County of Monterey
Board Policy Manual

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Policy Category Government and Administration		

I. Purpose

See attached.

II. Background

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III. Policy

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IV. Procedure

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V. Review Date

a. This Policy will be reviewed for continuance by November 12, 2029.

VI. Board Action

a. Legistar File Number: 24-692, November 12, 2024.

County of Monterey Guidelines for Department Website URL Naming Convention Policy

URLs for Departmental Websites on the County Website

The County of Monterey has been granted ownership of the domain "countyofmonterey.gov," and is in the process of obtaining the domain "Condadodemonterey.gov," from the Department of Technology and the federal .gov Registrar administered by Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). In accordance with "Bill: AB-1637 Local government: internet websites and email addresses", to drive consistency and maintain the protections provided by utilizing this domain, the County of Monterey requires that all County Department websites hosted on the public County Website's Content Management System (CMS) follow the naming convention of:

countyofmonterey.gov/government/departments-a-z/[departmentname]

for example:

countyofmonterey.gov/government/departments-a-h/administrative-office

or the shortened format of:

countyofmonterey.gov/department name

or department abbreviation for example:

countyofmonterey.gov/CAO

Please note that while "https://www." will be displayed in the URL, end users are not required to type this in to reach the address.

Custom/Vanity URLs

As of 2024, there are a small number of County URLs that do not align with the countyofmonterey.gov domain, however Bill AB-1637 allows for "an internet website that is noncompliant with that requirement to redirect that internet website to a domain name that does utilize a ".gov" or ". ca.gov" domain."

An example is a shortened department URL that is using the County's comry.us short URL domain such as https://comry.us/adopt with a final destination of a .gov page https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/government/departments-a-h/health/monterey-county-animal-services/adopt-a-pet.

Shortened URLS such as this may be created for use in things such as online marketing, public outreach, and social media since they redirect back to a countyofmonterey.gov URL.

County departments may request custom/vanity URL that is a non-compliant domain as long as it redirects to a compliant .gov domain. These requests will be reviewed by the County Communications Director and the Deputy Chief Information Officer, who will determine if the request is approved. Requests should be submitted by emailing support@countyofmonterey.gov.

Subdomains for Public Resources or Services Hosted on different Web Servers

Departments that are required to provide resources or services on different web servers where the content cannot be incorporated into the County Website may request subdomains to be compliant. The subdomains should follow the naming convention of:

[service].countyofmonterey.gov

for example:

mc-choice.countyofmonterey.gov

or

Calendar.countyofmonterey.gov

A County Department may request a subdomain for these special use cases where the content cannot be incorporated to the County Website. The request will be reviewed by the County Communications Director and the Deputy Chief Information Officer, who will determine if the request is approved. In addition, ITD Security must sign off on the request after preliminary approval. Requests should be submitted by emailing support@countyofmonterey.gov.

For pre-existing domains that do not align with countyofmonterey.gov exceptions will be considered on a case by, case basis and are subject to approval of the federal .gov Registrar administered by Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

Benefits:

A .gov domain offers several benefits, especially for government entities and associated organizations. Here are some key advantages:

Trust and Credibility: A .gov domain is a trusted source of information because it is only available to government entities and strictly regulated. It signals to users that the website is official and trustworthy.

- **Security**: The .gov domain has stringent security requirements, making it less vulnerable to cyberattacks compared to other top-level domains. This ensures a higher level of protection for sensitive information and data.
- **Official Recognition**: Having a .gov domain provides official recognition of the entity as a legitimate government organization, which can help in building public trust and authority.
- **Consistency and Branding**: A .gov domain helps in creating a consistent and recognizable online presence for government entities, enhancing their branding and making it easier for citizens to find and trust their services.
- **Compliance and Standards**: Websites with a .gov domain are required to comply with specific standards and guidelines, ensuring a certain level of quality, accessibility, and performance. AB1637 requires government agencies to transition the domain to .gov by January 1, 2029.
- **Enhanced Communication**: The credibility of a .gov domain can improve communication with the public, as citizens are more likely to engage with and respond to official government websites.

Overall, a .gov domain reinforces the legitimacy, security, and trustworthiness of government entities online, providing a reliable platform for delivering information and services to the public.