



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER



NEWS RELEASE

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CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER GIRALDO TO RETIRE AFTER 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

After three decades of dedicated public service—including 12 years as Chief Probation Officer—Fernando Giraldo has announced his retirement from the County of Santa Cruz, effective July 25.

As the first Latino Chief Probation Officer in County history, Giraldo's leadership has been marked by efforts to center community-based solutions, reduce youth incarceration, and strengthen public safety through evidence-based practices. Among his many achievements:

- Developing services that significantly reduced out-of-home placements for Latino youth;
- Creating the PARK Day Treatment Programs in North and South County;
- Launching the Luna Evening Center and restorative programs focused on cultural responsiveness;
- Establishing Probation Success Centers in North and South County and a Pretrial Division;
- Securing more than \$30 million in competitive grant funding, including over \$12 million in Proposition 47 grants;
- Overseeing key infrastructure projects, including the renovation of Juvenile Hall and construction of a new youth gymnasium; and
- Developing the Secure Youth Treatment Facility and Camp program.

Giraldo has served in statewide leadership roles and has been named Employee of the Year, Community Hero, and 2025 Visionary Chief Probation Officer of the Year by the California Office of Youth and Community Restoration.

"It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve the people of Santa Cruz County," Giraldo said.

"Santa Cruz provided the ideal setting to lead transformative justice initiatives rooted in equity, compassion, and innovation. I am deeply thankful to have walked this journey alongside an exceptional team of professionals whose unwavering commitment has helped make our department a national model of excellence."

As part of a thoughtful succession plan and in collaboration with the Superior Court, Assistant Chief Valerie Thompson will be appointed to serve as Interim Chief. A nationwide recruitment will be conducted to identify a permanent replacement who will continue to advance the department's mission of justice, equity, and community safety.