

2022-2023 Annual Report



Pictured: Speaker of the Assembly, Robert Rivas with HSCC Executive Director Elaine Johnson



A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on the past 2 years, I am filled with immense gratitude for the journey we've embarked upon. I am honored to present our annual report which culminates my first year and a half of serving as the Executive Director of Housing Santa Cruz County (HSCC). It has been a time of building momentum as a new organization, doing the critical work to lay the foundation for growing public support, and building political will.

As I reflect on the past year and a half, I am humbled by the remarkable strides and collective efforts that have brought the community closer to our shared vision of making Santa Cruz County a healthy, vibrant place for people to live and call home. Our annual report highlights some of our achievements which stand as a testament to the dedication and collaborative efforts of our team, and we are excited to share our plans for what is next.

It is the stories of transformation and impact that fuel our mission. As we have celebrated affordable housing project groundbreaking and project completions throughout the year, I have also had the honor to work with some local leaders and families that are underrepresented in our community. Listening to their stories and eagerness to be a part of the housing solution is so inspiring. Having people who are most impacted at the table helps move the needle forward. These narratives illuminate the real difference we are making in the community.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the possibilities the future holds. Our goals for the upcoming year include continued, dedicated advocacy for housing solutions throughout the county, working with all local jurisdictions on the implementation of the Housing Element goals, gearing up for another successful Affordable Housing Month to bring hundreds of community members together, as well as playing a major role in a City revenue measure that would bring funding into the community for housing development.

Finally, I want to extend my appreciation to our dedicated staff, Board, committed volunteers, supportive donors, and engaged stakeholders. Your unwavering support and dedication are the driving force behind our accomplishments. I am excited about the future ahead as we work together to further our work in Santa Cruz County.

ELAINE JOHNSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



HOUSING
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Mission and Value Statement

Mission

Our mission is to ensure Santa Cruz County is an inclusive, thriving, just, diverse, culturally rich and sustainable community by promoting affordable, safe, stable homes for local residents and workers.

Value Statement

We all rely on one another to make our community work: From local workers and families to our seniors and vulnerable community members; from the farmworkers who pick our food to the store clerks who sell us our groceries; from the teachers who care for our children to the home care workers who care for our parents.

Through public advocacy, community education, and democratic accountability, Housing Santa Cruz County (HSCC) commits to continually transforming Santa Cruz County into a thriving community where everyone has a place to call home.

Where We've Been

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past two years, we are thrilled to share the remarkable progress toward our 2022-2023 goals at Housing Santa Cruz County. Your unwavering support has been instrumental in driving meaningful change, and together we have achieved significant milestones. With the strides we've made together thus far, we are excited to share some numbers that highlight the impact of our collective efforts at Housing Santa Cruz County (HSCC).

In the pursuit of affordable housing advocacy, we've sent over 100 letters to elected officials, and provided testimonies at over 20 policy hearings, engaging with decision makers to increase affordable housing opportunities and policy.

In late 2022 we pushed our "Housing is on the Ballot" campaign, an education and advocacy drive wherein we hosted candidate forums in North and South County, covering the different council, supervisorial, and state level candidates for office. We also collected candidate questionnaires and video messages geared towards affordable housing, and made those responses public via our website, newsletter, and social media.

During Affordable Housing Month 2023, (AHM), we hosted meaningful conversations with Dr. Tiffany Manuel, founder of TheCaseMade, and over 70 community leaders on the importance of changing the narratives and making a case for affordable housing and community partnerships. We heard from community leaders after these events how the perspectives Dr. Manuel shared will shape the direction of their annual work.

We also invited Shane Phillips, author of *The Affordable City*, to be the keynote speaker for the AHM kickoff event. His insights and vision for a more equitable housing landscape was well attended and received.

In addition to our special events, we led 14 additional AHM events that were hosted or co-hosted by community partners. We want to thank our staff, volunteers, and committed community for the tremendous, year-long commitment it takes to prepare for and successfully execute these 16 AHM events.

AHM 2023 built on progress made the prior year, which featured 13 events total, including events such as our "Housing for a Healthy Watsonville" forum and the and the "The Plan For More Affordable Housing: Influencing the Housing Element Process" housing forum.

