



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: County Administrative Office

Subject: Report on Efforts to Protect and Support Santa Cruz County Immigrant and LGBTQ+ Communities

Meeting Date: February 25, 2025

Formal Title: Consider report on efforts to protect and support immigrant and LGBTQ+ communities, direct the County Administrative Office to work with the Health Services Agency and Human Services Department to allocate \$100,000 for undocumented immigrant legal services and \$100,000 for LGBTQ+ community support services, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Consider report on efforts to protect and support immigrant and LGBTQ+ communities in Santa Cruz County;
2. Direct the County Administrative Office (CAO) to work with the Health Services Agency (HSA) and Human Services Department (HSD) to allocate \$100,000 for undocumented immigrant legal services and \$100,000 for LGBTQ+ community support services;
3. Approve the transfer of appropriations in the amount of \$200,000 from General Fund Contingency for immigrant legal and LGBTQ+ support services, and authorize the CAO to implement the transfer to HSA and/or HSD pending identification of community-based organizations to deliver services; and
4. Direct the CAO to return on or before June 10, 2025, with an update on protecting and supporting immigrant and LGBTQ+ communities residing in Santa Cruz County.

Executive Summary

In December 2024 and January 2025, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolutions 279-2024 and 4-2025, reaffirming Santa Cruz County's commitment to protecting and supporting immigrant communities as a sanctuary county and reaffirming Santa Cruz County's commitment to protecting, serving, and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and people with other gender and sexual identities (LGBTQ+) in their pursuit of health, happiness, and private exercise of bodily autonomy. As an immediate step to further these commitments, staff recommends transferring \$200,000 from General Fund Contingency, with \$100,000 dedicated to undocumented immigrant legal services and \$100,000 dedicated to LGBTQ+ community support services.

Discussion

On December 17, 2024, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 279-2024, reaffirming Santa Cruz County's commitment to protecting and supporting immigrant communities as a sanctuary county. Subsequently, the Board adopted Resolution 4-2025, reaffirming Santa Cruz County's commitment to protecting, serving, and supporting LGBTQ+ individuals and women in their pursuit of health, happiness, and private exercise of bodily autonomy.

These resolutions affirmed the County's role in ensuring that immigrant residents have access to necessary resources and protections against policies that may negatively impact their safety and well-being and emphasized the County's dedication to ensuring continued access to services that allow LGBTQ+ individuals and women to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, free from fear of discrimination or retaliation. The Board also directed the County Administrative Officer to work with community partners to identify opportunities to strengthen resources available to support these communities and maintain and expand essential services.

Recent federal policy changes are targeting undocumented immigrant and LGBTQ+ communities with impacts both local and nationwide, giving rise to an immediate need for resources to protect the health and wellbeing of these county residents. As an immediate step to further these commitments, staff recommends transferring \$200,000 from General Fund Contingency, with \$100,000 dedicated to undocumented immigrant legal services and \$100,000 dedicated to LGBTQ+ community support services. The CAO will work expeditiously, in collaboration with HSA and HSD, to identify community-based organizations (CBOs) to deliver these services, and requests the Board's authorization to implement the transfer of appropriations pending this work. The County has a variety of contracts already in place with CBOs through HSA and HSD, so one or more of these contracts may serve as the mechanism for these additional services.

Additionally, at the State level, Senate Bill No. 2 (SB 2) was signed by the Governor on February 7, 2025, and filed with the Secretary of State on the same day. SB 2 amends the California Budget Act of 2024 to allocate additional State funding for civil legal services and immigration-related support. Specifically, it appropriates \$10 million to the Judicial Council for grants to legal service organizations aiding indigent individuals facing deportation, eviction, wage theft, and other legal challenges; \$10 million to the California Department of Social Services for immigration-related services, including removal defense; and \$5 million to the Judicial Council for grants through the California Access to Justice Commission to support nonprofit legal service providers. Grant funds will be available for encumbrance until June 30, 2026, and for expenditure until June 30, 2028.

The bill takes effect immediately, but the State has not yet released specific criteria detailing how the funds allocated under Senate Bill No. 2 will be distributed. The CAO will track this information, including specific criteria for grant eligibility, application processes, and timelines for disbursement, as it is released by the responsible agencies. The CAO will return on or before June 10, 2025, with an update on SB 2 implementation and local efforts to protect and support immigrant and LGBTQ+ communities.

Financial Impact

The recommended actions will result in a \$200,000 transfer from the General Fund Contingency to support undocumented immigrant legal services (\$100,000) and LGBTQ+ community support services (\$100,000). No new revenue sources are identified at this time, and the General Fund Contingency budget will be reduced by \$200,000 with the transfer of appropriations for immigrant legal and LGBTQ+ community support services (GL Key 131375 Object 98700). With the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget adjustments recommended in the mid-year report, the General Fund Contingency budget has available appropriations of \$7,107,282, excluding the \$1 million restricted contingency for winter storm damage response.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework - Plans, Policies & Budgets, Community Voices & Partnership
Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

Submitted By:

Carlos Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Chat GPT 4.o, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) large language model tool, contributed to the development of this agenda item, including Staff Report, in compliance with the County of Santa Cruz AI Appropriate Use Policy.