



The City of



Economic Development

MEETING NOTES

San Diego Promise Zone

Healthy Communities Meeting Minutes

Thursday, Feb. 12, 2025 | 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. | via Zoom

Working Group Goal: Promote access to healthcare and healthy foods

In Attendance:

City of San Diego – Promise Zone (Amber Weber, Roosevelt Williams III, Daniella Salgado, Amairany Macias), **I Love to Glean** (Karen Clay), **County of San Diego – Health and Human Services Agency** (Alondra Estrada-Lam), **Blue Shield of California** (Ale Ricardez), **Family Health Centers of San Diego** (Maarya Haq, Victoriano Diaz), **Barrio Botany** (Christina Abuelo), **Sanford Stem Cell Institute UC San Diego** (Mericar Domdom), **Kate Sessions Commitment** (Anne Fege, Anisah Enciso), **Travelers Aid Society** (Allie Servey), **HealthCorps** (Andrea Harrison), **Logan Heights CDC** (William Burties), **Mission Edge** (Olivia Yazzolino), **Watering Hope** (Anayo Nworjih), **County Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice** (Kim Ridout), **GRID Alternatives** (Clovis Honore), **Computers 2 Kids** (Stephanie Swift), **JIREH Providers** (Jaleh Dodson), **County of San Diego – Land Use & Environment** (Yasamin Rasoulzadeh), **San Diego Parks Foundation** (Hayley Krolik), **Community Member** (Emma Smith)

Meeting Notes:

Introductions, Culture Share, and Agenda Review:

- Ale Ricardez welcomed everyone to the February Healthy Communities meeting and shared this month's agenda.
- The culture share for this month was related to **Pay a Compliment Day** and **National Send a Card to a Friend Day** and asked participants, "If you could mail a letter of appreciation to anyone right now, who would you send it to and what compliment would you give them?"

Partner Announcements:

- Anne Fege: Seeking community members and youth who are interested in civic engagement and willing to serve on the **City of San Diego's Community Forest Advisory Board** (CFAB). The Board serves in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Council on urban forestry policy and advocates for establishing, stewarding, and sustaining a healthy urban forest citywide. Current vacancies include Council Districts 3, 5, and 8, with Districts 1 and 4 becoming vacant soon. This is a great opportunity for

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



residents who are passionate about advocating for trees, environmental justice, and strengthening community through urban forestry.

- Apply here: <https://onboard.sandiego.gov/board/3419>
- Angel Nolasco: **California Coast Credit Union** is launching a six-month [Financial Wellness Curriculum](#) designed to benefit those served by local nonprofit organizations. Through monthly interactive webinars and expert guidance, community members will learn practical strategies to improve personal financial habits, plan for the future, and expand financial independence. The first class was on Jan. 26. This is an opportunity designed for Promise Zone partners based on community and partner input, and may be shared with staff, volunteers, clients, as well as other organizations.
- Promise Zone: Apply to host **Summer 2026 interns** through the San Diego Regional EDC! Launched in 2019 as part of the region's inclusive growth effort to double the number of skilled workers in San Diego, EDC and its partners organize a regional internship program to offer support to small and mid-sized businesses and nonprofits, and connect San Diego students to valuable work-based learning opportunities. [Apply by Feb. 13.](#)
- Promise Zone: **The San Diego County/Founders First CDC's CORE Program** provides free 1:1 bookkeeping support, funding readiness education, and labor compliance training to help small businesses and nonprofits with 2-10 employees in San Diego County strengthen their operations and improve financial stability. The application deadline for Cohort 2 is Jan. 30, and participants who sign up afterward will be added to Cohort 3.
- The **San Diego County/Founders First CDC's BUILD Program** supports small businesses and nonprofits in overcoming bonding and insurance barriers when applying for contracts with the County of San Diego. Small businesses and nonprofits that are San Diego County-based, interested in County contracts, and/or new or first-time government contractors are eligible to receive 1:1 coaching with bonding and insurance experts, personalized business assessment, guidance on affordable coverage, subsidies for bonding/insurance, and access to the Funding Readiness program.
- Kim Ridout: Join San Diego County for an in-person community workshop to share your ideas and experiences to help improve food access and food security across the region. Participants will also learn about the progress of the **County's Food Justice Community Action Plan (FJCAP)**. Community input will help shape current and future County actions on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 1:30 – 3:30 PM. The workshop will take place in the Southeastern Live Well Center at the Tubman Chavez Conference Room on 5101 Market St, San Diego, CA 92114.



