



URBAN LEAGUE OF
SAN DIEGO COUNTY

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2023 - 2024



BREAKING NEWS

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Urban League of SD County makes huge difference for the community



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Urban League of San Diego County Receives a \$20,000 Grant from Bank of America to Strengthen Community Health Workers Programming

SAN DIEGO

Civil rights group aims to increase homeownership for minority communities in San Diego

The program has created 81 first-time homebuyers since August of 2021, according to President and CEO Ali Abdallah.

By Kelvin Henry • Published September 22, 2024 • Updated on September 22, 2024 at 3:57 pm



SAN DIEGO NEWS

ON NOW

10PM: NBC7 News

Trending Stories

NBC 7 RESPONDS

National City family paid \$150 a month for years for canceled service

RECALLS

Costco recalls nearly 80,000 pounds of Kirkland-brand butter

DESIGNING, PROTECTING & FORGING OUR FUTURE



*Al Abdallah
President & CEO*

While many changes have been witnessed over the last 71 years of the Urban League of San Diego County's history, one core commitment has never changed; that is the commitment to assisting the most vulnerable and under-valued members of our communities. The proud community members we serve transition out of poverty through a continuum of program enriched services that support collective access to familial preservation and development. The success of this past year in our operations, fund development, and core programs has well-positioned the League for strategic growth and enhanced

initiatives. I can confidently report to our partners, sponsors, volunteers, stakeholders and constituents, our consorted efforts resulted in an overall 35% increase in positive outcomes for our clients. This translates to more homeownership, renters, graduates, first generation students, healthcare competency and awareness, more bridgebuilding and more small business development.

I have profound gratitude for the team of civic leaders I have the honor of working beside everyday. We continually work to strengthen our capacity to remain in the critical communal role as the catalyst and convener of social and economic progress. As we continue to create more homeowners, decrease debt, send students to college and careers, and increase health standards, our efforts ensure we create greater access to a higher quality of life for our neighbors. For the families experiencing basic needs insecurities, we promise to unlock the wealth of possibilities in store for us as an agency that seeks strategic coalitions and bold public policy reforms.

The septuagenarian era of the Urban League of San Diego County will be a period of expansion and influence into and upon the broader civil and geopolitical landscape of Southern California. I look ahead to the next decade as a humbling mandate to faithfully guide the organization I helm and to amplify the voice of the community I serve. It is a mandate I am keen to meet with vigilance, resilience and integrity.

*"Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality."
-Warren Bennis*

HELPING HANDS & TENACIOUS HEARTS

It is an incredible honor to serve the unyielding community of San Diego County and to build dynamic relationships that support the mission and vision of this organization. We take seriously the responsibility entrusted to us by county residents and philanthropic partners to be faithful stewards over critical resources and programs that benefit our clients. It is the unique shared experience we have with the community that motivates us towards excellence as we execute our mission.



*Larry S. Reed
Board Chair*

At a time when fear and uncertainty were at their highest due to unforeseen weather-related disasters, high interest rates and surmounting political pressure; the determination of the Urban League to overcome formidable barriers to equality and equity has remained steadfast despite the year's trials. Our constituents can take heart in the knowledge that we are an organization that persistently strives for excellence as we work on behalf of our clients. I congratulate the staff and my fellow board members on a job well done, and I encourage you all to stay strong as we continue to serve well over 7,000 clients each year. Our Mission requires that we continue to expand our impact as we advocate for sustainable socio-economic independence for the communities we serve each year.

I know the same truth now as I knew when I first joined the Urban League as a volunteer and funder some 15 years ago: that the Urban League of San Diego County only rises as it lifts others. Remembering this central tenant of our culture and identity ensures we move forward and grow as a positive, life-influencing agency for this generation and the next. On behalf of the Urban League, I sincerely want to extend a hand of friendship to all prospective independent and corporate partners to say, "Welcome a movement of meaningful change, bring helping hands and a tenacious heart".

*"Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts. It is about one life influencing another."
- John C. Maxwell*

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Director



ABOUT ULSDC

Mission, Vision, Values

Our mission is to assist African Americans and other underserved people in San Diego County in achieving social and economic equality through advocacy, bridge building, and program services. We accomplish this by helping families transition out of poverty through a continuum of program-enriched services that support education, college prep for youth, social support, employment counseling, recovery, housing homeownership, and neighborhood preservation and advocacy.

Our vision is to be a catalyst for change in San Diego County and become one of the best human service organizations in the state of California. We seek to be the provider of choice for our co-workers, the investment of choice for our corporate, government, and philanthropic partners, and a model of integrity and excellence for a community-based organization.

