



# County of Santa Cruz



## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY Agency Administration

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### Press Release

For Immediate Release  
Date: March 26, 2025

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### **SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ANNOUNCES GRANTEES OF FUNDING FOR IMMIGRANT AND LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

Watsonville, CA - Santa Cruz County officials announced the awardees of \$200,000 to support legal services for undocumented immigrants and LGBTQ+ community support services in Santa Cruz County. As directed by the Board of Supervisors on February 25, 2025, these funds will be issued expeditiously. The grantees include:

<b>Legal Services for Undocumented Immigrants: \$100,000</b>		
<b>Community Partner:</b>	<b>Award amount:</b>	<b>Types of services that will be provided:</b>
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Monterey	\$25,000	Free community educational sessions, immigration consultations, and legal representation for low-income individuals on immigration matters.
Community Action Board, Inc.	\$25,000	Free immigration consultations to identify possible paths to lawful permanent residency, case management, and legal representation on immigration matters.
Watsonville Law Center	\$50,000	Legal consultation and representation for immigration matters, including housing, employment, or fraud issues that arise due to a person's immigration status.
<b>LGBTQ+ Community Support Services: \$100,000</b>		
The Diversity Center	\$75,000	Free, identity-affirming mental health counseling, peer support groups, well-being workshops, and visibility events for LGBTQ+ and allied youth, families, adults, and seniors.
Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs)	\$10,000	With support from the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, GSAs will create welcoming spaces for LGBTQ+ and their allies throughout Santa Cruz County.

Queer Youth Task Force	\$10,000	Expanding access to programming for youth participants across Santa Cruz County, such as the Queer Youth Leadership Awards and student-led workshops on mental health and healthy relationships.
TransFamilies	\$5,000	Community outreach, peer counseling, and support groups for families of gender-diverse children and youth of all ages.

Funding for these grants comes from the County’s General Fund Contingency.

“Recent federal policy changes targeting undocumented immigrant and LGBTQ+ communities gave rise to an immediate need for resources to protect the health and wellbeing of these county residents,” said Carlos Palacios, County Executive Officer. “This is an immediate first step to further our commitment to protect and support immigrant communities as a sanctuary county and our LGBTQ+ communities in their pursuit of health, happiness, and private exercise of bodily autonomy.”

Activities related to these funds are set to commence in upcoming weeks, and grantees will provide comprehensive progress reports to the County in spring and summer 2025. County CEO Palacios is expected to provide an update to the Board of Supervisors regarding these local efforts in June 2025.

“We stand firm in our mission to protect and serve our community, regardless of immigration status, race, religion, gender, or any other characteristic. We are deeply grateful for the resilience, strength, and contributions of our community—your dedication makes Santa Cruz County a better place for all. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors for their unwavering support and their commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion for all,” said Adriana Melgoza, Executive Director, The Watsonville Law Center.

“Support from the County of Santa Cruz will strengthen our core programming, including free, identity-affirming mental health counseling, peer support groups, well-being workshops, and visibility events for LGBTQ+ and allied youth, families, adults, and seniors. We are deeply grateful for this investment in our LGBTQ+ center during this urgent and unprecedented time for the queer, transgender, and nonbinary community,” said Cheryl Fraenzl, Executive Director of The Diversity Center.

Find key Santa Cruz County statements and local resources for accessing reproductive care and support services for immigrants and LGBTQ+ communities at [santacruzcountyca.gov/sanctuary](http://santacruzcountyca.gov/sanctuary).

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