to build large-scale solar and wind facilities and launched California's first 24/7 100% renewable service in 2014. We quickly evolved to promote electric vehicles in 2016, followed by launching a major rebuild program to support fire victims in 2018. In 2020,

SCP opened an Advanced Energy Center to promote home electrification, and by 2023 the Center had evolved into a full-service customer support and community event space. In 2021, we identified the coming California winter peak power reliability issue and launched a concerted effort to build 600 MW of new geothermal power. In 2022, we launched a program that allows customers to receive rewards for reducing their energy use during periods of high stress on the grid, and today we have over 12,000 customers enrolled. By 2023, SCP became active in advocating for reforming California's transmission planning process to lower future reliability and cost risks. In 2024, SCP launched a Capital Projects & Engineering department with an express goal of building, owning and operating its own energy resources. In 2025, SCP created an independent research arm called the SCP Energy Lab to publish public-interest research.

Through all of this evolution, we have steadily worked to improve our customer service to ensure customers can better understand and control their energy bills. We have worked to improve our communications to become more accessible, clearer, and to connect with people who have traditionally been underserved, including Native American tribes, Spanish speakers, small business owners, renters, and Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQ communities.

SCP does not seek to duplicate what PG&E and private-sector providers do well. SCP also does not seek to administer traditional utility programs, favoring instead efforts that educate, transform behavior, jump-start an industry or have scalable potential to avoid infrastructure costs over time. Our first successful program helped launch California's electric vehicle boom, and we ended it after three years because – while it was at its peak in popularity – SCP's intervention was no longer changing behavior. Ending this successful program exactly when its effect began to wane continues to stand as something we are proud of, precisely because that is so rare.

What We Are Looking For

Above all, we want a people manager who brings people together around a shared vision. The COO will supervise 7 to 9 departmental Directors, each of whom leads a team of engineers, analysts, managers, and specialists. The quality of those Directors' experience, and the quality of SCP's work, depends heavily on the COO's skill in uniting and aligning teams, coaching, giving feedback, setting expectations, running effective one-on-ones, managing conflict, and building a culture where staff speak up, take initiative, and raise problems and opportunities early.

We are looking for someone who:

- Has a track record of developing people into stronger, more effective leaders, not just managing tasks or projects
- Maintains a calm, grounded demeanor in difficult or emotionally charged situations
- Is confident and comfortable holding staff accountable while also being generous with support, resources, feedback, and recognition
- Can draw the best out of people across a wide range of personalities, communication styles, experience levels and functional backgrounds
- Leads by taking responsibility for outcomes, including mistakes, without deflecting or assigning blame and focuses on process improvements
- Listens well, asks good questions, and is comfortable learning from others
- Writes and speaks clearly, including to non-energy audiences such as the Board of Directors and the public

A person with strong electricity or parallel utility experience (e.g., water and wastewater) who is a truly exceptional people and team manager will be prioritized. Energy sector expertise without strong people management skills will not be considered.

Reporting Structure

The COO reports to the CEO and is a member of SCP's senior executive team, which also includes a contracted Special Counsel, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and Chief Strategy Officer (CSO).

Initially, the COO will have between 7 and 9 direct reports, heading the following departments:

