



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NEWS RELEASE



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Contact: Jason Hoppin

Jason.Hoppin@santacruzcountyca.gov

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY YOUTH COMMISSION APPLICATIONS OPEN

The County of Santa Cruz is now accepting applications for its newly established Youth Commission, an advisory body that will give young people a direct role in shaping the policies and programs that affect their lives.

The Youth Commission will bring together 11 high school students, ages 14 to 18, from across Santa Cruz County to advise the Board of Supervisors on issues impacting youth. Members will identify community priorities, develop recommendations, and serve as a bridge between young people and local government decision-makers.

To ensure broad and equitable representation, members will be selected through a structured appointment process. Five students will be appointed by each member of the Board of Supervisors. The remaining six seats will be filled with at-large appointments, with preference given to applicants from the following underrepresented groups:

- People of color
- People with a physical or learning disability
- People living in rural or unincorporated areas
- People with an immigrant and/or farmworker family background
- People who identify as low-income
- People who identify as LGBTQ+

This intentional structure reflects the County's commitment to ensuring that young people who have historically faced barriers to civic participation are not just included — they are heard, valued, and empowered to lead.

"The Youth Commission is more than an advisory body — it's an investment in the next generation," County Executive Officer Nicole Coburn said. "We want young people to gain real leadership experience, develop lasting skills, and know that their voices can genuinely shape the future of their community."

Youth Commissioners will meet monthly during the school year and collaborate with County leaders and community partners to identify priorities, develop solutions, and help ensure County decisions reflect the needs and experiences of young people.

Applications are open to all high school students who live and attend school in Santa Cruz County. The application deadline is **May 31, 2026**.

To apply, visit: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/bTRtLzqiTS>.