



The City of



Economic Development

MEETING NOTES

San Diego Promise Zone

Jobs and Education Working Group Meeting Minutes

Thursday, Aug. 21, 2025 | 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom | (Meeting ID: 160 295 2326) | [Zoom Meeting Registration Link](#)

Working Group Goals: *Create jobs and improve educational opportunities*

In Attendance

City of San Diego - Promise Zone (Amairany Macias, Daniella Salgado, Chrishael Sanchez, Roosevelt Williams III, Amber Weber), **Workshops for Warriors** (Ashley Morey), **Digital Promise** (Bianca Alvarado), **San Diego Workforce Partnership** (Carol Crisp), **Black Tech Link** (Domanic Riley), **Nerds Rule Inc** (Dr. Tristaca McCray), **San Diego County Office of Education** (Ernesto Rivera), **San Diego Workforce Partnership** (John Maruri), **Laura Rodriguez Medical Assistant Institute** (Kandy Palafox), **Urban League of San Diego County** (Kea Hagan), **The Learn Program** (Lee Bardon), **Crawford High School** (Melissa Woods), **United Way of San Diego County** (Nina Ghatan), **University of California San Diego** (Raquel Aparicio), **Elementary Institute of Science** (Sarah Tuakli Cooper), **DETOUR Fancy** (Tinesia Conwright), **Barrio Logan College Institute** (Tomaso Mauricio)

Meeting Notes

Welcome, Agenda Review, Culture Share

- Co-chair Raquel Aparicio kicked off the meeting by welcoming partners and reviewing the agenda.
- Guidelines for a respectful and effective meeting were shared and posted in the chat.
- Sarah Tuakli Cooper led our **culture share**: When was the last time you gave yourself permission to play or imagine freely?

Partner Updates

- **California Student Opportunity and Access Program – Senior Jump Start 2025** (Sept. 20, 2025): The Senior JumpStart 2025 event will take place on Saturday, Sept. 20, 2025, and is completely free for high school seniors and their families. This event will provide valuable information on career paths, the college application process (UCs, CSUs, community colleges, and private universities), scholarships, financial aid, and more. While the program is targeted toward 12th graders from SDUSD, it is open to all seniors from any school. For more details, visit this [link](#).
- **San Diego County Office of Education - Manufacturing Expo** (Sept. 30, 2025): Join for the Advanced Manufacturing Expo on Tuesday, Sept. 30 at 11:00 a.m. at Cuyamaca

Click the following links to stay connected to the San Diego Promise Zone

[Newsletter](#) | [Website](#) | [Email](#) | (619) 236-6700 | 1200 Third Ave, 14th Floor, San Diego, CA 92101



College. Come explore the latest in advanced manufacturing, connect with industry experts, and discover opportunities for innovation and careers in the field. For more details, visit this [link](#).

- **City of San Diego's Office of Child and Youth Success & United Way – Bank On:** The City of San Diego's Office of Child and Youth Success, in partnership with United Way, is applying for an opportunity through Bank On to support youth workforce programs. The initiative aims to integrate banking access and financial education into these programs. If awarded, this effort will provide professional development, access to resources, networking, and peer learning to help strengthen youth workforce programs across San Diego. Organizations that currently run youth workforce programs may be able to participate. More details will be shared as the application process moves forward. Visit this [link](#) for more information.
- **Access Inc. - Drop-In Center Development:** Access Inc. is working with small businesses and developing drop-in centers to prevent gang violence and promote positive programs in the Southeast community. Locations in progress: 1835 Imperial Ave. (Creative Site) and 3796 Imperial Ave. Everything is still in the planning stage—updates will be provided as programming details are finalized. Access Inc. will continue supporting the community and the individuals they serve.
- **Delta G.E.M.S.:** Delta G.E.M.S. is offering group activities, college and career preparation, leadership development, Delta G.E.M.S. Curriculum, and mentorship. Visit this [link](#) for more information.
- **Urban League of San Diego County (ULSDC) and Doors of Change – Education Youth Advocacy Program, Project 2.5:** ULSDC and Doors of Change are partnering to support youth (ages 14-24) who face multiple barriers, including housing and learning challenges. See the attached flyer for more details.
- **Urban League of San Diego County – Project Ready Leadership Program:** Register today for open enrollment for new and continuing students. This is an in-person and free program that focuses on mentorship, leadership development, historical and cultural literacy, scholarships and money for college, college tours, and more.
- **Lauren Rodriguez Medical Assistant Institute – Medical Assisting Program:** Laura Rodriguez Medical Assistant Institute has a medical assisting program that is designed to prepare students for entry-level positions as medical assistants in a variety of health care settings.