Our signature event in 2022, "Affordable Housing Straight Talk: Local Leadership Tells Us How It's Delivering on Needs" was co-hosted with Lookout Santa Cruz and featured a "first person" report from each of the local government jurisdictions in Santa Cruz County featuring 4 City Mayors and the Chair of the County Board of Supervisors.

We are honored to be the lead organizer for Santa Cruz County's Affordable Housing Month and will continue to hold May as a pillar month for affordable housing advocacy, education, and progress.

For more information on past Affordable Housing Months, and how to get involved for 2024, please visit: <https://www.housingsantacruzcounty.com/affordable-housing-month>



Pictured: HSCC Staff, Board Members, and Supporters pictured with Author and Keynote Speaker Shane Phillips, at HSCC's Affordable Housing Month 2023 Kickoff Event.

Where We're Headed

2023 - 2025 Strategic Plan Goals

As we envision the year 2024, Housing Santa Cruz County (HSCC) stands committed to playing a major role in shaping the city revenue measure and fostering a future where affordable housing is accessible to all. Our multifaceted approach revolves around collaboration, education, advocacy, and community engagement. Some key goals for 2024 are:

1.) City of Santa Cruz Revenue Measure Engagement: HSCC will actively contribute to the development and success of a revenue measure in the City, recognizing its significance in creating real opportunity for Affordable housing initiatives and projects.

2.) Affordable Housing Month Expansion: Building on past successes, we will further expand Affordable Housing Month, bringing together hundreds of community members for education, advocacy, and engagement.

3.) Advocacy and support for Housing Projects: HSCC will continue to provide advocacy and support for ongoing and new housing projects, ensuring they align with our vision for a more inclusive and accessible housing landscape.

4.) Advocate for Policies: HSCC remains committed to advocating for impactful policies at the local and state levels.

5.) Partnerships with Local Organizations: Collaborating with other local organizations, HSCC will leverage collective strengths to amplify the impact of affordable housing.

6.) Representation of Underrepresented Communities: Recognizing the importance of diverse perspectives, HSCC will actively collaborate with underrepresented community members to ensure their voices are heard.

7.) Hosting Community Engagement Meetings: Hosting a series of community engagements. HSCC will facilitate open dialogues, ensuring community members have a platform to voice their ideas, concerns, etc.

8.) South County Housing Strategies: HSCC will work closely with partners in South County, tailoring housing strategies to address the unique needs of the region.

9.) Collaboration with City and County Leadership: Continue to strengthen partnerships with city and county leaders throughout Santa Cruz County to ensure our advocacy efforts align with the broader community goals and priorities, including Housing Element Commitments

10.) Support for Local Sales Tax Measures: Collaborating with the City and County, HSCC will extend support for local sales tax measures that contribute to funding and sustaining affordable housing initiatives.





PILLARS OF ACHIEVEMENT

PROJECT ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY:

We successfully provided assistance, support, and advocacy to over 14 projects containing affordable housing units. Your support allowed us to navigate the complexities of the approval process, making a tangible impact on the availability of affordable homes in our community.

ADVOCACY AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEETINGS:

We actively spoke at local government jurisdiction meetings, championing specific affordable housing projects and endorsing policies aimed at increasing the supply of affordable homes. Your support empowered us to be strong voices and constant for change within our local communities.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT:

Our commitment to community education and engagement was evident through the hosting/co-hosting or playing a major role in 12+ impactful events on critical housing topics, throughout Santa Cruz County, fostering awareness and understanding of the challenges and solutions surrounding affordable housing.

PRO-HOUSING DESIGNATION INITIATIVE:

We initiated conversation with at least one jurisdiction this far to see the Pro-Housing designation from the state. It was great to give recognition to The City of Santa Cruz this year for receiving this esteemed award.

APPROVAL OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS:

Through relentless advocacy, we contributed to the approval of affordable housing units across multiple local jurisdictions.

These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our community and the meaningful change we can drive when we stand together. As we look ahead to 2024, we recognize the immense opportunities before us, from influencing Housing Elements to advocating for crucial revenue measures.

As we embark on the journey ahead, we invite you to continue standing with us. Your contribution will enable us to do even more in 2024, seizing every opportunity to make a lasting impact on the lives of those in need of housing.

OUR PILLARS OF ACHIEVEMENT LED TO...

