



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jason Hoppin

831-454-3401

### COUNTY NABS THREE CSAC AWARDS

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to receive statewide recognition for innovative programs to address community behavioral health, the housing crisis and environmental protection.

Each year, the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) honors innovation and best practices in county government through their Challenge Awards program. This year, Santa Cruz County was honored with a Challenge Award for its Zero Waste Plan, a Merit Award for coordination of the HOPES Team, and a Merit Award for its ADU Toolkit.

"I'm proud that Santa Cruz County is demonstrating a commitment to innovation, effective partnerships and a focus on results for our community. These awards are a validation of the work we've done, and continue to do, to improve the lives of our residents," Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Chair Ryan Coonerty said.

"CSAC is proud to spotlight county innovation and resiliency through these awards," CSAC Executive Director Graham Knaus said. "As our counties continue to face new challenges, they are constantly developing solutions to best meet the needs of their communities. The programs receiving these annual awards exemplify the outstanding work that can be found throughout California's 58 counties."

The County's Zero Waste program won a Challenge Award for its suite of environmental initiatives that has become a model for other counties and has led to statewide change. By coordinating across multiple projects, the county has made meaningful progress to protect the environment, including: a groundbreaking franchise waste hauler agreement that serves as a foundation for increased waste diversion; ongoing measurement of the waste and recycling streams allows for fine-tuning collection, sorting, marketing and education programs to meet rapidly changing conditions; expanded outreach and education including school partnerships; new illegal dumping prevention programs; a commercial organics diversion program that



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now includes more than 100 businesses, resorts, schools and hospitals; a leadership role in stopping many problematic products at the source including bans on plastic bags and Styrofoam, the first plastic straw ban in the U.S., strict requirements for recyclable and compostable food service ware, and a ban on small plastic bottles of personal care products in hotels and motels; innovative Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs; and more. See <http://dpw.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Home/RecyclingSolidWaste/ZeroWastePlan.aspx>.

The County's Homeless Outreach, Proactive Engagement Services (HOPES) Team won a Merit Award for bringing together new and existing resources to serve homeless individuals using an integrated service model including health and behavioral health providers, crisis services, outreach specialists, veteran providers and criminal justice personnel. The HOPES Team helps assure client needs are being met, regardless of which partner first engages with the client or how they enter services and includes a high level of community engagement. See <https://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/BehavioralHealth/HOPESTeam.aspx>.

The County's ADU Toolkit won a Merit Award for empowering residents to be part of the solution to the housing crisis by simplifying and incentivizing permitting processes, building on work by the Board of Supervisors to dramatically expand the use of accessory dwelling units to meet community housing needs. The Toolkit includes a GIS tool for property owners to see if they are eligible to build ADUs and receive answers to common questions; an online fee and construction cost estimator; a cash flow estimator tool; graphic-rich how-to guides; links to online resources, including builders' websites and pre-designed ADU plans; and more. The program also includes a forgivable loan program to create more affordable units, and an elimination of building fees for smaller units to promote affordable-by-design housing. See <http://www.sccoplanning.com/ADU.aspx>.

Representatives from CSAC will be present at the Oct. 22, 2019 Board of Supervisors meeting to present team members with each award.