



City of Santa Cruz

Investing in the Next Generation Toolkit



Fall 2025



City of Santa Cruz

Investing in the Next Generation Toolkit

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Contact Information

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The Well-being of Young People

in the City of Santa Cruz

May 13, 2025

Our Process



Planning meetings

- Councilmembers
- Staff
- Youth Liaisons
- Consultant



Community Engagement

- Bilingual online survey, co-designed by staff and Youth Liaisons
- Youth and Family Town Hall, co-designed and co-facilitated by City staff and Youth Liaisons



Department Updates

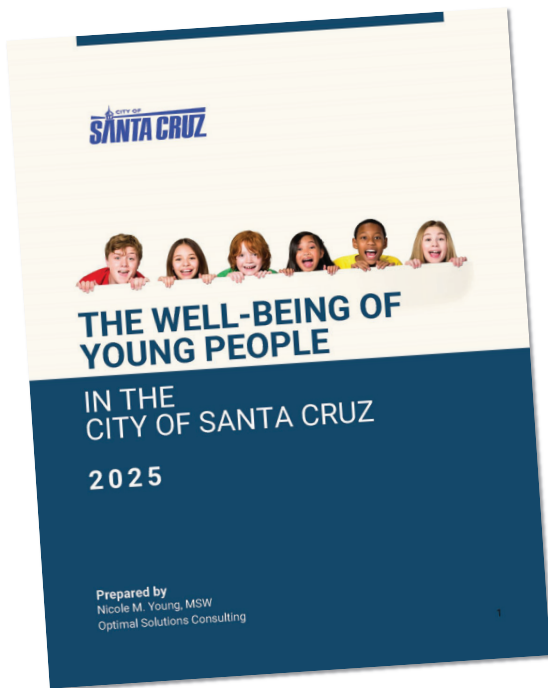
- Actions and accomplishments since the 2023 Well-being report



Data

- Community-level data (specific to City of Santa Cruz)

2025 Well-being Report



- City of Santa Cruz Children & Youth Bill of Rights
- Quick List: Opportunities for Action
- Our Commitment to Young People's Well-being
- City Programs
- Actions & Accomplishments
- Data Snapshot
- Community Insights
- Opportunities for Action
- References

Quick List: Opportunities for Action



Strengths & Promising Trends

1. Youth-centered programming
2. Youth Liaison program
3. Children's Fund grants
4. Strong Start "birth assets"
5. Student well-being

Challenges & Concerns

1. Child care costs and availability
2. Mental health and wellness
3. Substance abuse and risky behavior
4. Education and opportunities
5. Safety

Opportunities for Action

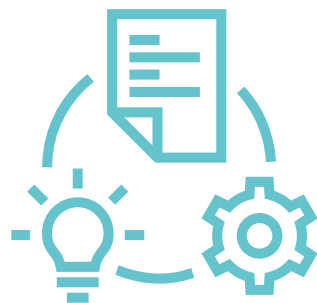
- 1 Continue to develop and/or enhance child- and youth-centered City policies and programs. Amplify the voices and role of young people in City decision-making processes.
- 2 Increase and/or enhance recreational facilities or activities for young people of all ages.
- 3 Engage with young people and families regularly and consistently, in places and ways that are natural and convenient for them.
- 4 Continue to expand and deepen partnerships with other organizations serving children, youth, and young adults.
- 5 Explore new revenue sources. Communicate with the public about how the City is using its current funding and resources to support the well-being of young people and their families.

Youth Liaisons

Insights



Recommendations



Scarlett Folger presenting to CPVAW the planning for Sexual Assault Awareness Month activities at Pacific Collegiate School with Monarch Services

From left to right: Youth Liaisons Sammy Lamber, Alan Lee, Ben Sommerville at the Youth & Family Town Hall

RESOLUTION NO. NS-29,910

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ ADOPTING THE
YOUTH ACTION NETWORK FRAMEWORK AND SUPPORTING CITY PARTICIPATION
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INITIATIVES

WHEREAS, Santa Cruz County's youth connectedness to school and community has been above state average in the last few years, youth leadership and voice continues to be an integral part of promoting youth community connectedness; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Cruz City Council adopted the Countywide Youth Violence Prevention Strategic Plan (2015) in response to the increasing prevalence of youth violence in Santa Cruz County. Their work and impact on the community allowed them to successfully inform and guide practices, policies across the County to allow stakeholders at all levels to work in a coordinated effort to effectively address youth violence prevention locally; and

WHEREAS, after 7-years of collectively working to decrease youth violence in the community, YVPN heard a call to action to center youth voice and leadership within the network. YVPN responded to that call and transitioned to centering youth voice and leadership in its efforts, while continuing to focus on youth-wellbeing through a holistic public health approach; and

WHEREAS, the words "Violence Prevention" will no longer be in the name of the Santa Cruz County Youth Action Network (YAN), the network holds that in focusing on overall youth well-being, in elevating youth voice and leadership to inform decision-making, in strengthening youth-adult partnerships, in focusing on equitable community change, YAN is working to prevent youth violence and other negative outcomes for youth; and

