

The County of Ventura
Invites Applications for

DIRECTOR OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & PUBLIC GUARDIAN

Annual salary: up to \$276,008 (DOQ)
plus incentives



COUNTY *of* VENTURA

THE COUNTY OF VENTURA

Ventura County sits on the "Gold Coast" of Southern California — a short drive from Los Angeles (35 miles northwest) and Santa Barbara (20 miles southeast). Residents enjoy rolling hills, sweeping ocean views, and a nearly ideal climate, with an average annual temperature of 74.2 degrees. This combination of scenic beauty, mild weather, and quality of life keeps residents calling Ventura County home.

The County is home to 843,843 residents (2020 census) across ten incorporated cities: Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, San Buenaventura (Ventura), Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks. Its diverse geography spans beaches, harbors, mountains, farmland, state parks, and the Channel Islands, with convenient access via major freeways, highways, and a coastal railway. With reputable schools, excellent healthcare, and safe communities, it's an outstanding place to raise a family.



COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Ventura County is a general-law county governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors. The Board appoints a County Executive Officer to oversee day-to-day operations and advise, assist, and act as the Board's agent on all matters within its jurisdiction, including oversight of 25 countywide agencies and departments. The County is committed to serving its residents through engagement, strategy, execution, and accountability, ensuring that all employees are treated with respect and are free from discrimination. It operates with an annual budget of approximately \$3.4 billion and a staff of more than 10,000 employees.

Ventura County Behavioral Health promotes hope, resiliency, and recovery by providing the highest-quality prevention, intervention, treatment, and support for individuals facing mental health and substance use challenges. In collaboration with community-based, faith-based, and other public and private partners, the Department ensures access to effective treatment and support for children, adolescents, transitional-aged youth, adults, and seniors — and their families. Services are delivered through regional clinics in Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula, Thousand Oaks, Fillmore, and Simi Valley, with many programs also offered at additional community-based locations to keep services accessible to clients where they live.

THE POSITION

Ventura County seeks an accomplished and visionary leader to serve as its next Director of Behavioral Health & Public Guardian. This is a rare dual-mandate executive role that combines oversight of one of the County's largest and most complex service systems with direct legal authority over some of the community's most vulnerable residents.

Reporting to the Director of the Health Care Agency, with additional accountability to the County Executive Officer and the Board of Supervisors, the Director of Behavioral Health oversees the development and management of all County Behavioral Health programs and services — including the Adult, Youth and Family, and Substance Use Services divisions, along with Driving Under the Influence programs. Appointed by the Board of Supervisors as both Director of the Behavioral Health Department and the statutory Mental Health Director, this position carries broad authority to set departmental direction, establish priorities, and represent Ventura County's behavioral health system before federal, state, and local partners. As Public Guardian, the Director also holds legal responsibility — through Superior Court appointment — for individuals deemed unable to care for themselves or manage their own finances due to grave disability, mental illness, or the effects of aging, including oversight of placement, medical care, benefits, asset management, and the County's Representative Payee Program.



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will bring more than technical program knowledge — they will bring the vision to guide Ventura County Behavioral Health through a pivotal period of transformation. As California implements Proposition 1's Behavioral Health Transformation, the transition from the Mental Health Services Act to the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), the CARE Act, and SB 43's expanded conservatorship standards, the incoming Director will play a defining role in shaping how VCBH delivers integrated, whole-person, and culturally responsive care in the years ahead.

Success in this role requires broad and balanced capabilities: strong business acumen and financial expertise to manage a complex, multi-source funding structure; the leadership skill to build and sustain multidisciplinary teams focused on client-centered, data-driven outcomes; and a genuine commitment to serving Ventura County's culturally diverse communities, particularly those who are unserved, underserved, or facing systemic barriers to care. The Director must be equally comfortable in the boardroom and in the community — equally at home negotiating a state contract, briefing the Board of Supervisors, and building trust with clients, families, and community-based partners.

This is an at-will Deputy Director – Health Care Agency classification, exempt from the provisions of the Civil Service Ordinance.

VENTURA COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

MISSION AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH), an integrated division of the Ventura County Health Care Agency, provides mental health and substance use treatment services countywide, including a 24/7 Access/Crisis Line for individuals and families in crisis, those considering suicide, and those struggling with mental illness, substance use, or both.

Vision: A community where Ventura County's diverse residents are respected and empowered so those impacted by mental health and substance use can heal, thrive, and lead a healthy, engaged life.

Mission: VCBH is committed to reducing stigma and discrimination, promoting wellness through a whole-person care approach where clients and families are empowered by appropriate, accessible, timely, and collaborative behavioral health services.

Values: Respect, Equity, Integrity, Compassion, Collaboration, and Quality.

The incoming Director will lead VCBH through a pivotal period of state-driven change:

- Proposition 1 / Behavioral Health Transformation: approved by California voters in March 2024, reallocating mental health funding toward those with the most significant needs and funding new supportive housing and treatment beds statewide, as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) replaces the decades-old Mental Health Services Act.
- The CARE Act: launched statewide December 1, 2024; Ventura County Superior Court is now accepting petitions.
- Senate Bill 43: expanded the definition of "grave disability" to include severe substance use disorders, affecting 5150/5250/5270 holds and LPS conservatorships – effective in Ventura County by January 1, 2026, directly impacting the Public Guardian's caseload.
- COAST: a local, multi-agency effort tackling the opioid crisis.

The Director will guide VCBH in implementing these overlapping mandates while sustaining the Department's commitment to accessible, whole-person, culturally responsive care – an opportunity to shape how Ventura County delivers behavioral health services for years to come.





QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of education, training, and experience that results in the required knowledge, skills, and abilities qualifies. Typical combinations include:

- **Administrator:** Master's degree in hospital, public health, or public administration, plus three (3) years of health care administrative experience, including two (2) years in behavioral health. Additional experience may substitute for education year-for-year.
- **Physician/Surgeon:** Licensed in California, with completion of graduate psychiatric education (per Section 623) plus two (2) years of psychiatric training or practice, including one (1) year of administrative experience.
- **Psychologist:** Licensed in California with a Doctorate in psychology, plus three (3) years of clinical experience, including two (2) years of administrative experience.
- **Clinical Social Worker (LCSW):** Master's in social work with California licensure, plus five (5) years of behavioral health experience, including two (2) years of administrative experience.
- **LMFT/LPCC:** Licensure-equivalent training in marriage, family, and child counseling (per January 1981 standards), plus five (5) years of behavioral health experience, including two (2) years of administrative experience.
- **Registered Nurse:** Master's in psychiatric or public health nursing, plus five (5) years of related experience, including two (2) years of administrative experience. Additional post-baccalaureate experience may substitute for education year-for-year.

Desired Qualifications

- Experience as a mental health director or substance use program administrator in a California county similar in size to or larger than Ventura
- Senior executive experience (CEO, CFO, or equivalent) managing a nonprofit or community-based behavioral health organization, including Medi-Cal/Drug Medi-Cal budgeting, funding, HR, contracts, and compliance
- Senior-level management of public programs serving individuals with serious mental illness or SED youth
- Experience as a Division Manager in a comparable California county
- Five (5) years of professional-level administrative experience, with two (2) years in behavioral health
- Bilingual (English/Spanish)

WHAT WE OFFER

In addition to an annual base salary of \$197,129 to \$276,008 (DOQ)

The Director of Behavioral Health & Public Guardian will receive an attractive benefits package that includes:

- **General Salary Increase:** A general salary increase of 3.5%, effective December 20, 2026, and 3.5%, effective December 19, 2027.
- **Educational Incentive:** may be eligible for 2.5%, 3.5%, or 5%, based on completion of an associate, bachelor's, or graduate degree from an accredited institution, not required for the position.
- **Retirement/Social Security:** Defined retirement benefits vest after 5 years of service. The County and you also each contribute to Social Security. For more information, visit: www.vcera.org. If you are eligible, you may establish reciprocity with other public retirement systems, such as CalPERS.
- **Health Plans:** Medical, dental, and vision plans for you and your dependents. A flexible credit allowance of up to \$1,024.11 biweekly.
- **Flexible Spending Accounts:** Increase your spending power by reimbursing you with pre-tax dollars for IRS-approved dependent care and health care expenses.
- **Executive Annual Leave:** 248 hours earned per year, increasing to 288 hours after 5 years of service, to 328 hours after 10 years of service, and to 368 hours after 15 years of service. Credit for prior public service may be considered (Management Resolution, § 1202A).
- **Annual Leave Redemption:** The ability to "cash out" or redeem up to 100 hours of Annual Leave per year after using 80 hours. (Management Resolution, § 1207)
- **Holidays:** 13 paid days per year, including 1 floating holiday to use at your discretion.
- **Deferred Compensation:** You may elect to contribute to one or both of the County's deferred compensation plans (established under Internal Revenue Code sections 401(k) and 457). If you participate in the County-sponsored 401(k) plan, the County will match a part of your contribution up to 3% of your salary, on a per pay period basis. Following 5 years of continuous County service, an additional 2% non-elective contribution will be made to the 401(k) plan.
- **Professional Membership:** Eligible for county-paid membership in professional organizations related to the position.
- **Other benefits include:** Disability Plans; Employee Assistance Program; County-paid Life Insurance; Tuition Reimbursement; Benefit Reimbursement Program; Wellness Program; and WorkLife Program, which includes child care and elder care referrals.



HOW TO APPLY

To APPLY for this exceptional opportunity, please submit a **resume and cover letter** that illustrate your qualifications for the position:

Submit in one of the following ways:

- Submit your resume and cover letter online at <http://www.venturacounty.gov/jobs>
OR
- **E-mail to:** Bill.Friedel@venturacounty.gov

This recruitment will remain open until filled. The first review of resumes will occur the week of August 31, 2026. Applications submitted after that date will be reviewed on a rolling basis. The County reserves the right to advance exceptionally qualified candidates forward in the process at any time, regardless of the review schedule. To receive prompt consideration, please submit your materials by the first review date. All relevant experience, training, and education must be included to determine eligibility.

For more information about this position, please contact Bill Friedel at (805) 654-2419 or at Bill.Friedel@venturacounty.gov

Interview Process

Well-qualified candidates, as evidenced by their CVs or résumés, may be invited to an initial screening interview, which may be conducted by phone, one-way video, or another format at the County's discretion. Candidates who advance will be invited to an in-person panel interview, and top finalists will then meet with the Director of the Health Care Agency and the County Executive Officer for a final interview. The interview process may be consolidated or expanded based on the size and quality of the candidate pool. Selection of the final candidate will require the Board of Supervisors' concurrence.

Background Investigation

The selected candidate may be subject to a thorough background investigation, which may include inquiries into past employment, education, criminal history, and driving record. In addition, the successful candidate will undergo DOJ/FBI Live Scan fingerprinting.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The County of Ventura is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome applicants regardless of age, ancestry, color, disability, family or medical leave status, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital or medical condition, military or veteran status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy-related conditions), or sexual orientation.



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