



The City of



# Economic Development

## MEETING NOTES

### San Diego Promise Zone Economic Activity Meeting Minutes

Thursday, Apr. 9, 2026 | 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | via Zoom

**Economic Activity Goal:** *Increase Economic Activity*

#### In Attendance:

**Accessity** (Christina Garcia), **Black Leadership Alliance Coalition** (TJ Harris), **Black Tech Link** (Elizabeth Cotton), **California Coast Credit Union** (Angel Nolasco), **City of San Diego Promise Zone** (Amber Weber, Roosevelt Williams III, Chrishael Rose Sanchez, Amairany Macias), **Father Joes Villages** (Thomas Lovell), **Local Initiative Support Corporation** (Ivonne Rojas), **National University** (Danielle Stephen), **Partners for Economic Prosperity** (John Tucker), **San Diego Workforce Partnership** (Teddy Martinez), **International Rescue Committee** (Irene Bwayo), **Sister Cities Project** (Shawn McClondon)

#### Meeting Notes:

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

- Danielle Stephen welcomed everyone to the April Economic Activity working group meeting and shared the agenda.
- The culture share for this month was in recognition of the end of tax season: “What financial misconception do you see most often in the communities we serve?”

##### Partner Announcements:

#### 1. Cal Coast Financial Wellness Curriculum

California Coast Credit Union continues its 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. 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. The next virtual workshop, **Taking the Mystery out of Credit**, will be on **Monday, April 27**.

- View more information [here](#), or access the [flyer](#).

#### 2. Veterans Affairs for New American Funding - Family Fun Day

The national nonprofit First Book and Blue Star Families are inviting military families, teachers from San Diego-area Title I schools and the families they serve to a STEAM Book Family Festival. Families will be able to choose from 35,000 free STEAM books (Science, Technology,

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Engineering, Arts, and Math), with titles for all ages, and enjoy hands-on family activities. The free event will be held in the main entrance of National University.

- Date: **Saturday, Apr. 11**
- Time:
  - 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM Open to Educators from Title I Schools – Early Entrance
  - 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM Open to Military Families and Families with Children in Title I Schools
- Location: National University, 9388 Lightwave Avenue in San Diego
- Please visit: [First Book and Blue Star Families Distribute 35,000 Free Books](#)

### 3. Mojo Volleyball Game - Equitable Schools Fund

Join the Mojo for a special match supporting San Diego Unified Community Schools on **Friday, April 24 at 7 pm**. This fundraiser will benefit local schools through the Equitable Schools Fund and Grondin Community Bridge while highlighting the impactful work happening across the district.

### 4. Black Tech Link - Industry Networking Night

Black Tech Link is hosting an Industry Networking Night event focused on GIS on **May 20 at 6-9 p.m.** at San Diego College of Continuing Education. Please attend if you are interested in networking with GIS professionals.

- Registration and more information will be available soon.

### 5. Mission Edge CFO Advisor for San Diego Small Business Owners

Do you know a San Diego small business owner who's ready to grow their business and their paycheck? Mission Edge's **Impact Lab** is now accepting applications.

- **What it is:** 8 weeks of free, **one-on-one** CFO-level guidance, valued at \$10,000, designed to help business owners get aligned, confident, and strategic with their numbers. Programs are available in English and Spanish.
- **Results:** Past participants report 75% revenue growth and a 95% business survival rate one year after completing the program.
- **What's included:** Weekly 1:1 sessions with a Finance & Growth specialist
  - Personalized support based on your actual business finances
  - Three virtual Mastermind sessions with fellow entrepreneurs
- **Deadline to apply:** April 13.

### Promise Zone Updates:

- **The Promise Zone's 4th Annual Youth-Led Career Expo** was held on Tuesday, Mar. 3, 2026, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. at the Balboa Park Club & Recital Hall. It featured resume reviews, mock interviews, professional headshots, a young professionals panel, and raffle prizes. Employers hiring youth and organizations offering job training or apprenticeship opportunities were encouraged to participate. Sponsorship opportunities, including swag bag items and raffle donations, were supplied to lucky students who attended.

The Career Expo had the following stats:

