

10. 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 ()



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.

Juliette Rezzato

From: Board Of Supervisors
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 11:23 AM
To: Agenda Management Support
Subject: #10 comment_Smith, J

-----Original Message-----

From: Jo Ellen Smith <forjoellensmith@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2025 1:38 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountycalifornia.gov>
Subject: LGBTQ+ migrant legal services

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Dear Supervisors,

In supplying both of these organizations with \$100,000 from the general fund under the title of emergency. These nonprofit services should be required to document exactly where the funds are spent. So much of our money is supply to nonprofits with no accountability for the spending.

Again Documentation of where the money is actually spent should be mandatory for the donation of \$100,000 each Organization receives.

This is no small sum!

Jo-Ellen Smith
Fifth District
831-247-90 600

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Sent from my iPhone

Juliette Rezzato

From: Board Of Supervisors
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 11:23 AM
To: Agenda Management Support
Subject: #10 comment_Champlin, R

-----Original Message-----

From: GORDON PATERSON <wo8700@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2025 10:47 AM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Money for Immigrants and LGBTQ+

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Are you guys nuts? You have people living on the streets, high crime in certain areas and drug use is running rampant and you want to put more money into Immigrant issues and LGBTQ+ issues. I believe you should first audit the money already going to these groups and determine how to better make use of the funds we have available today. I firmly believe in helping these groups with taxpayer money but not before we audit our existing funds.

Thanks

Rick Champlin

Juliette Rezzato

From: Board Of Supervisors
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 11:22 AM
To: Agenda Management Support
Subject: #10 comment_Laflin, N

From: Nic Laflin <nic.laflin@diversitycenter.org>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 2:03 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Support for agenda item #10 in upcoming meeting

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Hello,

My name is Nic Laflin and I am writing to show my support for agenda number 10: 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 (County Administrative Office).

I would like to voice my support for the County Administrative Office to invest in LGBTQ+ affirming trainings for staff, gender-neutral bathrooms at all county buildings and offsite events, LGBTQ+ protections in county policy (including a non-discrimination policy that names misgendering/deadnaming as harassment) for both staff and community members, LGBTQ+ affirming signage within all county buildings, LGBTQ+ history honored by the county, LGBTQ+ data collected from patients to track if queer people are being served, and forms that honor non-binary identities and chosen names on all county-related forms.

In addition, I am voicing my support for immigrant protections within the county, including each department of the county having an ICE response plan that does not coordinate with ICE, does not cooperate with ICE without a valid warrant, includes the number for YARR and a local immigration attorney, and includes preventative measures such as know your rights signs and red cards at all county buildings for staff and community members to access with ease.

Thank you and have a good day.

Sincerely,

Nic Laflin
District 2 Resident

Juliette Rezzato

From: Board Of Supervisors
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 2:35 PM
To: Agenda Management Support
Subject: #10 comment_Potenzo, L

From: Leslie Potenzo <lp@cruzio.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 1:54 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Please Fully Support Agenda Item 10

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Dear Supervisors,

My name is Leslie Potenzo and I live in Soquel. I have lived in Santa Cruz County for 35 years and I am a small business owner. I work with numerous local organizations on the issues of Social and Racial Justice and Criminal Justice oversight.

In keeping with our county's commitment to the values of equity and human dignity, I am writing to say that I hope you fully support the recommendations in the staff report, (Agenda Item 10), which strengthen the resources available to our undocumented and LGBTQ+ communities at a time where the threats upon them are so serious.

Thank you for your consideration,

Leslie Potenzo
District 1

From: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
To: [Agenda Management Support](#)
Subject: #10 comment_Sexton, P
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 5:06:06 PM

From: pamela sexton <pamelabeth.sexton@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 5:00 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountycal.gov>
Subject: Support immigrant and LGBTQ+ communities

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Dear Supervisors,

I want to voice my support for the proposal to allocate \$100,000 for undocumented immigrant legal services and \$100,000 for LGBTQ+ community support services.

Statements of support by political leaders are valuable, but it is the actual allocation of funds that demonstrates real support.

In my job as an ESL teacher at the Watsonville Adult School, I have the privilege of teaching and learning from an amazing group of students who currently range from age 18 to 76. I regularly hear stories of deep and chronic anxiety related to immigration status, racial discrimination, concerns about separation from their children and/or their children's safety.

As the proud mother of a non-binary child, and part of the queer community, I have followed with horror the attacks on trans and queer youth, and directly felt the impacts of the scapegoating.

Investing dollars, time, care, and attention for these needs now is critical to help strengthen our community against the disgusting national attacks on us all.

Sincerely,
Pamela Sexton
831-254-0451

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When we dream alone, it is only a dream, but when we dream together, it is the beginning of reality.

