



### San Diego Promise Zone

#### Jobs and Education Working Group Meeting Minutes

Thursday, Oct. 16, 2025 | 2:30 – 4:00 PM

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

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

#### In Attendance

**Access Inc.** (Aneeshah Powell), **Black Tech Link** (Domanic Riley), **City of San Diego – Office of Child and Youth Success** (Tara Ryan), **City of San Diego - Promise Zone** (Amairany Macias, Amber Weber, Chrishael Sanchez, Daniella Salgado, Michele Marano, Roosevelt Williams III), **City of San Diego Planning Department** (Melissa Languren), **Detour** (Tinesia Conwright), **Elementary Institute of Science** (Sarah Tuakli Cooper), **Father Joes Villages** (Thomas Lovell), **Grid Alternatives** (Elisabetta Baratti), **International Rescue Committee** (Mahsa Imani), **Junior Achievement** (Madeline Bowen), **Neighborhood House Association** (Ernesta Johnson), **San Diego College of Continuing Education** (Kelly Henwood, Andrea Gastellum), **San Diego Workforce Partnership** (John Maruri), **United Way of San Diego County** (Alyssa Abellar), **Urban Collaborative Project** (Barry Pollard), **Youth Will** (Liliana Garista)

#### Meeting Notes

##### Introductions, Culture Share and Agenda Review

- Co-chair Sarah Tuakli Cooper 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.
- Roosevelt Williams III led our culture share: In observance of National Train Your Brain Day, what is a skill or piece of knowledge you've recently learned that challenged you to think in a new way?

##### Partner Announcements

- **City of San Diego – Clean Energy Career Map:** Melissa Languren informed attendees on the Clean Energy Career Map's creation and purpose.
  - The career map serves as an all-in-one, centralized resource where users can view and access:
    1. Job descriptions and overviews
    2. Career progressions
    3. Training pathways and educational resources

The map can be viewed [here](#).

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- o **International Rescue Committee (IRC):** Mahsa Imani delivered information on International Rescue Committee's career program, stating that short-term certification training for ages 18 - 26 are now open.
- o **Grid Alternatives:** Workforce coordinator Elisabetta Baratti notified attendees about their [Installation Basic Training Program](#), a paid training program for ages 18 - 26. Completion of the program results in trainees receiving three certificates: a general certificate of completion, OSHA 10, and a CPR certificate. Additional benefits and services include resume support and job placement assistance.

### Promise Zone Updates

- **Upcoming Promise Zone Events—Save the Date!**
  - o The Promise Zone has been selected to present as a panel and will have an exhibitor's booth at the Live Well Advance Summit on Oct. 22, 2025.
    - o Our session is titled "San Diego Promise Zone: How Cross-Sector Organizations Unite in Community," and the time will be from 1:15-2:00 p.m.
    - o Registration to attend the event is free.
    - o Jon Rios from the SD Housing Commission, Sarah Tuakli Cooper from the Elementary Institute of Science, and Angel Nolasco from Cal Coast Credit Union will join Amber Weber on the panel.
  - o All-Partner Meeting: Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025.
  - o Career Expo: Tuesday, Mar. 3, 2026, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Balboa Park Club & Recital Hall.
- **New Promise Zone Partners:** Since beginning our new MOU process in April, the Promise Zone has welcomed over 30 new partner organizations. Click [here](#) to see all partner organizations in the Promise Zone. Welcome, new partners!
- **Inclusive Public Engagement Guide:** The San Diego Promise Zone held a community workshop and listening session regarding the development of the City's [Inclusive Public Engagement Guide](#) in Summer 2024. At the December 2024 and July 2025 All-Partner Meetings, updates on how the planning was going were shared. The City's Planning Department now has [webpage](#) and the Guide has been released for public review. Residents are invited to attend an in-person workshop on Friday, Oct. 10, 2025 at 4 - 5:30 p.m. at the Mission Valley Library or via the online feedback form.
- Visit the [website](#) for more information, to register, and to share your thoughts.

