



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

1000 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-4130 | www.santacruzhumanservices.org
RANDY MORRIS, DIRECTOR

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY GROUP (HSAG) July 2026 Meeting Minutes

DATE: July 22, 2026

PLACE: 1000 Emeline Ave., Santa Cruz

TIME: Scheduled 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm

WEB: [Human Services Advisory Group](http://www.santacruzhumanservices.org)

HSAG Members Present

- Denise Hitzeman
- Serg Kagno

Human Services Staff Present

- Randy Morris, HSD Director
- Adam Spickler, HSD Senior Analyst
- Heather Viola, HSD Executive Assistant

1. Welcome

- Brief greeting provided to HSAG members

2. Director's Report

County Update

- Leadership changes in the County Executive Office and Human Services Department shared:
 - (Former) Deputy County Executive Officer Elissa Benson resigned in late May
 - HSD (former) Deputy Director Kimberly Petersen, promoted in June to Deputy County Executive Officer
 - County Budget manager Marcus Pimentel resigned in July
 - HSD promoted Gloria Carroll, former Division Director of HSD's Family and Children's Services (FCS), to be new HSD Deputy Director
 - HSD will hire a new FCS Division Director in the near future
- HSD's June 10 budget presented to and approved by the Board of Supervisors:
 - HSD's budget can be found as [Item 8](#) on the Board's hearing agenda, with presentation starting at the 3:13:15 timestamp on the hearing's [video link](#)
 - Budget included \$26 million in reductions to absorb new costs resulting from federal and state actions, via eliminating 26 HSD positions, reducing some nonprofit contracts, and one-time use of County reserve funds
 - Board approval included direction for HSD to return in September, pending final State Budget results, to recommend what we may be able to do with modest State funding restorations
- Upcoming HSD presentations to the Board of Supervisors in September:
 - Annual Housing for Health (H4H) report on housing & homelessness, with a Point In Time (PIT) Count update

- Status of County's General Assistance program, with recommendations for program improvements

State Budget Update

- The final [State Budget](#) was passed on June 29, and with a great deal of effective advocacy from the California Welfare Director's Association and the California State Association of Counties, some of our agency's most critical funding was preserved across benefits services, adult and long-term care, housing and homelessness, and child welfare.

Federal Update

- The administration announced this week a freeze to Medicaid payments to CA among a small handful of "blue states," over what it claims as a response to "waste, fraud and abuse." In-Home Support Services will be most impacted. We expect this to be challenged in court, and CA will soon determine if emergency conditions will be needed to fund the program while this plays out in the courts.
- We do not anticipate there will be a federal budget update prior to the November "mid-term" election.

3. Advisory topics of interest for round table discussion

HSAG Membership

- The group discussed the possibility of holding an HSAG orientation with the new HSD Deputy Director, Gloria Carroll, and HSAG members
- HSD Director shared efforts underway to start membership outreach, with desire for HSAG member feedback on the focus to keep a Veteran member, a member to represent South County CBOs, and a South County community member—HSAG members approved/agreed with this direction
- Once identified, HSD will send an email to interested parties to formalize new HSAG membership, with information required per HSAG bylaws.

Schedule of Meetings for 2026-27

- Next meeting: Monday 10/5, 10 am at Emeline Ave in Santa Cruz
- December meeting: 12/2, 12:30 to 2:30 pm, location TBD

4. Public engagement opportunities

- HSD provided update on current outreach efforts, including public presentations held on new CalFresh work rules, and the upcoming Veterans Services Office resource outreach event
- Information on HSD website updates also shared

Next meeting: October 5, 2026, ~~10 am to 12 pm~~, 10:30 a m to 12:30 p m, 1000 Emeline Ave., Santa Cruz