



## Santa Cruz County Latino Affairs Commission

701 Ocean Street, Room 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

P: (831) 454-2772 F: (831) 454-2411 TTY/TDD 711

[commissions@santacruzcountyca.gov](mailto:commissions@santacruzcountyca.gov)

[www.scclatinoaffairs.org](http://www.scclatinoaffairs.org)

February 25, 2025

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

Attn: Chair Hernandez

701 Ocean Avenue, St. 500

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Request to Revisit and Increase Funding for Undocumented Immigrant Support Services

Dear Chair Hernandez and Members of the Board,

The Latino Affairs Commission would like to express our sincere appreciation for your ongoing efforts to support immigrant communities in our County. Your leadership in reaffirming our Sanctuary County status and allocating resources for critical services has been invaluable in ensuring that all residents feel safe, protected, and supported.

The County must be ready to respond swiftly and decisively to support our entire community, ensuring that every individual—regardless of their immigration status—feels safe, valued, and supported. The mere fear of deportation and other immigration-related actions can create a ripple effect that negatively impacts not only immigrants themselves but also their families, workplaces, schools, and the broader community. This fear can deter individuals from seeking essential healthcare, reporting crimes, accessing education, or participating in civic life, ultimately eroding trust in institutions meant to serve and protect all residents.

Therefore, the Latino Affairs Commission joins the Community Action Board and the Santa Cruz County Immigration Coalition in their concerns regarding the priorities they've identified, and we respectfully request that the Board revisit your recent decision to allocate only \$100,000 for undocumented immigrant support services. We urge you to reconsider this amount in the coming months and increase the allocation to at least \$150,000 to provide much-needed resources for the following:

1. **Provide Workforce Training on Immigration Issues:** Implement comprehensive workforce training for County employees to ensure that all staff—particularly those in public-facing roles—are equipped to interact effectively and lawfully with immigrant residents and engage appropriately with immigration enforcement officials.
2. **Ensure Adequate Funding for Immigrant Support Services:** Increase financial support for community partners serving the immigrant community to at least \$150,000 to sustain and expand essential services, including:
  - **Deportation Defense Fund:** Providing legal representation for individuals facing deportation proceedings.

- **Bail Bond Fund:** Assisting families with securing release for detained individuals.
  - **Household Support Fund:** Offering financial assistance to families impacted by immigration-related challenges.
  - **Legal and Education Services Fund:** Ensuring access to immigration pathways, personalized case assessments, education, and legal documentation preparation for immigrants. Additionally, providing legal education resources for private businesses, churches, and other entities that serve immigrant communities to ensure they can engage with immigration enforcement appropriately, safely, and effectively.
  - **Family and Child Safety Fund:** Supporting childcare and asset planning for immigrant families.
  - **Mental Health and Community Support:** Expanding access to mental health services and community-based support programs.
3. **Advocate for Additional Local Support:** Urge the Watsonville and Santa Cruz City Councils to allocate funding for these critical immigrant support services, ensuring a coordinated regional effort to protect and assist immigrant communities.
4. **Ensure Transparency in Reporting:** Require the County to make reports from community partners publicly available, allowing the community to monitor the impact of these funds. Reporting should focus on aggregate data, ensuring transparency while safeguarding individual privacy.

Thank you for your dedication to fostering a more inclusive and supportive community for all residents. A proactive, compassionate response is essential in safeguarding the well-being of all community members and reinforcing the values of equity, safety, and belonging. We appreciate your leadership in this area and look forward to working together to ensure that our County continues to uphold its values of equity, safety, and justice.

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Oscar Sanchez

*Commission Chair*

*Santa Cruz County Latino Affairs Commission*

Cc     *Santa Cruz City Council*  
         *Watsonville City Council*