Promise Zone Updates

- Chrishael Rose Sanchez was welcomed as she joined the team mid-June. As the Grants & Research VISTA, she identifies funding opportunities, prepares letters of support, and assists with research that strengthens our Promise Zone efforts.
- Amber Weber spotlighted key upcoming events such as the **All-Partner Meeting** on Thursday, Dec. 4, the annual **Youth-Led Career Expo** on Mar. 3, 2025, and another **All-Partner Meeting** in May or June 2026.



- We have had 30 organizations become an official Promise Zone partner since April. For a complete list of all partners, please visit the [Promise Zone website](#).
- In August, we recognized Healthy Communities co-chair Karen Clay for her outstanding work as the Community Spotlight. Karen leads I Love to Glean, co-chairs the Live Well San Diego Food Insecurity Working Group, and drives efforts through the Nourishment Network. We are grateful for all she does in the Promise Zone and throughout the County to advance food access. To nominate a community member for a future Community Spotlight, click [here](#).

Presentation: Workshops for Warriors – Ashley Morey, Development Specialist

Ashley Morey presented an overview on [Workshops for Warriors](#) (WFW)'s services emphasizing their mission to support and empower veterans to obtain career pathways aligned with their workforce skills and chosen programs.

- The presentation included a detailed review of WFW's mission and program details.
 - Workshops for Warriors is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides veterans, transitioning service members, and other students with training and nationally recognized credentials in CNC machining, welding, and more. WFW accepts Post-9/11 GI Bill® and is a DoD SkillBridge program.
- WFW has successfully trained 1,462 veterans, transitioning service members, and civilians. As of now it has over 19,113 nationally recognized manufacturing credentials earned.

Presentation: Digital Promise – Bianca Alvarado, Director of the San Diego STEM Pathways Initiative

Directors Bianca Alvarado and Nichole Aguirre presented an overview on the Digital Promise program. Digital Promise aims to advance community-driven and flexible approaches to STEM pathways that position 100,000 more historically and systematically excluded learners on the trajectory towards high-impact STEM careers, ready to lead and forge a San Diego known for its diversity, inclusivity, and visionary progress.

- The presentation included the mission, goal, and key program details:
 - Increase access, transparency, and support systems to encourage more San Diego youth to consider STEM and prepare them for success in a STEM careers.
 - Focus on both external, systems-level change and internal, learner-level transformation driven by community leaders and Digital Promise expertise in inclusive innovation, research, learning experience, and credentialing.
 - Work is led by a robust coalition of local and regional partners, who help ensure alignment with the local economy, community context, and values. Their efforts focus on bringing together institutions while also ensuring that learners feel a sense of belonging on their journey to a career in stem.
- WFW has successfully trained 1,462 veterans, transitioning service members, and civilians. As of now it has over 19,113 nationally recognized manufacturing credentials earned.

Promise Zone Priorities & Transition Activities:



Amber Weber provided updates about the federal Promise Zone designation, which ends on June 6, 2026. The Promise Zone team is half the size that it was last year; as such, the number of working groups meetings has been reduced to half. She invited participants to recommend organizations or people to present in future working group meetings. If you would like to suggest a guest speaker, please email PromiseZone@sandiego.gov.

Priority projects this year include the Youth-Led Career Expo (Mar. 3, 2026), the Community Perception Survey (Mar-April 2026), an Impact Report (for partners to complete), and transition plans. Participants participated in a poll regarding the Community Perception Survey, which resulted in a Google form being created for participants to share their ideas (link [here](#)) and an ad hoc meeting being scheduled, which was held on Sept. 17, 2025. Survey questions specific to each working group will be narrowed down and presented at the Oct/Nov. working group meetings.

Regarding the end of the federal designation, the City's role as the lead entity will change, and the City will continue to support the Promise Zone in other ways. The Promise Zone Steering Committee will have two planning sessions in September and October, and co-chairs will take ideas from the August and September working group meetings to the planning sessions. Participants discussed how to sustain Promise Zone collaborations after the designation ends. Ideas included hosting quarterly meetings (Logan Heights CDC), seeking funding for a full-time staffer, and engaging council offices, the County, or private foundations like Prebys. Live Well San Diego was suggested as a potential lead, since its priorities and working groups are similar to the Promise Zone's. Others emphasized exploring capacity-building grants, expanding to additional neighborhoods, and identifying a lead organization.

Key questions raised: Who should lead the transition? How can funding and grants be structured? Could organizations like San Diego Tourism Authority or local foundations serve as conveners? Overall, the group agreed on focusing on transition planning, expanding partnerships, and clarifying responsibilities for a future lead entity in working group meetings.

Partners are still encouraged to submit new activities, or update past activities, into the logic model with [this Google form](#).

Wrap Up and Adjourn:

- Co-chairs thanked those who attended the meeting and encouraged them to leave any feedback through the [Digital Comment Box](#).
- **Next Meeting:** Thurs., Oct. 16, 2025, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m., via Zoom