- Advanced registration is appreciated: bit.ly/OSElfjcap
 - Community members are invited to participate online as well.
 - For accommodations or interpretation services, please contact osej@sdcounty.ca.gov at least 72 hours prior to the event.
- Promise Zone: The **Resilience District Incubator** supports communities in exploring Resilience Districts—new public entities that pool resources across jurisdictions to fund strategic, community-led resilience investments—as well as other governance and financing models. Through hands-on technical assistance, peer learning, and practical tools, pilot communities will have the opportunity to assess feasibility, alignment with local priorities, and pathways from planning to implementation.
 - Local and regional public agencies, and nonprofits or community-based organizations partnering with an eligible public entity, are invited to submit a [Statement of Intent](#) to be considered as a pilot community in California and Connecticut.
 - Statements of Intent received by February 20 will receive priority consideration. Forms received after the priority deadline will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.
 - Promise Zone: The **San Diego Food System Alliance** has opened applications for the [Pollinator 2026 Cohort](#) cohort. This program supports small-scale farmers, ranchers, fishermen, and food business owners through tailored, one-on-one business planning and coaching. The deadline to apply is February 28, 2026.
 - Promise Zone: Community members are also encouraged to explore the [Local Food Economy Lab's website](#), which features extensive resource libraries and information about additional programs. To stay connected, individuals may join [Rhizome](#), the Lab's community listserv for sharing classifieds, funding opportunities, resources, and calls to action.
 - Traveler's Aid: Traveler's Aid Society of San Diego is offering transportation assistance for seniors living within the San Diego Promise Zone through the Senior Solutions Program. This program helps reduce transportation barriers to essential appointments, supporting economic stability and access to critical services. Eligible residents (housed or unhoused) may receive day passes, monthly passes, or MTS Access vouchers. Participants must be immunocompromised, extremely low-income, and able to provide documentation for medical or housing-related appointments requiring transportation.
 - Email: lorena@travelersaidsandiego.org
 - Promise Zone: The Promise Zone's **4th Annual Youth-Led Career Expo** is on Tuesday, Mar. 3, 2026, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. at the Balboa Park Club & Recital Hall. The event will feature resume reviews, mock interviews, professional headshots, a young professionals panel, and raffle prizes. Employers hiring youth and organizations offering



job training or apprenticeship opportunities are encouraged to participate. Sponsorship opportunities, including swag bag items and raffle donations, are still available. Visit the Career Expo website for more information:

<https://www.sandiego.gov/youthcareerexpo>

- Stephanie Swift: **Computers 2 Kids is hiring a Digital Navigator** to work alongside the City of San Diego's SD Access 4 All program, specifically serving the Promise Zone community. This position will be based at the Logan Heights Library and is a great opportunity to hire from within the community to support digital access, education, and capacity-building efforts. This role focuses on helping residents build digital skills, access technology resources, and learn and grow together.
 - Contact: Stephanie Swift | sswift@c2sdk.org
- Karen Clay: The **International Gleaning Symposium** will be held in San Diego this year from April 29 to May 1 in Mission Beach. This gathering brings together gleaners working collectively to address climate change, hunger, and food waste. Participants will have the opportunity to strengthen their organizations, learn innovative strategies, expand their networks, and connect with peers for collaboration and support.
 - If you are interested in attending, please visit the [International Gleaning Symposium website](#) for registration information.

Promise Zone Updates:

- The San Diego Promise Zone presented information on the **2026 Youth-Led Career Expo** on Mar. 3 2026. Amairany Macias delivered more information on the event's location, key activities, vendor registration leads, sponsorships, and volunteer opportunities.
- Amber Weber provided updates on the development of the **Community Perception Survey** and the upcoming dissemination of the it around the Promise Zone.
- A request was made to save the date for the **All-Partner Celebration** on Thursday, June 4, 2026. The event is scheduled for 1-4 pm at Workshops for Warriors' new location in Barrio Logan. This is the final All-Partner Meeting of the federal, City-led designation and the kick-off to the new, community-led San Diego Promise Zone Alliance.
- February's Newsletter spotlight was **Ernesto Rivera**. Ernesto Rivera was born and raised in Tijuana, Mexico, but later moved to the South Bay (San Ysidro). His involvement in the Promise Zone first arose out of a need to serve underserved communities, having come from one himself. Ernesto has served the Promise Zone for seven years, both as a Steering Committee member and as a loyal proponent of the initiative. Presently, Ernesto works at the San Diego County Office of Education as a Project Specialist for Work-Based Learning, a role that allows him to assist SDPZ with our annual Youth-Led Career Expo.
- To nominate a community member for a future Community Spotlight, click [here](#).

Guest Presentation: Maarya Haq & Victoriano Diaz – Family Health Centers of San Diego

Victoriano Diaz serves as the Director of Patient Engagement and Enrollment and Maarya Haq serves as an Administrative Aide III at Family Health Centers of San Diego, an organization that has supported San Diegans of all backgrounds since 1970.

During this meeting, Maarya and Victoriano shared valuable information with the Healthy Communities Working Group about the wide range of services Family Health Centers of San Diego provides.