WHEREAS, YAN is a newly reformed community impact initiative comprised of youth and adults working together to identify emerging needs in the Santa Cruz community, creating positive change communally, and working to increase youth-wellbeing through integrating youth voice and youth leadership; and

WHEREAS, YAN has created a framework within the community to center and amplify youth voice and support youth leadership to create positive social change by providing spaces for youth leader, adult allies, and youth-serving organizations to connect and collaborate with one another; and

WHEREAS, YAN is committed to help achieve the goals of promoting youth-adult Partnerships by increasing support to youth from caring adults and in relationships with local decision-makers, amplifying youth voice through meaningful youth participation within Santa Cruz County, and fostering youth leadership development and building youth capacity to create positive change; and

RESOLUTION NO. NS-29,910

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Cruz is committed to working with organizations and initiatives to implement a framework that outlines how the City will amplify youth voice in city decision making.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Santa Cruz that it hereby supports the newly formed Youth Action Network.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor is hereby authorized to appoint a member of the Santa Cruz City Council to serve as champions and bridge builder for the Youth Action Network and advise and support when called upon.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 14th day of December, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Watkins, Kalantari-Johnson, Brown, Cummings, Golder;
Vice Mayor Brunner; Mayor Meyers.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: None.

DISQUALIFIED: None.

APPROVED: _____


Donna Meyers, Mayor

ATTEST: _____


Bonnie Bush, City Clerk Administrator

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-22

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ TO AMEND THE CITY CHARTER TO ALLOCATE 20 PERCENT OF REVENUE GENERATED BY THE CANNABIS BUSINESS TAX TO YOUTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, ADDING A SECTION TITLED, "CITY OF SANTA CRUZ CHILDREN'S FUND."

The people of the City of Santa Cruz ordain as follows:

The City Charter of the City of Santa Cruz is hereby amended as follows:

Section 1. NAME.

This measure shall be known as the "Santa Cruz Children's Fund Act of 2021" (hereinafter, the "Act").

Section 2. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS.

- A. Cities benefit when youth live safe, peaceful, and healthy lives free from involvement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems.
- B. By helping City of Santa Cruz children and youth to succeed in school and graduate high school prepared for college, career, and community, the City of Santa Cruz will benefit.
- C. Fostering the healthy development of young children, ages 0-5 years old, will have a positive impact on the Santa Cruz community.

Section 3. PURPOSE AND INTENT

- A. The chief purpose and intent of this measure is to establish the Santa Cruz Children's Fund to protect and expand funding for services that help children and youth less than 25 years old to be safe, healthy and productive.
- B. This measure allocates audited, actual total annual unrestricted revenues equivalent to twenty percent (20%) of revenue derived from the City of Santa Cruz's Cannabis Business Tax (Santa Cruz Municipal Code Chapter 5.07) to the Santa Cruz Children's Fund.
- C. Monies in the Santa Cruz Children's Fund are to be used to provide services to Santa Cruz children and youth less than twenty-five (25) years old, in accordance with asset-based youth development principles, and placing a strategic priority on serving those children and youth most impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence.

Section 4. SECTION 1432 OF THE SANTA CRUZ CITY CHARTER IS ADDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

“1432. City of Santa Cruz Children’s Fund.

1. Children’s Fund Established. The “Santa Cruz Children’s Fund” is hereby established within the City’s General Fund.
2. The goals of the Santa Cruz Children’s Fund are to support enhancement and expansion of evidenced- based programs to prioritize access to early childhood development, prevention, and vulnerable youth programs, without supplanting existing City of Santa Cruz services or investments.
3. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, effective July 1, 2022, the Santa Cruz Children’s Fund shall receive funds from the City’s General Fund equivalent to twenty percent (20%) of the City of Santa Cruz’s audited total actual annual unrestricted revenues derived from the City’s Cannabis Business tax. The annual amount of revenue for the next fiscal year shall be estimated by the City Manager no later than January 15 of each year, beginning January 15, 2022. Twenty percent (20%) of the estimated amount of the City’s unrestricted Cannabis Business Tax revenue for the next fiscal year shall be deposited in the Fund no later than July 1 of each year. The Director of Finance shall publish the audited actual amount of Cannabis Business Tax revenues for the prior fiscal year not later than January 15 of each subsequent year, beginning January 15, 2022. Differences between the amount of estimated revenues deposited in the Fund and the audited actual amount of revenues for a fiscal year shall be reconciled by an adjustment in the amount deposited in the Fund for the following fiscal year.
4. Monies in the Santa Cruz Children’s Fund shall be appropriated by the City Council to support enhancement and expansion of evidenced-based programs to prioritize access to early childhood development, youth prevention, and vulnerable youth programs. The City Council shall designate a community oversight panel to make recommendations on the use of future revenues in a manner consistent with this Section which may include, but shall not be limited to, representatives of the following:
 - A. The City’s Parks and Recreation Commission;
 - B. The Santa Cruz City School District;
 - C. First Five Santa Cruz;
 - D. Youth Organizations;
 - E. The City Council.
5. Monies in the Santa Cruz Children’s Fund shall not be appropriated or expended for:
 - A. any service which merely benefits children and youth incidentally;
 - B. acquisition, lease, or maintenance of any capital item or real property not for primary and direct use by children and youth; or

- C. any service for which a fixed or minimum level of expenditure is mandated by state or federal law, to the extent of the fixed or minimum level of expenditure.”

