



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) February 2025 Meeting Minutes

DATE: February 3, 2025

TIME: Scheduled 3 pm – 5 pm

PLACE: Virtual via Microsoft Teams

HSAG Members Present

- Betsy Clark
- Steven Gray
- Denise Hitzeman
- Serg Kagno
- Karina Moreno
- Lisa Smith

Human Services Staff Present

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

1. Welcome and introductions (upon opening of meeting at 3:05 pm)

2. Director's Report

- Reflections discussed as a group, reflecting on feelings about the first two weeks of the new federal administration and the impacts felt and taking place within our community.
- Local Updates:
 - ✓ Advisory Group stipends—The Board voted on December 17, 2025, to pay Advisory Group members a stipend of \$75 per meeting attended, up to a maximum of 6 meetings per year, unless they opt out of receiving stipends or are a County employee or employee of another public agency serving on an advisory group as part of their official duties. HSD staff will follow up with Clerk of the Board to confirm the process for attaining stipend pay and will share instruction with HSAG membership.

- ✓ New BOS Members—With 2 members of the Board of Supervisors having retired (McPherson—D5, and Zach Friend—D2), Randy advised HSAG members of HSD orientation meetings held with the two new Supervisors (Monica Martinez—D5, and Kim DeSerpa—D2), noting the vast knowledge and experience both the new Board members have with HSD’s agency and programming, and their passion for preserving the safety net, due to their extensive backgrounds in social services.
- ✓ HSD Meeting with City Officials—Randy noted meetings held with the 2 new City Councilmembers in the City of Santa Cruz, to review the work of HSD that overlaps with the responsibilities of city government.
- State Budget Update
 - ✓ Randy reviewed the typical State Budget cycle with HSAG members, as well as reviewing last year’s State Budget process and results.
 - ✓ Randy also shared the initial good news, that Governor Newsom has not included any safety net cuts in his introductory January budget.
 - ✓ Randy also noted that the Governor advised he will be suggesting cuts in the May revise to better align ongoing funding of state services.
 - ✓ Finally, Randy noted that HSD has begun developing our next fiscal year budget, to present in late May / early June to the Board for approval. Because of the timing, HSD’s budget proposal will have “minimal changes, but cuts may be coming, we won’t know what items or how much until the State budget is finalized June 30.” He also noted that all of this lives in the shadow of activities we expect at the federal level to defund “entitlements”.
- Federal Landscape Discussion:
 - ✓ Discussion on impacts of proposed safety net cuts and threatened federal funding freeze, as well as impacts should the ACA be repealed. Further discussed the chaos that is ensuing for local government leaders trying to determine what may be frozen and how to prepare—very time consuming
 - ✓ Reminder of who is eligible for or already receiving Medicaid/Medi-Cal:
 - About one-third of County residents are on Medi-Cal
 - About 40% of those are eligible because of ACA’s Medicaid expansions, as well as State MC Expansion.
 - If the feds repeal Medicaid, about 35,000 to 40,000 people in our county lose Medi-Cal access.
 - ✓ CA has been aggressive in seeking waivers for Medicaid to allow Medi-Cal as a funding source for waiver-exclusive programs.
 - ✓ Randy also reviewed how the sequencing thus far of the federal spending freeze attempts, and the impacts it has had on local

leadership trying to decipher, determine and respond. Members were in agreement as to the waste of time this has caused.

- ✓ The group discussed risks to undocumented immigrants if targeted actions as indicated during the Trump campaign are to be carried out, as it appears to be.

3. Advisory topics of interest for round table discussion

- Review of future meeting structure, agenda, recurrence & membership:
 - ✓ The group discussed its role in being advisors, what we hope to accomplish in the coming year, and what agenda items we should plan to focus on.
 - ✓ Members agreed some in-person meetings would be beneficial, leaving ample time for Member Q&A, and continuing to be sounding boards to Randy on community-impact issues are all good uses of time.
- Review of HSAG Membership & Bylaws Compliance:
 - ✓ Approved bylaws states: "To remain in good standing as a member of the HSAG, members shall... Annually attend at least of 75% of the HSAG's regularly scheduled meetings, either in-person or virtually (both tardiness and absences will be considered when determining a member's annual 75% attendance rate)"
 - ✓ Also confirmed there is no maximum cited in bylaws or county code for membership, just a minimum cited.
 - ✓ Members agreed to have Randy reach out to current HSAG members not in compliance with 75% attendance to determine next steps.
 - ✓ Also, agreement to agendize at our next HSAG meeting, a more focused discussion on how we replace recent vacancies and thoughtfully expand membership.
 - ✓ HSAG members requested more frequent updates emailed to HSAG members from HSD, such as relevant program updates provided to staff, etc. Randy agreed to explore and report back by next meeting, if not share information prior to then.

4. Potential public engagement opportunities

- Members agreed we need to learn more about what to expect from new federal administration prior to planning any public forum/engagement opportunities.

Next meeting: will be determined by members via scheduling poll.