

# HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2024

### VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE & TAX COUNSELING FOR THE ELDERLY

Receive assistance with your tax return preparation process through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs. Both programs are managed by the IRS making them a reliable and trusted source for preparing tax returns. Explore the convenience of these free services by locating a nearby site through the IRS website at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-qualifying-taxpayers>. Be sure to review the checklist of required documents, your financial peace of mind is just a visit away.

#### Available to those who:

- Generally make \$60,000 or less
- People with disabilities
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers

If yes, VITA/TCE may be right for you!

PLEASE NOTE: Available services can vary at each site due to the availability of volunteers.



### E-BIKE OWNERSHIP REBATE PROGRAMS

Are you seeking ways to cut down on gas expenses or contribute to your community's climate goals? E-bikes might just be the solution you are looking for! Recent data indicates that e-bikes enable individuals to cover longer distances, travel faster, and do so with significantly less effort compared to traditional bikes. Take advantage of various local e-bike rebate programs by applying for the following initiatives: Take advantage of various local e-bike rebate programs by applying for the following initiatives:

- **GO Santa Cruz rebate**
- **Central Coast Community Energy (CCCE)**
- **Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD).**

If qualified and approved, these rebate rewards can be combined for a rebate of up to \$800. For detailed information on the application process, eligibility criteria, and more, visit : <https://ecoact.org/active-transportation/guide-to-accessing-the-city-of-santa-cruz-ebike-rebate>.



## SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK

The Second Harvest Food Bank plays an important role in addressing food insecurity by supplying nourishing food to nearly a quarter of Santa Cruz County residents. Second Harvest Food Bank's mission is to inspire and support Santa Cruz county.

Access to fresh and free groceries is made available at numerous locations, ensuring widespread community support. For detailed information on food distributions near you, please visit [www.thefoodbank.org](http://www.thefoodbank.org).



## "WHAT HOME MEANS TO ME" POSTER CONTEST

Explore your child's creativity! The Housing Authority is accepting submissions for NAHRO's poster contest with the theme "What Home Means to Me". All submissions must be on 22" X 28" paper and have a LANDSCAPE/HORIZONTAL orientation to be considered for national judging. Contestant participation is open to all children in grades K-12. Winners will be entered into the NAHRO's contest to be featured in their 2025 Calendar. For details on how to enter and full contest rules please visit <https://www.nahro.org/membership/what-home-means-to-me>. All submissions must be submitted to the Housing Authority by March 15th, 2024. Please contact Dalia Calixto with questions at (831)454-5982.



**Join the Housing Authority in creating your poster, supplies will be provided!**

**Friday, March 1st, 2024 5:30pm -7:30pm  
Garden Room at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art History  
705 Front st, Santa Cruz, Ca 95060**

## DIGITAL NAVIGATOR SERVICE

Empowering Californians through connectivity, Connected California comprises a dedicated team of digital navigators ready to assist you in establishing a seamless online presence and accessing resources tailored to your needs. Whether you're a student, job seeker, or simply seeking assistance with basic technology, a digital navigator is equipped to offer support for grades K-12 (and some college support). The bilingual navigators, proficient in both Spanish and English, are available for personalized one-on-one assistance via phone or email. To explore a full spectrum of support and services, please visit <https://sccl.org/digital-navigators/>.

### HOW IT WORKS:

- Call Them: 1-800-790-5319
- Text Them: 626-873-8390
- Email Them: [help@connectedca.libanswers.com](mailto:help@connectedca.libanswers.com) or [ayuda@connectedca.libanswers.com](mailto:ayuda@connectedca.libanswers.com)



## IMPORTANT!

Did your food benefits get electronically stolen between 10/1/2022 and 11/30/2023?

If yes, you may be eligible for CalFresh benefit replacements. Santa Cruz County residents can find out if you qualify by calling 1-888-421-8080 today!



**K-12 Students ride METRO for free**  
 Show your student ID to board (required for 9-12th grade only).

**YOUTH  
 CRUZ  
 FREE**



**NEW HORIZONS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz (HACSC) is celebrating a successful first year of the New Horizons Scholarship Program. 55 individuals residing in Housing Authority assisted units were honored with awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000. At the core of HACSC’s mission is the commitment to facilitating access and fostering opportunities that enhance the quality of life for our community members. The scholarship program, an essential component of this mission, extends support for academic achievement and economic mobility. We eagerly anticipate the continued impact and growth of the New Horizon Scholarship Program in 2024.

**Antonio’s Story...**

In a remarkable tale of resilience and transformation, Antonio has overcome the hardships of homelessness and the challenges of deployment during the Iraq War to emerge as a master’s degree candidate at California State University, Monterey Bay. Since 2017, Antonio has utilized his voucher to propel himself through an educational journey that saw him earn both an associate and bachelor’s degree. Currently on the brink of graduating with a Master of Social Work from CSUMB, Antonio’s capstone project is a testament to his dedication. Focused on prioritizing housing interventions for individuals battling substance use disorders, he continues to volunteer and work while attending school, showcasing an unparalleled work ethic. In recognition of his extraordinary achievements, Antonio has been named in the inaugural class of New Horizons Scholarship recipients in 2023. Antonio’s inspiring transformation serves as a beacon of hope and a testament to the resilience that can be found even in the face of adversity.



Antonio

**ENHANCED SECURITY FOR EBT CARDHOLDERS**

EBT Cardholders now have a new tool to better protect your account and benefits — the new “ebtEDGE”! This mobile app and cardholder portal gives EBT users new security features:

- Manage/change your PIN whenever and as often as needed
- Card “freeze/unfreeze” to lock and unlock card access as needed
- Transaction blocking for out-of-state use or for internet purchases
- Request a replacement if your card is compromised, damaged, lost, or stolen
- Biometrics access with touch ID or facial recognition to securely log in

The ebtEDGE mobile application is available and ready to download! Go to the Apple App Store for iPhone or the Google Play Store for Android devices and download the application today! Need more info? Visit <https://www.ebt.ca.gov/cardholder> for more information in English and Spanish.



**Housing Mediation Services are now available to all Housing Authority Clients!**

The Housing Authority has partnered with the Conflict Resolution Center of Santa Cruz County to provide free mediation services to landlords and tenants with rental housing disputes.

**For more information, please call (831) 475-6117 or email [daniela@crsantacruz.org](mailto:daniela@crsantacruz.org)**





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### HOUSING AUTHORITY CONTACTS

INFO CENTER.....(831) 454-9455  
 WAITING LIST.....(831) 454-5950  
 HOUSING PROGRAMS DEPT... (831) 454-5955  
 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT .....(831) 454-5977  
 TDD.....(831) 475-1146  
 FAX.....(831) 469-3712  
 EMAIL.....info@hacosantacruz.org

Housing Authority office:

2160 41st Avenue  
 Capitola, CA 95010

Monday - Thursday from 8:00 to 4:30pm  
 Closed on Fridays and public holidays.