



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)

April 2025 Meeting Minutes

DATE: April 21, 2025

TIME: Scheduled 3 pm – 5 pm

PLACE: Virtual via Microsoft Teams

HSAG Members Present

- Betsy Clark
- Denise Hitzeman
- Serg Kagno
- Jennifer Anderson-Ochoa

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

- **County Updates:**
 - ✓ Reviewed purpose of new County [Protecting Communities](#) webpage that HSD has contributed to.
 - ✓ Advised HSAG members of recent Board of Supervisors (Board) [action](#) taken to provide \$200,000 in service contracts to the two communities most targeted by the new federal administration.
 - ✓ Discussion of County budget hearings and approval [schedule](#), including impacts of potential state budget deficits:
 - Conversation centered on Federal/State/Local funding share percentages of HSD's budget, with Director Morris noting that the HSD FY 2025-26 budget the Board approves in June will likely be a placeholder as State and Federal budget decisions play out, with potential need to return in the fall to revise our budget.

- An HSAG Member asked why our overall County General Fund allocation is so low? Discussion detailed impacts of Proposition 13 from 1978 and the formula set at that time for our County's tax base, which until/unless the state legislature revisits formulas state-wide, remains the lowest in the state, even though Santa Cruz County has the highest percentage of unincorporated geography and population served.
- **Federal Landscape Discussion:**
 - ✓ Discussion included impacts of proposed safety net cuts to Medicaid, SNAP and TANF; potential federal funding freezes related to DEI executive orders; federal gutting of Dept. of Health & Human Services staffing and dismantling of divisions within the department; and risks of future loss of Medicaid waivers like IHSS and CalAIM
 - ✓ The Director also shared with the group a brief explainer of traditional federal funding role it has played historically for County governments to administer Federal and State mandated social services.
- **State Budget Review:**
 - ✓ Director Morris reviewed the effectiveness of Governor Newsom to get resources for our state, as well as the budget advocacy and budget setting process that took place in 2024 for the FY 2024-25 budget, and how we fought successfully against several concerning cuts to our programming last year.
 - ✓ The group acknowledged the January 2025 budget was status quo, budget is aware per media reports that social services cuts could be included in the Governor's May Revise, as announced mid-April based on the structural funding deficit, impacts of the federal economic downturn, and pending federal budget cuts.

3. Advisory topics of interest for round table discussion

- ✓ Update on stipends for HSAG Meeting Attendance
 - i. [Stipend Form](#)
 - ii. [W9 Form](#)
 - iii. [Electronic Payment Agreement](#)
 - iv. [AUD 7 Stipend Claim Form](#)
- ✓ HSAG Staff Liaison confirmed HSAG members who previously submitted required documentation, are all set to start getting reimbursed and will confirm by next HSAG meeting what functions may be needed for stipend payment to occur.
- ✓ Future meeting structure, agenda, recurrence discussed:

- Recurring meetings survey results reviewed, to choose a recurring time.
- It was determined that HSAG staff will send a meeting with recurring time/date/location soon, based on survey and Director availability.
- ✓ Discussion on Preferences for HSAG Membership Expansion:
 - An HSAG Member commented “Participant voices are as important as leadership voices on the HSAG”
 - An HSAG Member voiced concern that we ensure a robust outreach plan to maximize recruiting as many interested parties as possible to apply
 - An HSAG Member voiced interest in ensuring HSD program participants/consumers have opportunities to apply, as well as a need to ensure HSAG membership request applications are ease accessible to complete and incorporate voices of consumers.
 - An HSAG Member voiced their ‘lived experience group’ support experience, and that potential members with lived experience may need additional support to effectively apply and also to participate.
 - An HSAG Member voiced cautionary considerations in how we illustrate inclusion of those with lived experience folks, as we need to find people with an ability to effectively participate as an advisor and should not back away from that as a commitment.
 - Application process discussed:
 - HSAG Liaison staff is in the process of drafting and will use this feedback to create a final draft that also aligns with current commission application and HSAG bylaws, to share with HSAG members to finalize at the June meeting.

4. Potential public engagement opportunities

- HSAG Members agreed that waiting to learn more about what to expect from new federal administration prior to planning any public forum/engagement opportunities, is relevant.

Next meeting: June 25, 2025, 500 Westridge Drive, Watsonville, CA 95076