Section 5. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act or any application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this section and its applications shall not be affected. To this end, the provisions of this measure are severable.

Section 6. CONFLICTING MEASURES.

The measure is intended to be comprehensive. It is the intent of the People that in the event this measure and another measure relating to establishing the Santa Cruz Children’s Fund to protect and expand funding for services that help children and youth shall appear on the same City ballot, the provisions of the other measure or measures shall be deemed to be in conflict with this measure. If this measure receives a greater number of affirmative votes, the provisions of this measure shall prevail in their entirety, and all provisions of the other measure or measures shall be null and void.

Section 7. CONFLICTING CHARTER PROVISIONS.

Any section or part of any section in the Santa Cruz City Charter, insofar as it conflicts with this Act or with any part thereof, shall be superseded by the contents of this Act

This Charter Amendment measure shall become effective in the manner allowed by law.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by a majority vote of the electorate of the City of Santa Cruz on November 2, 2021.

I, Bonnie Bush, City Clerk Administrator of the City of Santa Cruz, in said County of Santa Cruz, and State of California, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of Ordinance No. 2021-22, which was approved on the 2nd day of November, 2021, by a majority vote of the electorate.

On December 14, 2021, the Santa Cruz City Council adopted Resolution No. NS-29,901 declaring the results of the November 2, 2021 election.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the corporate seal of the City of Santa Cruz, on this 14th day of December, 2021.



BONNIE BUSH
CITY CLERK ADMINISTRATOR



Organizations that Invest in Children's Fund Initiatives

Children's Funding Accelerator: <https://childrensfundingaccelerator.org/>

Heising-Simons Action Fund: <https://www.hsfoundation.org/>

Children's Funding Project: Funding the Next Generation:

<https://childrensfundingproject.org/resource/funding-the-next-generation-a-childrens-fund-campaign-manual/>

Childcare Developer Impact Fees:

Santa Cruz Municipal Code Title 18 Buildings and Construction Ch. 18.48

<https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/SantaCruz/#!/html/SantaCruz18/SantaCruz1848.html>



Roles & Responsibilities

Youth Liaison Roles & Expectations

Youth Liaisons are high school students working with United Way and city staff to represent youth voice in civic processes.

Expectations:

- Attend monthly check-ins with United Way staff
- Engage in informational interviews with local leaders
- Participate in youth-led policy workshops (e.g., *Leaders Unite*)
- Attend city council meetings or provide youth-related updates
- Represent youth needs in planning efforts and advisory groups

City Mentor Roles & Expectations

City Mentors support youth liaisons within city government and help them build confidence in civic engagement.

Expectations:

- Meet monthly with youth liaison(s)
- Introduce youth to city departments and leadership
- Support youth participation in projects or initiatives
- Communicate with United Way to ensure program alignment

**YOUR CITY,
YOUR VOICE**

APPLY TO BECOME A CITY OF SANTA CRUZ YOUTH LIAISON!



Are you a high school student living in the City of Santa Cruz who is curious about how city decisions are made?
APPLY TO BECOME A YOUTH LIAISON TODAY!

BENEFITS

- ✓ **Earn** a stipend for your time and leadership.
- ✓ **Deepen** your understanding of how your city supports its community.
- ✓ **Strengthen** your leadership and communication skills.
- ✓ **Build** meaningful connections with city staff, elected leaders, and peers.
- ✓ **Join** a network of youth leaders shaping change across the county.
- ✓ **Make** a real impact in your community.

COMMITMENTS

- ✓ **Collaborate** regularly with United Way staff and your City Council Mentor.
- ✓ **Engage** with local leaders and community events.
- ✓ **Attend** City Council meetings to bring youth voices forward.
- ✓ **Participate** in workshops to build leadership and advocacy skills.



SCAN TO APPLY TODAY!

Applications close Sept. 16, 2025



**YOUTH ACTION
NETWORK**



UNITED WAY
Santa Cruz County

City of Santa Cruz Youth Liaison Application



Name:

Age:

School:

Grade as of September:

Home Address

Phone:

E-Mail:

Why do you want to serve as a Youth Liaison for the City of Santa Cruz?

What are the three most important issues to you, your friends and your family concerning the City of Santa Cruz?

Please list any other activities you will be involved in during the school year. Include employment, sports, community or school groups.

What personal skills and characteristics do you possess that would make you a good representative?

If you could bring one thing to this city or change one thing, what would it be?

Are you interested in serving as a non-voting member of any of the following City Commissions?

Children's Fund Advisory Committee

Commission on Prevention of Violence Against Women

Parks & Recreation Commission

References: A reference can be a teacher, mentor or anyone who knows you. No family members.

Reference #1: Name

Phone Number

Reference #2: Name

Phone Number

I have read and understand the commitment required for the Youth Liaison position.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Permission: I give my permission for my child to seek the position of youth liaison for the City of Santa Cruz.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Date:

Telephone Number: