



SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA ITEM AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Control: 26001654

MEETING DATE: 08/11/2026
LEGAL ENTITY TAKING ACTION: Board of Supervisors
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT(S): All Districts
SUBMITTING AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: County Executive Office
DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSON(S): Jamie Newton, 714-834-2836
Susie Baker, 714-834-2832

REASON ITEM IS SUPPLEMENTAL: Upon direction from the Board of Supervisors, this Agenda Staff Report needs to be scheduled for the August 11, 2026, board meeting. This Agenda Staff Report and attachments were finalized after the filing deadline to the Clerk of the Board.

JUSTIFICATION: Formal Board action is needed to approve the Contract and appointment of Catherine Santiago as the Executive Director for the Office of Independent Review.

SUBJECT: Appointment of Executive Director of the Office of Independent Review

CEO CONCUR	COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	CLERK OF THE BOARD
Concur	Approve agreement to form	DISCUSSION 3 Votes Board Majority
Budgeted: Yes	Current Year Cost: See Financial Impact Section	Annual Cost: See Financial Impact Section
Staffing Impact: No		Sole Source: No
Current Fiscal Year Revenue: N/A	Funding Source: GF: 100%	County Audit in Last 3 years: No
Levine Act Review Completed? N/A		
Prior Board Action: N/A		

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. Consider and approve appointment of Catherine Santiago as the Executive Director for the Office of Independent Review, at an annual salary of \$275,000 and an estimated annual total compensation of \$421,185 including benefits, effective August 17, 2026.
2. Approve and execute the Employment Agreement for the Executive Director.

SUMMARY:

Appointing Catherine Santiago as the Executive Director for the Office of Independent Review at an annual salary of \$275,000 with an estimated annual total compensation of \$421,185, including benefits, will provide objective independent review, and will foster and enhance the efficiency of County operations and

programs that the office oversees: OC Sheriff's Department, Office of the District Attorney, Office of the Public Defender, Probation Department, and Social Services Agency.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Office of Independent Review reports directly to the Board of Supervisors (Board) and acts as an independent reviewer of multiple County departments. These departments include the OC Sheriff's Department, Office of the District Attorney, Office of the Public Defender, Probation Department, and the Social Services Agency. Appointed by and serving at the discretion of the Board, the Office of Independent Review (OIR) Executive Director will review, monitor, assist, and oversee the departments in advising the Board in the investigation of selected internal and citizen complaints and administrative investigations.

The County conducted a nationwide recruitment for the position of Executive Director for OIR with the assistance of executive search firm WBCP, Inc. Of the 89 applications received, seven were placed on the short list. Six of those candidates were interviewed by the County Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO). Three candidates were then referred to an interview with the entire Board. Upon completion of the closed session interviews, the Board provided direction to the CEO to make an offer to Ms. Santiago in the hopes of reaching an agreement. Ms. Santiago is agreeable to the draft employment agreement and all its terms pending the Board's final approval. Ms. Santiago has over twelve years of specialized legal experience with the U.S. Air Force, Department of Homeland Security, Vanguard University of Southern California, County of Los Angeles, Office of the Inspector General and County of Los Angeles, Office of County Counsel. Her legal expertise includes seven years of experience as a criminal attorney in the U.S. Air Force JAG Corps and nearly five years of experience in public safety oversight. Ms. Santiago is currently Senior Deputy County Counsel for the County of Los Angeles in the Justice and Safety Division where she serves as strategic advisor to the Sheriff's Department on policy development, legislative implementation, litigation exposure, and training standards. Prior to that role, Ms. Santiago served as Deputy Inspector General for Los Angeles County, where she exercised independent oversight of one of the nation's largest sheriff's departments. She monitored deputy-involved shootings, in-custody deaths, and other critical incidents, reviewing investigations for legal sufficiency, policy compliance, and systemic risk. Ms. Santiago holds a juris doctorate (JD) degree from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law, and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Vanguard University.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

A suggested salary of \$275,000 has been negotiated. Including the cost of benefits, the total annual cost to the County is anticipated to be \$421,185. Salary and benefits appropriations are included in the OIR's FY 2026-27 Budget for Budget Control 051 and will be included in the budgeting process for future years.

STAFFING IMPACT:

N/A

REVIEWING AGENCIES/DEPARTMENTS:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Employment Agreement OIR