We incorporate our values of integrity, innovation, impact, passion, commitment, and empowerment; prioritizing excellence in every area of service we provide.

History of the League

Since 1953, the Urban League of San Diego County (ULSDC) has historically been a civil rights and direct service 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. The ULSDC has a long history of working with schools, families, and communities to create effective family-centered programs. As one of more than 90 affiliates of the National Urban League nationwide, we are dedicated to the prosperity of SD County residents and beyond. The League helps more than 7,000 San Diegans achieve socio-economic and educational equality and sustainability each year by operating as first responders in helping families cope with challenges through a variety of programs designed to support and encourage self-sufficiency in all aspects of life.

IMPACT SUMMARY

The ULSDC connects with over 27,000 people via programs & services, social media, it's local podcast, and it's monthly newsletter.

The economic implications of this past program year for community members who participated in our programs and services are as follows:

- (1) \$8,333 is the average revenue increase amount for small businesses ;
- (2) Through scholarships, vouchers and awards, youth participant support totaled \$86,700;
- (3) The average monthly mental healthcare savings amount for seniors who received support increased by ~\$520; and
- (4) 40.7% of prospective homeowners who received coaching, gained access to more than \$60,000 in down payment and closing cost assistance

In total, 45% of our clients were tangibly and economically empowered through direct contact services with our staff via program enrollment.

The technical support we offered the community on the form of public workshops, partnership sponsored courses, service project management development, skills and wealth building coaching sessions generated greater client satisfaction in self-dependability and capabilities. Of the 7,000 clients we serve, 59% of them, as reported though surveys, communicate full problem solution and future issue prevention within 6 months of initial contact with the League. The various forms of technical skills, training, and services we provide have proven to directly impact the efficiency at which community members reach their personal goals and aspirations.



All youth participants are promoted to the next grade level, without requiring remedial courses.

All high school seniors apply to and are accepted into a 4 year or a 2 year institution.



Within the housing department, 369 clients received homeless counseling and assistance in housing placement. This number represents 22% of housing clients who disclosed their current living situation to be unstable, tentative, outdoors, and/or transient.

We were able to deliver efficient and effective program solutions to the growing diverse needs of our community through the full power of our agency. Operationally, we hit the benchmarks for all program objectives, and surpassed projected metrics of success in the housing and educational pillars. Our marketing campaign enlarged our audience, and thus highlighted the struggles of our community, by a little over 1,200 souls. Our swift response to internal and external pressures, inspired the following operational directives to be completed in tandem with our strategic plan:

- streamline our methodology and processes through custom data system development
- expand our 2.4 million dollar budget through sponsorships and investments
- foster ingenuity of ideas by growing our internal team, attending renowned national conferences, and connecting with diverse industries of services that parallel our own



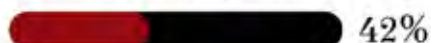
37% of our clients receive support services from more than one department.



All small business and entrepreneurship clients successfully complete and graduate from the program.



The EMASS (Elder Multicultural Access and Supportive Services) program saw a 12% increase in program enrollment for senior residents to receive 50 hours of support in healthcare navigation.



After meeting with ULSDC staff at community advocacy or civic engagement events, 42% of community members follow up with the league for program services.

The superb performance of the League gave allowance for the team to adapt and effectively respond to the needs of the community in emergencies. During the largest natural disaster San Diego has seen in recent years, that overwhelmed the health, social, economic and human infrastructure of the county, we filled the role of aide relief and liaison to the thousands of displaced families. We were on the ground combatting the primary determinants of survival and regeneration: class, health, age and economic status, by becoming an essential provider of services, resources, advocacy and campaigning to help mitigate disruptions caused by flood damage.

Our programmatic impacts align with our mission of economic empowerment, equity, self-reliance, social justice and civil rights. The Urban League of San Diego County continues to champion vital causes of it's community members and it's neighboring communities. To enhance quality of life, our goal is to instill confidence in a safe and prosperous San Diego in a rapidly changing world.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

Through advocacy, outreach, community organizing, research, policy analysis, issue campaigns, and publications, we elevate the issues in our community to ensure yesterday challenges become tomorrow's stepping stones. We at the ULSDC believe every American has an equal right and responsibility to fully participate in our democracy and civic process, and all people have a right to justice and fairness. Experiences are more joyful and lives are safer when public institutions address social issues, promote healthy responses to trauma and adopt community-led solutions. We strive to make the County of San Diego and its neighboring communities to be a more just and equitable place to live, learn and thrive.

