



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ HUMAN SERVICES

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JUNE IS ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

Santa Cruz County Strengthens Outreach and Support for Older Adults

In recognition of National Elder Abuse Awareness Month, the County of Santa Cruz is highlighting the importance of preventing elder abuse and ensuring older adults live with dignity, safety and independence. The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors officially [proclaimed](#) June 2026 as Elder Abuse Awareness Month on June 9, 2026, and June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

With more than 64,300 residents age 60 or older, older adults represent 24 percent of Santa Cruz County's population – a figure expected to grow to nearly 30 percent by 2030. Between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025, the County received more than 2,100 reports of elder abuse, including physical or emotional harm, neglect, abandonment, isolation or financial exploitation. Learn more via the County Human Services Department's [Safety & Care Community Dashboard](#).

Despite its prevalence, elder abuse is widely underreported. National estimates suggest that just one in 25 cases of elder abuse are reported to authorities. The County's Adult and Long-Term Care (ALTC) division of the Human Services Department investigates reports of abuse, advocates for people experiencing abuse, and helps them stay safe and independent. ALTC protects elderly and dependent adults ages 18-59, who have physical or mental limitations that restrict their ability to protect their rights. [A new video series](#) highlights stories of older adults who accepted help from ALTC and experienced meaningful improvements in their quality of life.

The County's Human Services Department is working in collaboration with local law enforcement, the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office, the Seniors Council, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, and other community partners to prevent abuse, support victims and hold offenders accountable. This work builds on Santa Cruz County's designation as an Age-Friendly Community, [Age Well Santa Cruz County initiative](#) and ongoing efforts to develop a comprehensive local Master Plan for Aging.

"Elder abuse can affect individuals in every community, but it is preventable," said Alicia Morales, Director of Adult and Long-Term Care for the County. "Together, we can help stop elder abuse by recognizing the warning signs and reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the appropriate authorities. If you believe a loved one, friend, or neighbor may be at risk, speaking up can make a critical difference in protecting their safety, dignity, and well-being."

If you or someone you know may be experiencing elder abuse, confidential help is available. Contact Santa Cruz County Adult Protective Services at (831) 454-4101 or visit santacruzhumanservices.org.

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