



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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COUNTY RECEIVES TWO CSAC CHALLENGE AWARDS

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce it has [been awarded two Challenge Awards](#) by the California State Association of Counties, the organization's highest honor.

The County was honored for its interactive budget website and a countywide, cross-jurisdictional effort to examine local criminal justice policies and practices. The awards were chosen from 370 entries across the State, while Santa Cruz County was one of 14 counties to be honored and one of four to receive multiple awards.

"These awards are an endorsement of the work we are doing on behalf of residents," County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios said. "It is gratifying to see our efforts to create positive change for local residents recognized on a statewide level."

One award was for a first-of-its-kind policy review of local criminal justice policies led by the Criminal Justice Council (CJC). The independent review was conducted by Applied Survey Research and examined policies in five local law enforcement agencies such as use of force, body cam footage disclosure, implicit bias and de-escalation training, use of restraints and more. The effort was led by CJC Chair and Santa Cruz County Supervisor Zach Friend and Supervisor-elect Justin Cummings.

"When done well, law enforcement policies can build transparency and trust within the communities they serve," Supervisor Friend said. "We believe we have created a national model for looking at how use-of-force and transparency policies and hope that other jurisdictions follow our blueprint for their communities."

Another award was for the County's online, interactive budget website, allowing residents to intuitively follow county budgeting in depth and see how it connects to strategic and operational objectives. The website is available [at this link](#).

"A budget is a statement of values, but most budget documents are difficult to follow for residents. By providing it as an interactive site within our Strategic Plan, we made our budget decisions more accessible, either on your phone or computer, and showed our community how it supports our values," County Budget Manager Marcus Pimentel said.