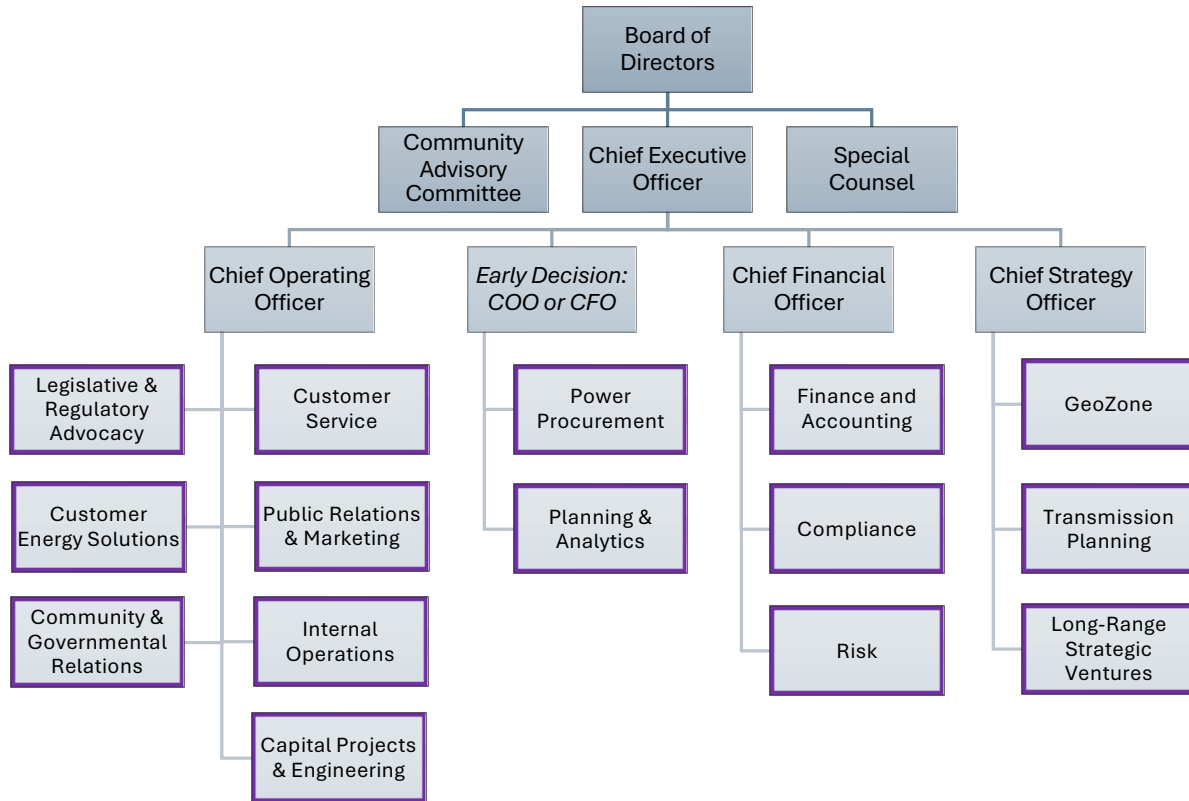
- Advocacy (legislative and regulatory)
- Customer Service (call center, customer center, on-site customer and contractor education, commercial accounts, notices, billing)
- Capital Projects & Engineering
- Community & Governmental Relations
- Marketing & Public Relations
- Customer Energy Solutions (programs, rebates, incentives)
- Internal Operations (human resources, IT, meeting and records management, building and vehicle management)

And potentially also (depending on experience):

- Planning & Analytics (load forecasting, tool development, customer data management, IRP research)
- Power Procurement

As part of onboarding, the CEO, CFO and incoming COO will discuss reporting for the Managing Director of Power Procurement and Director of Planning & Analytics. Depending on the COO's experience and skill in these areas, one or both of these roles will be assigned to the COO. See the organizational chart on the following page.

Other senior roles at SCP are structured as follows: the CEO oversees public relations strategy, special projects, the Energy Lab research function, sign-off on significant brand decisions, and Board relations. In addition to currently overseeing Power Procurement and Planning & Analytics, the CFO oversees accounting, finance, compliance, and risk management. The CSO has no direct reports and is dedicated to longer-term strategy and advocacy: geothermal development, transmission planning, and technical engagement at CAISO, the CPUC, the DOE, the CEC, and the national laboratories. The Special Counsel is hired by and reports to the Board, though in practice engages primarily with the CEO on a day-to-day basis.



COO Role in Relation to CEO

The COO works closely with the CEO in a relationship of mutual trust and frequent communication. The CEO sets strategic direction, manages the Board relationship, and approves high-level branding and public messaging, and major legislative decisions. The COO advises the CEO and translates strategy into execution: managing the departmental Directors, setting operational metrics, resolving cross-departmental issues, and ensuring that SCP's operations run smoothly, efficiently, and in compliance with applicable requirements. While the CEO owns the Board relationship, the COO owns the operational machinery that supports the Board and SCP's Community Advisory Committee: oversight of agenda development, staff report quality, packet preparation, clerking, minutes, and records management. Strong execution in this area is essential.

The first tasks of the COO are to establish:

- A strong rapport with staff at all levels
- A routine for regular communication and coordination with the CEO
- Discuss and propose to the CEO a set of clear roles and decision rights for the COO (i.e., where the COO recommends versus decides)
- A proposed set of goals and metrics, which will serve as the COO's annual review criteria
- A strategic approach to how staff are developed and assessed

Minimum Qualifications

Experience

Substantial experience directly managing professional staff, including experience managing other managers (i.e., managing people who themselves manage teams). We anticipate that strong candidates will have at least ten years of full-time management experience, with several years serving at a senior management level. Experience supervising staff in energy, utility, or other regulated technical fields is a strong plus but is not required if the candidate's people-management track record is exceptional and they have other relevant energy or utility experience.

Education

A bachelor's degree in a relevant field is expected. A master's degree (MBA, MPA, engineering, public policy, or similar) is a plus but is not required.

Skills and Abilities

The items below are listed in rough order of importance.