The advocacy and civic engagement programming at the ULSDC serves as proof that through skillful organizing, all San Diegans can influence public policy and legislation to promote racial equity. We offer impactful trainings to promote social justice and civic leadership. We host public forums to highlight important issues, and canvas our neighborhoods to inform on policy.

Without our commitment to be responsible and trustworthy messengers of the community, we could not identify the root causes of our issues and develop effective solutions that leads to systemic and sustainable changes. As a voice for the voiceless, the ULSDC continually works to provide a full continuum approach to advocacy and awareness through learning and creating systems of support to address skill gaps and access to capital, which can then work to enlarge San Diego's capacity for fairness and unity.

EDUCATION & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Today, we serve the next generation of leaders, as such they need the necessary tools to develop into thriving, successful adults. Through signature programs such as Project Ready and Golden Pyramid Scholarship Awards, we at the ULSDC help students progress academically, socially and intellectually in college, work and life.



MENTORSHIP

- Group mentoring
- Professional mentors
- Peer support

CAREER EXPLORATION

- Learn from industry leaders and professionals
- Site visits

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

- 1 on 1 support
- Proficiency assessments
- Tutoring

SERVICE LEARNING

- Research projects
- Community service
- Impact analysis

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Leadership development
- Group activities

COLLEGE CULTURE & AWARENESS

- College tours
- Financial aid workshops
- College application support



The curriculum used to support our youth addresses the lack of culturally relevant and historically accurate materials in the urban experience in America and empower youth with positive images of themselves as a people who have impacted the social, economic, political and cultural development of this nation yesterday and today. We believe youth have a sure chance of success when they themselves, their parents and community leaders are involved in education reform to fill the resource gap for families and educators. This is the promise of education we work towards.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

The ULSDC is passionately dedicated to empowering all Americans to have access to quality healthcare solutions; which is why the aim of the Health & Wellness department is to provide replicable, sustainable health care resources and related information to underserved communities while advocating for the elimination of health disparities. To these ends we provide peer-based healthcare awareness to seniors in the community that is both culturally and linguistically appropriate. Our community health workers operate in the role of advocate, educator, mentor, role model, cultural broker and translator.

As a leading organization in pursuing health equity and optimal communal health, we address the multiple social barriers to healthy living and well-

being. We believe that more should be done to respond to the social determinants of health proactively and to singularly focus on advancing health equity via investments in policy, innovation, partnership and programs.

The Health & Wellness Equity Collaborative is designed to promote collaboration and create opportunities for community-based organizations to work together in unity to address the health and wellness issues impacting the African-American and other communities of color in San Diego County. The ULSDC looks at opportunities to collaborate and support one another on mutual missions, initiatives, and projects impacting our communities. We seek to add support and meaningful substance and bridge connections between health providers, faith-based organizations, and community-based organization throughout SD County and neighboring communities.

HOUSING & FINANCIAL EDUCATION

The Housing Department at the ULSDC believes in promoting economic self-sufficiency, through comprehensive services in financial capabilities and homeownership. All counselors are HUD-certified and are ready to provide counseling, education, and resources.



FORECLOSURE PREVENTION/SUPPORT

- Loan servicer mitigation support
- Crisis budget development
- Document interpretation

HOME OWNERSHIP

- Affirmative asset building
- Down payment and/or closing cost assistance

PRE-PURCHASE

- Credit repair and building
- 1 on 1 financial assessment
- Develop action plan/goal setting

FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES

- Effective spending plan analysis
- Goal setting/vision mapping
- Financial coaching

POST-PURCHASE

- Comprehensive budgeting for sustainability
- Strategic planning with follow up support

RENTAL COUNSELING

- Eviction support/rental assistance fund application
- Rental housing search
- Homeless resources and prevention



We strive to develop generational wealth within underserved communities by providing access to HUD-certified counselors, comprehensive educational programs, and a talented pool of professionals in housing and financial capabilities. Having a place to call home offers a priceless sense of security and stability. A home is not a luxury; it is a fundamental human right. Through the many programs the ULSDC offers, the housing division is creating opportunities for the most vulnerable of us to achieve housing stability and security.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

At the ULSDC both the workforce development and small business programs attest to the idea that employment and entrepreneurial pursuits should meet more than basic needs, but rather it should allow families to access income that allows San Diegans to live a full life and provide benefits that protect individuals and their families from life's many challenges. We have a long history of supporting community members in entrepreneurship, looking for their first job, looking to make a career change, re-entering society, transitioning out of the military, spouses of military personnel or those who find themselves recently unemployed. We help equip community members with the tools needed to re-enter

the workforce or to pave their own path to financial independency. We offer small business support that includes one on one coaching and an individualized personal action plan over a twelve month period. Coaching within the small business program is meant to give community members the opportunity to learn expert subject matter as it pertains to certain aspects of their businesses.

