COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
1000 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
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RANDY MORRIS, DIRECTOR

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY GROUP (HSAG)
October 2026 Meeting Minutes

DATE: October 5, 2026
TIME: Scheduled 10:30 am – 12:30 pm
PLACE: 1000 Emeline Ave., Santa Cruz
WEB: Human Services Advisory Group

HSAG Members Present
- Denise Hitzeman
- Maria Cadenas
- MariaElena De La Garza *(Temporary Member)*
- Serg Kagno

Human Services Staff Present
- Randy Morris, HSD Director
- Adam Spickler, HSD Senior Analyst
- Heather Viola, HSD Executive Assistant

1. **Welcome**
   - Welcome to new members with overview of HSAG and expansion efforts to date, provided by Director Morris
   - Personal introductions provided by each new and returning HSAG member

2. **Director's Report**

   Future Expansion
   - Director Morris invited members to share what they felt may be missing from the current HSAG structure as a way to help guide expansion. Members noted:
     - Desire to increase being "of service" to HSD and agency director, and identifying how best to be helpful as an HSAG member
     - Better representing HSD in the larger community to support HSD advocacy
     - Using "A Santa Cruz Like Me" candidate pool and matrix to help determine future membership
     - Careful consideration of members with lived experience

   County Update
   - Leadership changes in Human Services Department shared:
     - Dr. Gloria Carroll, former Director of HSD's Family and Children's Services (FCS) Division, promoted to HSD Deputy Director
     - Claudia Herrera-Sandoval, former Deputy Director of FCS, promoted to FCS Director
     - Trish Daniels, former HSD Administrative Services Director, was promoted by CEO to become County Budget Manager
     - Irma Marquez, Director of HSD's Employment & Benefits Services Division (EBSD), announced retirement for end of calendar year 2026

- September 29 Board of Supervisors (Board) meeting included 2 presentations of significance to HSD:
  - Item 8: Updates on the FY 2026-27 Adopted Budget, with presentation starting at the 2:04:15 timestamp on the hearing's video link
    - Adopting the updated budget included $3.5 million in state-funded Medi-Cal and CalFresh administrative support to help mitigate enrollment declines, administrative changes, and new work requirements for both programs, to address HR1 related impacts.
  - Item 9: CORE Subcommittee Recommendations, with presentation starting at the 3:35:15 timestamp on the hearing's video link
    - The Board voted to delay by, no later than the 1st meeting in December, consideration of a modified set of the 9 recommendations brought to the Board by the CORE Subcommittee
- Upcoming HSD presentations to the Board of Supervisors on October 6 agenda:
  - Item 7: Annual Housing for Health (H4H) report on housing & homelessness
  - Item 8: 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 continues what local government experiences as organized chaos, making program administration and funding increasingly challenging.
- We do not anticipate there will be a federal budget update prior to the November "mid-term" election—the results of which could further impact the safety net HSD works to preserve.

3. **Advisory topics of interest for round table discussion**
   - The group discussed timing for state legislative and budget advocacy—Director Morris noted this ticks up for human services agencies after the annual January introduction of the Governor's proposed budget
   - The group also discussed navigating the upcoming budget process for FY 2027-28 and that depending on election results, budget will take on an outsized focus in the year ahead.

Next meeting: December 7, 2026, 12:30 to 2:30 pm, 500 Westridge Drive, Watsonville