



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
Public Health Division

1070 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-7519 Fax: (831) 454-4770
santacruzhealth.org



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Date: April 22, 2026

Contact: Corinne Hyland

(831) 566-4370

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY LAUNCHES YOUTH SURVEY TO ELEVATE YOUTH VOICES ON SUBSTANCE USE AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Santa Cruz County, CA — A new countywide effort is underway to better understand the experiences, perspectives, and needs of young people related to substance use. The *2026 Santa Cruz County Youth Substance Use Spotlight* study is now inviting youth and young adults ages 13–20 to participate in a short, confidential survey.

Led by Applied Survey Research in partnership with the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, the study aims to gather direct input from youth to help inform more effective prevention, education, and support strategies across the county.

The **10–15 minute survey** asks youth about topics such as:

- Experiences and perceptions related to substances
- Where they get information and support
- Barriers to accessing services
- What is working—and what could be improved

“There’s no better way to help achieve their goals than by asking for their help and guidance. Young people know what is happening and what it will take to provide the support that they deserve,” said Susan Brutschy, President of Applied Survey Research. “This is a chance to honor their experiences and ideas.”

Participation in the survey is:

- Voluntary and anonymous
- Open to youth and young adults ages 13–20 in Santa Cruz County
- Designed to be completed in approximately 10–15 minutes
- Incentivized with a \$20 gift card

The study has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), ensuring that all research activities meet strict standards for protecting participant privacy, confidentiality, and safety. As approved, parent or guardian consent is not required for youth to participate in this anonymous survey.

Community-based organizations, youth-serving programs, and local partners are helping to share the survey directly with youth to ensure broad and diverse participation.

"Improving community health is a shared effort, and we are committed to honoring the principle of "nothing about us without us," said Dr. Lisa Hernandez, Santa Cruz County Health Officer. "We invite local youth to share their experiences and perspectives by participating in this survey because their voices are invaluable."

Youth and young adults can take the survey here:

https://asr.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9tsJyHXvTMGjbSe



The survey will be open until Friday, May 1, 2026. Findings from the study will be used to help guide local efforts to better support youth health and well-being, with a focus on equity, access, and responsiveness to lived experience.

About Applied Survey Research

Applied Survey Research is a nonprofit social research organization dedicated to helping communities use data to better understand local issues and improve outcomes