Juliette Rezzato

From: Board Of Supervisors
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 2:07 PM
To: Agenda Management Support
Subject: #10 comment_King, W

From: Wendy King <wking108@mac.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 6:56 PM
To: Justin Cummings <Justin.Cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Cc: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Funding for immigrant services

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Supervisor Cummings,

As a member of the Welcoming Network, as the child of immigrants, as a local Santa Cruz community member, and as a citizen of our USA, I urge you to increase funding for immigration services from \$100,000 to at least \$150,000. With an estimated 16,000 undocumented individuals in Santa Cruz County, the need for legal, financial, and emotional support has never been greater.

The Santa Cruz County Immigration Coalition (SCCIC), informed by input from over 120 direct and indirect service providers, has identified the following urgent priorities:

- **Deportation Defense Fund (\$25K)** – Legal support for families facing deportation is essential to keeping our communities intact.
- **Bail Bond Fund (\$20K)** – Ensuring access to bail prevents unnecessary detention and family separation.

- **Household Support Fund (\$10K)** – Deportation disrupts entire households, leaving families struggling to meet basic needs.
- **Legal and Educational Services (\$55K)** – Families need access to immigration pathways education, personalized case assessments, and legal document preparation.
- **Family & Child Safety (\$25K)** – Childcare and asset planning help families prepare for the unthinkable, ensuring children’s well-being and financial security.
- **Mental Health & Community Support (\$15K)** – The fear and trauma of deportation impact mental health, and community-based infrastructure, such as rapid response networks, help keep families informed and safe.

The current \$100,000 allocation is simply not enough to meet these growing needs. Increasing funding to at least \$150,000 is a necessary step toward ensuring the safety, stability, and dignity of our undocumented community members—individuals who contribute so much to our local economy and culture.

In these very scary times, I urge you to lead with compassion and justice by increasing this allocation.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Wendy King

Santa Cruz 3rd District

Juliette Rezzato

From: Board Of Supervisors
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 2:22 PM
To: Agenda Management Support
Subject: #10 comment_Solick, R

-----Original Message-----

From: Randa Solick <rsolick@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 9:42 AM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountycalifornia.gov>
Subject: Item 10b

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Please approve funding for protection of our immigrant population. My suggestion would be for the full hundred thousand dollars to go to the Undocufund , to provide legal remedies for people who are apprehended. And we know more money will be needed, but this would be a strong start. Thank you, Randa Solick, Aptos.

Juliette Rezzato

From: Board Of Supervisors
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 1:51 PM
To: Agenda Management Support
Subject: #10 comment_Johnston, P

From: Paul Johnston <paultijo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 5:53 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Cc: Welcoming Network <santacruzwelcome@gmail.com>
Subject: Item 10, support for LGBTQ+ and immigration legal services

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Dear friends,

I am sorry that I will not be able to speak on this item at the meeting tomorrow. I'm sending this notes hoping to ensure that you have a chance to review my comments. By way of introduction to those whom I have not been able to meet: I am a retired public sociologist. In the past I engaged intensely with the Board during community efforts to end past-Sheriff Wowack's use of our jail to hold our neighbors for deportation; I subsequently helped your predecessors draft the language for your sanctuary policy. More recently I am active in the Santa Cruz Welcoming Network. Earlier, while serving as a consultant to Santa Clara County, I helped that county launch the first local office of immigrant affairs in the country.

Throughout these years I have consistently advocated, in many published Op Eds and other forum, for expanded county leadership in immigrant affairs. So I support and applaud your action. I'd also ask you to consider this a first step: please do not stop here. Perhaps you might consider several questions:

1. Will LGBTQ+ support services begin to include support for refugees fleeing to our community due to persecution for their gender identities?
2. Some other California counties have long provided much more funding and leadership in public planning for immigration legal services. Will our county's commitment will be similarly sustained and expanded?
3. By itself this amount of support will not have a significant impact on representation for vulnerable families given the scale of need unless it is part of a meaningful planning effort. Will your staff begin to provide public leadership to build regional capacity in this field?

4. Specifically: might the funds could be allocated through a process that includes needs assessment that leads to a planning process, including identifying additional sources of support and promotes collaborative services and fundraising similar, again, to other counties?

5. Finally: It's widely recognized that our county boundaries are artificial barriers to good planning and community services, especially for immigrant communities centered as they are in the Salinas Valley. Combined public support can help overcome barriers to collaboration, and regional planning can leverage much more significant levels of foundation support. So I can you please direct county planners to engage with their counterparts in the 4-county region that includes Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito and south Santa Clara counties to convene and steer a regional planning effort?

I'd like to note that at a January convening of immigrant-serving agencies on the central coast, Attorney General Bonta advised us that major public foundations which put millions of dollars annually into rural community development in California have approached him to ask where, given these new circumstances, they should direct "a lot of money". He said he had advised them to fund rural immigration legal services in areas like the central coast. I sincerely hope that through collaboration and public leadership YOU can leverage our county's support in a way the makes a meaningful difference in this deeply under-served region.

Thanks for your consideration.

Paul Johnston
831 239-2068