About Family Health Centers:

- Family Health Centers of San Diego (FHCS) has provided affordable, high-quality care for over 50 years, focusing on uninsured, low-income, and medically underserved communities.
- Operates **90 sites** across San Diego County.
 - Services include:
 - 23 primary care clinics
 - 8 dental clinics
 - 14 behavioral health facilities
 - 3 vision clinics
 - Outpatient substance-use treatment
 - 3 mobile medical units + 2 mobile counseling centers
 - Physical therapy, pharmacy, audiology, acupuncture, cardiology, chiropractic care
 - Diabetes programs, family planning, prenatal support, reproductive health
 - HIV/Hepatitis services, LGBTQ services, transgender health services
 - Homeless services, social services, insurance enrollment help
 - Pediatric services, developmental services, youth behavioral health
 - Sports medicine, podiatry, wound care, weight management
 - STD/STI screening and treatment, smoking cessation, syringe services
- Primary care services include: acute care, chronic disease management, ENT, medication assistance, physicals, pediatrics, pregnancy testing, prenatal care, vaccinations, sick visits, referrals, STI prevention/treatment, and telehealth.
- Primary care clinic hours: generally Mon–Fri, 8:00–5:00 or 8:30–5:30.
- Saturday hours available at Logan Heights and El Cajon (limited services).
- Some locations offer extended hours depending on department/program.
- Urgent Care: open Mon–Sat, 8 a.m.–8 p.m., walk-ins only.
- FHCS accepts Medi-Cal (Straight, Molina, CHG, Blue Shield Promise), Medicare, Covered California, private insurance, and sliding scale payments.
- To access services, patients must be or become an FHCS patient.
- Enrollment steps:
 - Call 619-515-2363 for Medi-Cal screening and application help.
 - If needed, change Primary Care Provider to FHCS through your health plan.
- Managed care plan contacts:
 - Community Health Group: 1-800-224-7766



- Blue Shield Promise: 1-855-699-5557
- Molina Healthcare: 1-888-665-4621

About Laura Rodriguez Medical Assistant Institute (LRMAI):

- The Laura Rodriguez Medical Assistant Institute (LRMAI) trains medical assistants in a supportive, hands-on learning environment.
 - Its mission is to prepare students for healthcare careers by combining strong academics with practical, real-world training.
 - The program is part of Family Health Centers of San Diego and includes classroom instruction, clinical skills training, and an 8-week externship.
 - LRMAI aims to strengthen the healthcare workforce by developing compassionate, well-prepared allied health professionals.
- Program length: 710 hours (390 classroom/lab + 320 externship hours)
- Externship takes place at Family Health Centers of San Diego clinics
- Class options:
 - Full-time: 4.5 months, Mon–Fri, 8 AM–3 PM
 - Part-time: 7.5 months, Mon–Fri, 5:30 PM–9:30 PM
 - Location: 5160 Federal Blvd., Suite 150, San Diego, CA 92105
- Students learn: anatomy, medical terminology, clinical procedures, admin skills, computer skills, insurance processing
- Hands-on training through skills lab + 8-week externship
- Certification exam taken after program completion
- Admissions requirements: 18+, high school diploma/GED, English proficiency, health/safety clearance
- Program cost: \$7,250 total
- Financial support options: OWA, WIOA, Blue Shield scholarship
- Loan forgiveness available for graduates who work at FHCSD for 3 years
- Career pathways include MA, MA Lead, MA Supervisor, MA Instructor, and further nursing/medical roles
- Upcoming classes (tentative): Jan 26, 2026 (PT), Mar 23, 2026 (FT), Aug 24, 2026 (PT), Sept 21, 2026 (FT)

Contacts

- **Victoriano Diaz**, Director, Patient Engagement and Enrollment – (619) 515 – 2589, victorianod@fhcsd.org
- **Maarya Haq**, Administrative Assistant III – (619) 255-7946, maaryah@fhcsd.org

Promise Zone Priorities & Transition Activities:

Karen Clay and Alondra Estrada-Lam, Healthy Communities Co-Chairs, invited the working group to provide feedback on how their organization would like to engage with the new San Diego Promise Zone Alliance in the future.

Co-chairs asked partners to consider the following:



- Which organizations are interested in continuing their partnership?
- Do we, as the Healthy Communities Working Group, want to commit to meeting every other month?
- Do we want to adopt an all-partner meeting format with time to break into working groups?
- Do we want to adopt rotating Zoom and in-person meetings?
- How can your organization engage within this new structure?
- Can your organization host a meeting?
- Are you able to sponsor refreshments?
- Can you provide a speaker?
- Would you like to join the development sub-committee or communications sub-committee to support the Promise Zone Alliance directly?

Feel free to reach out to Alondra Estrada-Lam (alondra.estrada@sdcounty.ca.gov), Karen Clay (info@ilovetoglean.org), or Ale Ricardez (ale.ricardez@blueshieldca.com) with questions or ideas about the transition.

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., May 14, 2026, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., via Zoom