People management

- Demonstrated ability to develop staff, including giving timely, specific, and kind feedback
- Ability to manage managers: setting clear expectations, supporting their development, and intervening appropriately when their teams need help
- Skill in managing conflict without taking sides prematurely, and without allowing problems to fester
- Ability to draw out candid input from staff, including staff who are reluctant to speak up
- Comfort holding staff accountable, including having difficult conversations about performance
- Genuine interest in the wellbeing of staff, including work-life balance and professional growth
- Ability to engender a strong sense of teamwork and excitement among senior staff members about executing on a shared agenda that then permeates throughout the organization

Temperament and judgment

- Calm demeanor under pressure, including in politically visible or emotionally charged situations
- Takes responsibility for outcomes, including mistakes, without deflecting
- Honest communication, including being willing to say "I don't know" or "I was wrong"
- Ability to have confidence in defending a position/situation the CEO may not initially agree with
- Patience and tact in working with elected officials, Board members, staff, and the public
- Confidence in addressing conflict swiftly, resolutely, kindly and confidentially

Operational and financial management

- Strong budget and financial management skills, including the ability to read and use balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements
- Work with CFO and CEO in the implementation of long-term financial goals, budgeting and improving efficiency
- Ability to draft a staff report that recommends a major expenditure or investment, and to defend it in a public meeting
- Strong project and time management skills; ability to prioritize and adapt quickly in a changing environment
- Creative problem-solving, including the ability to develop novel solutions to organizational or personnel problems

Communication and external-facing skills

- High-quality writing, including for Board packets, staff reports, and public communications
- Clear and persuasive oral communication, including in public meetings
- Ability to present and interact effectively with regulatory agencies, the CEO, Special Counsel, CFO, CSO, Board of Directors, Community Advisory Committee, staff, and the public
- Comfort operating under California's Brown Act and related public meeting and public records requirements
- Spanish language proficiency a plus, but not required

Knowledge

- California energy markets and regulatory structure (CPUC, CAISO, CEC, PCIA, RA, IRP, RPS)
- Community Choice Aggregation governance, financing, and operations
- Public agency operations, including Joint Powers Authorities, the Brown Act, and the Public Records Act
- Public Works projects and California Contracting Code
- Power procurement, hedging, and portfolio risk management
- Utility rate design and cost-of-service analysis

Candidates who are strong on people management but lighter on energy-sector knowledge may apply, and should address in their cover letter how they would plan to come up to speed on the subject areas above.

Our Culture

SCP practices 'public entrepreneurship,' meaning we are a governmental agency that embraces experimentation, learns quickly from failure, and invests in what works. Day-to-day management is collaborative and relatively flat. The hierarchy exists and is clear, but it is not invoked constantly when things are working smoothly. We rely heavily on staff asking questions, flagging problems early, and providing critical feedback on draft decisions before they are finalized.

The COO plays a central role in sustaining this culture. That means modeling openness to being questioned, acknowledging and supporting staff who raise concerns, and protecting the space for creative and sometimes unconventional approaches to operational problems.

At the same time, we want the COO to actively raise the performance bar across the organization. SCP's ambitions outpace our current execution in places, and our strongest performers should feel matched by the team around them. We expect the COO to develop talent, set high standards, and build teams where excellence is the norm rather than the exception. That work should be done with care and patience, but it must be done.

A few practical things that describe daily life at SCP: we are family-friendly and provide flexibility for individual needs outside of the office, including work from home opportunities outside of core in-office hours. We are dog-friendly (well-behaved dogs are welcome at the office). We like to celebrate our successes and our staff members' milestones and major life events. Many of our staff are active in the community, serving on non-profit boards, showing up at community events, and representing SCP in person across the service area. We value that kind of civic engagement and expect the COO to model it.

Compensation and Benefits

SCP provides a competitive public-sector benefits package, including a generous PTO accrual package, contributions to medical and vision coverage, fully paid dental, life and disability benefits. SCP also provides a defined employer contribution towards a 401(a) plan. SCP is not a part of CalPERS. Additional benefit details will be discussed during the interview process.

Working Conditions

This position is based at SCP's 3-building campus in downtown Santa Rosa, California. The role is primarily in-person. For the first six months, this will be a 5-day work week in-person schedule. After that initial period, the COO may request and, subject to confirming the ability to perform, the CEO may approve a schedule with one or both remote workday options available to staff (currently Mondays and Fridays).

The role requires the ability to travel to meetings and events across the service territory and occasionally beyond.

How to Apply

Applicants must submit:

- A cover letter outlining key qualifications and reasons for interest in the position.
- A current resume, including education and relevant experience.
- A writing sample (ideally a memo, report, or staff document the applicant wrote themselves, not a personal essay or academic paper).
- Five professional references, at least two of whom are people the applicant has managed.

Please email these materials to jobs@sonomacleanpower.org. Applications that do not contain all submission requirements will not be considered.

SCP actively works to provide an inclusive work environment, where people of different ethnicities, national origins, native languages, races, skin colors, sexes, genders, sexual orientations, ages, physical abilities, genetics, politics, religion, financial wealth, and education feel welcome, safe, and invited to fully participate at every level. SCP further seeks to contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society through our actions, our communication, our policies, and our investments. SCP expects all its employees to contribute to these goals.

The Sonoma Clean Power Authority is an EEO/ADA employer.