POLICY ADVOCACY:

- Assembly Constitutional Amendment 1
- Senate Bill 4
- Senate Bill 423
- Senate Bill 862
- Assembly Bill 531
- Senate Bill 886
- Assembly Bill 2011
- Assembly Bill 2097
- Assembly Constitutional Amendment 14
- NO on Measure O
- YES on Measure N
- YES on Measures K & L
- Housing Element for each jurisdiction

SPEAKING AT PUBLIC MEETINGS/EVENTS:

- Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Meetings
- City Council Meetings across jurisdictions
- Santa Cruz Planning Commission Meetings
- Neighbors to Neighbors (Guest speaker)
- Cradles to Careers- Family L&L Circle Workshops (Panel)
- Our Downtown Our Future Housing Summit (Panel)
- MBEP Practical Housing Policy: Increasing Supply and Affordability (Panel)
- United Way Real Cost Measure Event (Panel)
- The Free Guide's Don't Give Up on us Now Event (Moderator)

PROJECT ADVOCACY:

- Par 3 site
- Metro Project
- Peace Village Project
- Park Haven Plaza
- Pacific Station housing complex
- Cedar Street Apartments
- Downtown Library Affordable Housing Project
- Natural Bridges Apartments
- Bienestar Plaza
- Sparrow Terrace
- 314 Jessie Street
- 831 Water Street

ADVANCING AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

- City of Santa Cruz bond measure
- County of Santa Cruz Sales Tax
- City of Santa Cruz Sales Tax



Pictured: Elaine moderating a panel on local housing solutions

COMMUNITY TESTIMONIALS

“As a state elected official, I'm genuinely inspired by Elaine Johnson's leadership at Housing Santa Cruz County. Her passion for affordable housing and commitment to our community is remarkable. With her unique blend of legal expertise and dedication to social justice, Elaine is making a significant impact. It's a privilege to collaborate with her and witness the positive changes she's bringing to Santa Cruz County.”

-Gail Pellerin, California State Assembly Member, District 28

“Dr. Tiffany Manuel [HSCC Affordable Housing Month] reminded me of how our language impacts our individual and collective actions. In her work, she highlights that successful social change movements start with foundational narratives that “win hearts, change minds, and grow impact.” We need to broaden our message to be more inclusive if we're going to see progress on homelessness and affordable housing issues. A lack of stable, safe, and healthy places to live for people in our communities impacts all of us.”

-Dr. Robert Ratner, Director, SC County Housing for Health Division

“Collaborating with Elaine and Housing Santa Cruz County (HSCC) has helped Santa Cruz Public Libraries (SCPL) better inform the public about the housing crisis and be an active partner in identifying solutions to this significant community issue. We are very grateful for the opportunity to work with Elaine and the HSCC team and look forward to future collaborations working towards a more equitable and inclusive Santa Cruz.”

-Jesse Silva (she/her), Community Outreach Librarian, SCPL

“Housing Santa Cruz County, led by Executive Director Elaine Johnson, passionately advocates for access to secure, stable, and affordable housing. Through strategic collaboration, HSCC supports the vision that everyone in the community has access to safe and affordable homes. Johnson's advocacy and innovative strategies position Housing Santa Cruz County as a trusted force for positive change, championing the fundamental right to housing for every community member.”

-MariaElena De La Garza, Executive Director, Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County

“We're so grateful to be able to partner with Elaine and Housing Santa Cruz County to elevate the voices of BIPOC families who have been disproportionately impacted by our housing crisis, and who deserve to be heard and included in charting our path forward.”

-Allison Guevara, Social Impact Consultant

Meet our dedicated 2022-23 Board of Directors

Thank you to these dedicated community leaders who volunteer their time to guide HSCC's efforts toward further success.