We believe all people have strengths that can be recognized and confidently embraced for the good of others, which is why the ULSDC works to ensure every American has the right of access to a rewarding career with a livable wage and adequate benefits. We offer small group classes that provide goal setting, soft skills training, expungement opportunity process, job readiness, trauma response, parenting skills, financial literacy, and housing education to support these ends.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

HONORING BLACK LEGACY & EMPOWERING NEW BEGINNINGS

Executive Board

Karla Sanchez - Chapter President

Alysse Hogan - Vice President

Jesse Codere - Personal & Professional Development Chair

Bryan Cawthon - Finance Chair

Ashley Rundles - Communications Chair

Soleil Wallen - Community Service Chair

For over 20 years, the San Diego Urban League Young Professionals (SDULYP) have supported the programs of the ULSDC by serving the diverse needs of the region. The auxiliary chapter seeks to provide a place for young professionals to focus their energies' on community service and economic empowerment. The SDULYP's also work to strengthen it's members by encouraging them to achieve balance in their lives. They demonstrate unwavering dedication to strengthening the San Diego community. Through educational workshops, health and wellness events, policy advocacy days, youth engagement activities, home ownership workshops and voter engagement initiatives, SDULYP makes a profound impact. Each event not only empowers its members, but also serves the broader community, furthering SDULYP's mission of fostering positive change and resilience in San Diego County.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The ULSDC is on its transformative journey to advance communal equality in San Diego County and beyond. Building on a rich legacy of advocacy and direct service, we have set ambitious goals to significantly expand our impact over the next 3-5 years. Our strategic plan lays out clear actionable steps to scale the organization to a multi-million dollar operation, enhance our capacities to end homelessness and elevate community engagement. We are committed to transforming the community through collaborative efforts and innovative solutions. By fostering long-term community wealth and wellness, we aim to implement programs that support our five pillars. We invite all stakeholders to join us on this journey, contributing their insights, resources, and support to help achieve these ambitious goals.

Strategic Objectives

- I. Regional Expansion: expand influence and services into neighboring counties to meet the unique needs of these communities.
- II. Programmatic Efficacy and Advancement: broaden the scope and scale of current programs to become the largest provider of comprehensive support services.
- III. Financial Stability and Growth: increase the diversity of our revenue sources through infrastructure and innovative fundraising strategies with the goal of doubling the organization.
- IV. Organizational Leadership and Advocacy: become the thought leader and primary advocate to enhance public awareness, and influence policy.
- V. Comprehensive Organizational Development: create detailed and standardized procedures of operations to be the model for efficiency and effectiveness among nonprofits nationally.

These five strategic objectives align with the vision of making the ULSDC a powerhouse for community transformation and support, driving substantial improvements in the lives of individuals and families in underserved communities. We are dedicated to addressing immediate community needs while paving the way for long-term community wealth and wellness. Together with our partners and other community-based organizations, the Urban League of San Diego County can redefine what is possible for the community at large, creating a future where socio-economic equality is not just an aspiration but a reality.

THANK YOU

A special thank you to all our volunteers, sponsors, partners and supporters. The work of the ULSDC is not done in silo, but in working relationships with community members and organizations. The passion of the staff could only be matched by the individuals who live in the communities they serve; and often are joined by such passionately dedicated residents. With each helping hand the work and impact of the league increases tenfold. It is our pleasure to serve the community and an even greater privilege to live with and grow beside the hardworking residents of San Diego County. We do this work because of you and we wouldn't want to do it without you.

It is heartwarming to see the many organizations and foundations that share our passionate drive for equality and prosperity. We offer a very special thank you to our partners below:

Satterberg Foundation - San Diego Foundation - Hologic -
Delta Sigma Theta - Omega psi Phi - Sigma Gamma Rho -
Zeta Phi Beta - Kappa Alpha Psi - UPS - California
Secretary of State - Comerica - First Citizens Bank - Wells
Fargo - US Bank - CIT Bank - City National Bank - LISC ,
San Diego - RISE, San Diego - San Diego Chamber Black
Chamber - UNIDOS - National Urban League - AbbVie -
CALSOAP - African American Association of Educators,
SD - San Diego National Association of Naval Officers -
Union of Pan Asian Communities - Somali Family Services
- US Midway Museum - UC San Diego - University of San
Diego - Southwestern Community College - MiraCosta
College - Cuyamaca College - Grossmont Community
College - Olympian Highschool - CSU San Marcos - San
Diego City College - San Diego Community College District
- San Diego Continuing Education - San Diego Unified
School District - San Diego County Office of Education





71ST Equal Opportunity
Diversity & Equity Awards
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offers access to resources to assist communities, families and businesses in reaching their financial aspirations. Visit usb.com/access to access your financial goals.

