

County of Santa Clara



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County of Santa Clara Appoints Director of Office of Human Relations

SAN JOSE, CALIF. – The County of Santa Clara has appointed Richard Hobbs, a San Jose resident, as its new Director of the Office of Human Relations. Hobbs, who has been serving as Director of Citizenship and Immigrant Programs since 1996, brings 26 years of experience to the position.

“Richard has demonstrated a unique understanding of the many diverse needs of our community, those that are historically disadvantaged and under-represented,” said Pete Kutras, County Executive. “With his long-standing experience in the immigrant community and solid relationships with local community-based organizations, he will provide strong leadership for the Office of Human Relations.”

As Director of Citizenship and Immigrant Programs, Hobbs was instrumental in developing “The Santa Clara County Model” for immigrant integration, one of the most successful local government programs in the country in assisting low-income immigrants. Under his supervision, the program developed a guidebook known as “Knowledge of Immigrant Nationalities” (KIN), and the immigrant resource guide “Immigrant Rights, Responsibilities, and Resources.” Through the Santa Clara County Citizenship Initiative, he has assisted nearly 90,000 low-income immigrants in Santa Clara County with U.S. citizenship, 1996-2004.

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Before joining the County in 1996, Hobbs spent six years with Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, taught English as a Second Language at local colleges, and served in the Peace Corps in Afghanistan and Ecuador. At Catholic Charities, he presented more than 100 community and professional workshops on immigration law, represented hundreds of immigrant clients at the INS and Board of Immigration Appeals, and helped establish the first Day Workers Job Center in Santa Clara County.

Hobbs is a Trustee with the San Jose-Evergreen Community College District, serving since 1994; a member of the Santa Clara County Bar Association; member of the American Immigration Lawyer's Association, Silicon Valley Chapter; and member of the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association.

Hobbs has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin American Studies from the University of Missouri, Columbia, a Master of Arts degree in Social Sciences from San Jose State University, a Master of Arts degree in Latin American History from the University of Mexico, and a Juris Doctor from Golden Gate University in Law, specializing in immigration law. His appointment as the Director of the Office of Human Relations is effective January 25, 2005.

“I approach this appointment with deep humility and excitement.” Hobbs said. “It is an honor to follow in the footsteps of Jim McEntee, a giant in the field of human relations. I hope to promote humane relations and human rights for all residents of Santa Clara County.”

The Office of Human Relations provides services to the residents of Santa Clara County that promote equality, justice and peace in the community. It offers programs such as Dispute Resolution, Institute for Non-Violence, Citizenship and Immigrant Services, the Network for a Hate-Free Community and the Youth Taskforce. The Office of Human Relations serves county residents by providing staff support and direction to the Human Relations Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women, two advisory bodies to the County Board of Supervisors.