



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### FIRST COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER SELECTED BY BOARD

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce that Heather Rogers has been confirmed by the Board of Supervisors as Santa Cruz County's first-ever Public Defender.

Rogers has nearly two decades of experience as a defense attorney, including nearly a decade as a staff attorney with Biggam, Christensen and Minsloff, where she currently serves as a supervising attorney. Rogers has experience working high-profile felony cases, as well as working with justice-involved youth and immigrants.

"Ms. Rogers is the right choice to lead our community's first-ever Office of the Public Defender. We are confident that she will provide excellent, client-centered services for our indigent defendants, promote equity and inclusion as she develops the office, and continue working closely with the court and the community to assure that public defense services in Santa Cruz County are among the best in the state," Board Chair Bruce McPherson said.

Rogers is a graduate of Stanford Law School and clerked on the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals with Judge M. Margaret McKeown. She serves on the board of the Santa Cruz County Defense Bar and the Santa Cruz County Trial Lawyers Association, and represents District 2 on the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission.

"I'm honored to be chosen to lead this new agency," Rogers said. "I look forward to putting together a team that provides courageous, compassionate, client-centered defense to reach the best outcomes for our clients in a manner that is consistent with our community's values."

Since 1975, the law firm of Biggam, Christensen and Minsloff has provided indigent defense services in Santa Cruz County. In 2020, the County completed an organizational assessment and analysis of alternatives, resulting in the Board's decision to establish the Office of the Public Defender.