



MEDIA RELEASE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY Sheriff-Coroner

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Sheriff-Coroner

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Awarded Grant to Address Underage Tobacco Use.

The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office has received a \$369,000 two-year grant from the California Department of Justice to reduce underage tobacco through enforcement of Minimum Legal Age (MLA) laws and increased tobacco education and awareness programs. The award is the result of revenue generated from Proposition 56, (2016), which increased the tobacco tax by \$2.00, bringing the total tobacco tax up to \$2.87 per pack of cigarettes.

The grant will allow the Sheriff's Office to hire a full-time Tobacco Compliance Officer (TCO), who will oversee the Sheriff's Tobacco Prevention Program (STOPP), as well as a half-time account technician who will assist with the coordination of enforcement and awareness activities. As the primary officer of STOPP, the TCO will rigorously enforce tobacco MLA laws throughout the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office jurisdiction with the goal of achieving a sustained ninety-five percent compliance rate by the year 2020. Violations of will result in a citation and a fine of up to \$200 for the first offense, \$500 for a second offense and \$1,000 for the third offense.

In addition to enforcement activities, the TCO will develop a school-based awareness module that will address all aspects of tobacco use, including the short and long-term negative health effects, social influences, peer pressure, resistance and refusal skills, and media literacy as it relates to tobacco marketing and advertising.

Electronic cigarettes and other vaping devices are of specific concern. A local 2017 survey of eleventh graders revealed that thirty-five percent had used tobacco in this manner, whereas six percent of seventh graders admitted to vaping.

The TCO will prioritize schools with a prevalence of low-socioeconomic factors. For more information, visit <http://www.lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/3573>

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