**College of Continuing Education: Kelly Henwood, Special Projects Manager; Andrea Gastellum, Outreach Coordinator**

### **Program Overview**

San Diego College of Continuing Education is part of the San Diego Community College District, with 7 campuses throughout San Diego, several of which serve Promise Zone residents.



- Enrollment for Spring 2026 is now open as of Nov. 17, 2025.
- A wide array of [academic areas](#) are offered from automotive to business to child development, etc. Certificate programs are also offered in several key industries as well as [trades/technical](#).

Eligibility: Must enroll [online](#) or in person.

### **Neighborhood House Association: Ernesta Johnson, Sr. Director of Development & Community Affairs**

#### **Program Overview**

Neighborhood House Association is one of the largest human services organizations in San Diego County.

- Over 20 key program areas in 125 locations across San Diego County.
- 800 employees
- Majority of funding comes from the federal government, followed by the State, and finally the County.
- Since its inception, NHA has provided support for immigrants transitioning to San Diego; it opened in 1914 in Barrio Logan.
- NHA has provided support via service during a number of periods with great hardship:
  - Great Depression
  - World Wars (I & II)
  - Covid-19 Pandemic

#### **Key Programs:**

- [NHA College Academy](#): College Preparatory Program for underprivileged youth. Provides students access to resources that help make college a reality.
- [Homework Center](#): A space for at risk academic deficient youth to study. Resources such as printers, internet access, and school supplies among other things are provided to help assist with their learning and completion of assignments.
- [NHA Nutrition Services](#): Prepares nutrient rich meals for thousands of children across San Diego County.
  - Meal Prep Academy: Educational program that teaches adults and youth how to prepare healthy nutritious food.
  - It established a food bank in 1977 and is responsible for the creation/development of a number of key programs/initiatives.

#### **Career Expo Design Input:**

#### **Chrishael Sanchez, AmeriCorps Grants & Research Vista**

## Presentation Overview:

- Invited youth (ages 16–24) to complete a 2026 Career Expo Design Input Survey to reflect voices and aspirations of Promise Zone youth; over 90 responses were received.
- Nearly all respondents were first-time participants—95.6% hadn't attended last year's Expo—so this feedback reflects fresh eyes and new ideas.
- Students are most excited to explore career pathways and learn about part-time jobs, summer internships, and continuing education.
- Skill-building opportunities are a priority: top interests included resume reviews, mock interviews, professional headshots, networking, financial education, and workshops.
- There's a wide range of career interests: engineering and architecture topped the list, followed by health sciences, business and finance, and many other fields.
- Students shared challenges they face, like uncertainty about which path to take, financial concerns, academic pressures, and feeling underprepared—highlighting a need for guidance and support.
- Many expressed interest in local companies and organizations, from healthcare and public service to arts, hospitality, and educational institutions.
- Finally, 39 students shared their emails to stay informed about the 2026 Career Expo, showing strong interest and engagement.

## **Promise Zone Priorities & Transition Activities:**

- Amber Weber provided updates on priority projects this year, which include the Youth-Led Career Expo (Mar. 3, 2026), the Community Perception Survey (Mar-April 2026), and transition plans.
- Amairany Macias presented recommended final questions from the *ad hoc* Community Perception Survey meeting held for Economic Activity and Jobs & Education on Sept. 17, 2025.
- To facilitate the transition from a City-led initiative to a community-led initiative post-designation, the Promise Zone Steering Committee has had two in-person planning sessions since our last meeting.
  - The committee remains committed to advancing and prioritizing the shared goals and to explore opportunities to sustain current momentum to continue the work, and the Steering Committee will be putting together a draft overview of plans, which we'll share with each working group *before* the Dec. 4 All-Partner Meeting so there is to review the ideas before the All-Partner Meeting.
  - For further suggestions and chatting about transition ideas reach out to co-chairs Raquel Aparicio and Sarah Tuakli Cooper.

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: <https://forms.gle/FAbFjw4ZUuAd3Uiy6>
- Next Jobs & Education Working Group meeting will be held on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026 from 10-11:30 a.m.