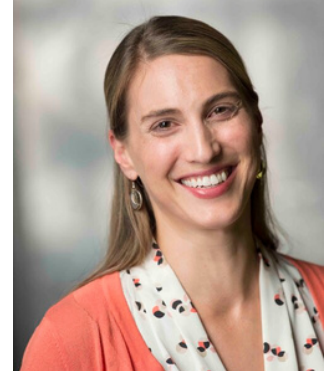
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Former Mayor of
City of Santa Cruz



Elisa Orona, Vice Chair
Senior Director,
San Francisco Foundation



Jane Barr
Affordable Housing
Consultant



Alina Harway
Communications Director,
Nonprofit Housing Association



Andrew Goldenkranz
Chair, SC County
Democratic Party; COPA



Paz Padilla
Programs and Impact Director,
Community Action Board of
Santa Cruz County



Erica Padilla-Chavez
CEO, Second
Harvest Food Bank



Sibley Simon
President,
New Way Homes



Adam Spickler
Cabrillo College Trustee



Gretchen Regenhardt
Former Regional Directing Attorney,
CA Rural Legal Assistance



Tim Willoughby
Chair, Affordable Housing NOW

Meet Our Team



ELAINE JOHNSON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elaine Johnson was born and raised in the Bronx, New York City, where she first learned the importance of community and being of service. She understood early on the value of community and how important it is to support everyone, including those who were underrepresented with the same opportunities afforded to others, and that it didn't matter if one was raised in a 'housing project;' that the possibilities were just as endless for her as they were for others. She is passionate about advocating for affordable housing, creating positive change in her community, and leveling the playing field so that everyone can have a safe, stable place to call home, regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic background. She believes that having a home is a human right for all.

Elaine holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and a Juris Doctorate from Monterey College of Law and is a certified mediator. She has worked in the fields of juvenile dependency, and mediation, and has extensive experience collaborating in the community around restorative justice, housing, and campaign management.



JORDAN TAYLOR ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Jordan Taylor has been providing administrative and technical support to Housing Santa Cruz County since our founding in 2020. Since he joined the team, he has helped to create our website, establish and grow our social media presence, oversee the creation and distribution of our newsletter and other materials, develop and execute a range of event and action campaigns, build out our internal systems, and represent HSCC across the community.

Jordan was born and raised in Santa Cruz County and became aware of the housing crisis at a very young age.

Jordan holds a Bachelors Degree in Political Science from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA.

Thank you

to our Supporting Sponsors!



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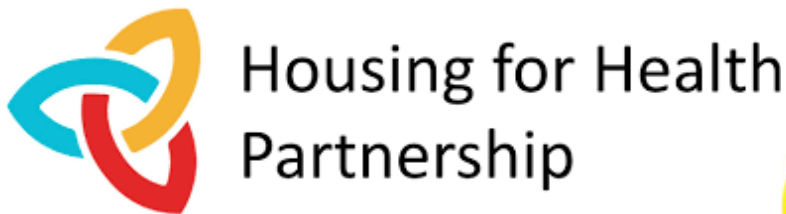


Temple Beth El
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Thank you

to our Premier Sponsors!



The Meadow Fund

Salud Para La Gente

Working Together for a Healthy Community

AND A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO OUR INDIVIDUAL DONORS WHO HELP
TO SUPPORT OUR ORGANIZATION AND KEEP OUR ADVOCACY MOVING.

While we cannot name everyone who donated, please know that we are so thankful for your dedicated support. We are a small team, but knowing that we have the communities support behind us makes us feel mighty as ever!

BECOME A SUPPORTER OF HSCC TODAY!



If, like us, you believe:

- Santa Cruz County is facing a housing crisis made worse by COVID and the wildfires, floods, and other external factors.
- All of our neighbors: teachers, farmworkers, social workers, seniors, people with disabilities deserve an opportunity to live in Santa Cruz County.
- The lack of affordable housing is forcing families and young people into overcrowded living, or to leave our community.
- Healthy, happy communities are diverse communities.
- Climate Change can be mitigated through smart, affordable and sustainable housing solutions.
- Our elected officials need to be held accountable and support housing.
- More members of our community need to be informed and engaged on the critical need for affordable housing; recognizing that housing systems and resources are not easy to navigate for some of our community members, leaving their voices out of decision making process.
- Our systems need to do a better job at engaging with those who are most marginalized due to economic status, immigration status, language barriers, and structural racism.

Then now is your chance to **join Housing Santa Cruz County** in helping to build a more affordable Santa Cruz County for all.

Our fiscal sponsor, New Way Homes, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and because no goods or services were provided by our organization in return for the contribution, **your contribution is tax-deductible** to the extent allowed by law. New Way Homes tax ID # is 47-4091853.

You can make your donation online at:

<https://www.housingsantacruzcounty.com/join-us>

or mail a donation check to:

Housing Santa Cruz County

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Santa Cruz, CA 95061