- o ~250 participants
  - o 81 professional headshots
  - o 51 vendors (employers, apprenticeship programs, job training)
  - o Over 60 volunteers from 12+ organizations and 4 City departments (including Employ & Empower interns)
  - o 16 sponsors resulting in over \$7,000 of in-kind gifts, including 20 raffle prizes, lunch, snacks, and swag bags
  - o Expo included a panel of young professionals, resume review, mock interviews, professional headshots, professional clothing to wear for headshot, elevator pitch practice, vendor fair, art station, and the kick-off to the SDPZ's Community Perception Survey
  - o Of 123 youth who completed the participant survey after the event:
    - ♣ 52% said yes, they plan to apply for a job or apprenticeship program they learned about at the career expo, and 35% said maybe.
    - ♣ Health sciences and medical technology is the sector in which students are most interested (39%).
- **Our April Community Spotlight** featured Jon Rios. Jon has been actively involved over the years with the Housing Affordability working group and Steering Committee. Jon has a wealth of experience on Housing related matters through his early position as Director of Integrated Strategies with the San Diego Housing Commission but he has stayed as co-chair for the last 4.5 years because of his personal connection to the neighborhood and the impact the resources have on residents living in the communities. For Jon, the Promise Zone is very personal. He grew up in Logan Heights across the street from Logan Elementary School, in communities where opportunity was not always easy to see or access, and where housing stability could make a huge difference in a family's future. As a result Jon has always felt a responsibility to stay connected to these communities where people are working hard to build better futures for themselves and their children. His career has centered around creating opportunities for young people and families. Links to learn more about Jon are included in the [newsletter](#).
  - **Community Perception Survey (CPS):** The 2026 Community Perception Survey was finalized following working group feedback and translated into Spanish. Survey outreach is taking place in March and April at various locations throughout the Promise Zone, including Northgate Gonzalez Markets (Barrio Logan and Logan Heights) and Food 4 Less (Encanto). Residents are receiving a \$5 grocery gift card for their participation. As of now we have already surveyed over 500 individuals, exceeding our goal! We continue to survey next week with the revised goal of reaching 750 residents. Overall, the surveying has gone very well, and it has been discovered that the experience has been rewarding both to the residents and to the SDSU students. The residents have expressed appreciation at having an opportunity to share their thoughts, and they were appreciative of the grocery gift card incentive. The idea to offer a grocery card came as a result of community partner's suggestion at the December All-Partner Meeting, which

was a reminder of how incredibly important network is to collaborate with each other. The SDSU students as fellow volunteers have been terrific to work with. It is evident that this experience has been rewarding for everyone involved.

- o An [Online Survey](#) was created to reach more residents.
- **Partner Impact Survey:** All Promise Zone partners with an MOU on file were invited to complete a brief online Partner Impact Survey to share how their organization has impacted residents of the Promise Zone over the 10-year designation as well as how the organization has been impacted by the Promise Zone initiative. Only a few questions were required. Although the majority of questions were optional, we encouraged partners to answer as many questions as they could. As an incentive, we have many event tickets available through a drawing. The survey is intended to capture organizational impact on Promise Zone residents and the effects of participation in the 10-year designation. The results are set to be compiled into an Impact Report, which will then be shared at the All-Partner Celebration at the end of the designation.
  - o [Partner Impact Survey Flyer](#)
  - o Partner Impact Survey [here](#).
- **All-Partner Celebration: Save the Date:** Thursday, June 4, 2026, 1–4 p.m. at Workshops for Warriors' new Barrio Logan location. This event will serve as the final All-Partner Meeting of the federal designation and the launch of the community-led San Diego Promise Zone Alliance. The event will include testimonies from partners, data from the Partner Impact Survey, the Community Perception Survey, and census data, remarks from government officials, and a beautiful charcuterie table. Invitations were sent to invitation to MOU partners.
  - o [All-Partner Celebration flyer](#)

### **Guest Presentation: Black Tech Link: GIS Workforce Training**

Elizabeth Cotton is the Founder and Executive Director at Black Tech Link, a California based non-profit organization focused on empowering black and brown students to reach their full potential through immersive STEM education projects and internships.

During the meeting, Elizabeth provided a Geographical Information Systems Workforce Training presentation. The presentation offered key overview of Geographical Information Systems and their usage, as well as Black Tech Link's own GIS training program and BIPOC Coastal Research Program.

### **Key Areas of Focus:**

- Geographical information systems as a tool for community development, environmental coastal research, urban planning infrastructure and public health and community service.
- Geographical information systems careers and salaries.

### **Black Tech Link Programs:**

- BiPOC Coastal Research Program

- GIS Training & Certification Program

**Presentation Slides:** [HERE](#)

**Contacts: Black Tech Link**

- Website: <https://blacktechlink.org/>
- General Contact: [blacktechlink@gmail.com](mailto:blacktechlink@gmail.com)

**Promise Zone Priorities & Transition Discussion:**

Danielle and Sylvia shared updates from the previous Economic Activity working group meeting. The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing the future of the Working Group and changes/developments members would like to see or implement.

A Development Sub-Committee has been formed to pursue grant funding and provide operational support. A Communications Sub-Committee will be formed next. If you are interested in getting involved, please reach out to Danielle, Sylvia, or [promisezone@sandiego.gov](mailto:promisezone@sandiego.gov).

**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>
- Remember to RSVP for the [All-Partner Celebration](#), which will be held on Thursday, June 4, 2026 from 1- 4 p.m.