



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060-4073
(831)454-2000 | www.santacruzcountyca.gov
Nicole D. Coburn, County Executive Officer

News Release

Date: January 27, 2026

Contact: Jason Hoppin

jason.hoppin@santacruzcountyca.us

BOARD FORMS S.H.I.E.L.D. SUBCOMMITTEE TO PROTECT COMMUNITY FROM ADVERSE FEDERAL ACTIONS

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors today authorized the creation of an ad hoc Board subcommittee — S.H.I.E.L.D. (Safeguarding Health, Inclusion, Essential Services, and Local Defense) — to help prepare the County for the potential impacts of increased federal immigration enforcement activity.

The S.H.I.E.L.D. subcommittee will be comprised of Board Chair Monica Martinez and Supervisor Felipe Hernandez and will work with County staff, community partners, and regional agencies to ensure Santa Cruz County is prepared to respond in a coordinated, lawful, and timely manner while protecting access to essential services for all residents.

Santa Cruz County has long affirmed its commitment to being a welcoming and inclusive community, including reaffirming that County resources will not be used to enforce federal civil immigration law based solely on immigration status and investing in legal and community support services. Recent federal policy shifts and expanded funding for immigration enforcement have heightened concerns about potential impacts to local families, workers, schools, and essential services.

“South County families are already feeling fear and uncertainty,” Fourth District Supervisor Felipe Hernandez said. “This effort is about making sure people can continue to go to work, take their kids to school, and seek healthcare without fear. S.H.I.E.L.D. gives us a way to prepare responsibly, work with trusted community partners, and respond quickly if our residents are impacted.”

The subcommittee will collaborate closely with community-based organizations that work directly with immigrant residents. It will also coordinate with regional counties

SERVING THE COMMUNITY | WORKING FOR THE FUTURE



through ongoing inter-county convenings focused on preparedness and shared strategies.

“As a County, we have a responsibility to be proactive, not reactive,” said Board Chair Monica Martinez, of the Fifth District. “S.H.I.E.L.D. allows us to bring together staff, community partners, and regional allies so we can protect access to essential services and uphold our values — even as federal actions continue to evolve.”

Over the past year, the Board of Supervisors has taken several measures to address federal actions and protect the local community, including resolutions in defense of the U.S. Constitution and civil liberties, to protect LGBTQ+ and women’s rights, to affirm the County’s sanctuary status, and to oppose renewed oil and gas exploration off the coast of California.

Additionally, the County provided \$200,000 for legal services for undocumented immigrants and LGBTQ+ community support services, and set aside \$500,000 to provide food to needy families during the federal government shutdown.

The County has also printed and distributed thousands of “Know Your Rights” red card, and has provided important resources for those affected by federal actions. For more information, visit [Sanctuary](#).