U.S. Bank is proud to support the Urban League of San Diego County.



EQUAL HOUSING
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Awards Program

Masters of Ceremonies

-

Universal Invocation

-

Negro National Anthem

-

Leadership Welcome Greeting

-

Annual Report & Program Spotlight

-

Presentation of Awards

-

Musical Performances



Lift Every Voice & Sing

James Weldon Johnson; John Rosamond Johnson

Lift every voice and sing,
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught
us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought
us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til, victory is won.
Stone the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?

We have come over a way that with tear has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the
slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
'Til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Lead us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we
met Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land

TJ Harris

TJ Harris is the visionary CEO of BLAC, a dedicated leader with over five years of experience driving generational progress and systemic change in black communities. passionate about empowering black and underrepresented young adults, TJ combines transformative leadership, mental health advocacy, and economic empowerment to foster long-term socioeconomic impact. His strategic approach crafts impactful initiatives in leadership development and career advancement, paving the way for lasting change. TJ's unwavering commitment to his community has inspired countless individuals to realize their potential and contribute to a more equitable society, making him a dynamic force and a beacon of progress in the community



MC

Jamaela Johnson

Jamaela is a third generation San Diegan, born and raised in Southeastern San Diego. She is the inaugural Community Affairs Manager for San Diego County with Clark Construction Group. In this role, she spearheads SDBE participating, local hiring initiatives, and community engagement for projects. Prior to joining Clark Construction, she served as a Community and veterans affairs Representative for the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors, District 4; before this she worked as a Student Services professional in the CSU system. Jamaela has received the President's Outstanding Graduate Award and the Growing Tree Award. With her passion for social justice, civic engagement, and economic development, Jamaela earned a BA in Human Development from CSU San Marcos, an MA in Public Administration and a Professional Certificate in Grant Writing from SDSU. Jamaela is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., ULSDC Young Professionals, and RISE San Diego Urban Leadership Alumni; Cohort 9.



MC

The Urban League of San Diego County is pleased to honor nine regional leaders who symbolize the importance of diversity, inclusion and equity. Their work and contributions throughout the county is crucial for the empowerment of community members to attain the American Dream of education, economic stability, sustainable housing, health equity and equal rights.

2024 Diversity & Equity Award Honorees

Eric Asiedu

Director, Mortgage Marketing & Sales
Support, First Citizens Bank



With 21 years of experience in the financial services industry, Eric brings knowledge, professionalism and an understanding of the financial landscape to his customer relationships. A member of First Citizens team since 2014, he's known as a trusted banker, helping customers achieve their financial goals. Eric is knowledgeable and passionate about the Retail & Mortgage Banking industry, working with many customers to grow their business. Living in the Southern California market area, Eric is familiar with what is happening locally and how it impacts industry. Eric is proud to be part of the First Citizens family, where "forever First" is more than just a slogan. It's a promise to stay with our customers through the years- and even across the generations- and remain worthy of the trust they place in us. We're committed to being of value to the people, businesses and communities that rely on us.

Janell is a seasoned professional and community advocate with a robust background spanning over two decades in corporate and nonprofit sectors. With a Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt certification, and through her passion for advocacy, business, and cooking, Janell founded Nelly's Kitchen, a culinary enterprise that doubles as a training ground for on-the-job learning and culinary entrepreneurship. She uses Nelly's Kitchen to offer hands-on experience in the culinary arts, equipping participants with both practical skills and business acumen to succeed in the food industry. Her work empowers formerly incarcerated individuals and community members to secure well-paying jobs and build their own ventures, reflecting her unwavering dedication to creating pathways for self-sufficiency and growth. Janell's unique blend of skills, advocacy, and heart shines through her commitment to transforming lives through culinary and entrepreneurial education.



Janell Davis

Founder & Owner
Nelly's Kitchen

Maya Madsen

Founder & CEO,
Maya's Cookies



Maya is the founder and CEO of Maya's Cookies, America's #1 Black-owned gourmet, vegan cookie company. She started the business in 2015, after spending 20 years in the fitness industry as a model and spin instructor. As a longtime vegan, she struggled to find gourmet, decadent vegan cookies that satisfied her sweet tooth, so she started baking them herself. She started small, sharing her cookies with friends and family and eventually transitioned into the local farmers market scene. Word began to spread among the San Diego vegan community and she slowly started adding more flavors to her weekly offerings. Fast forward to now, she operates her own facility to ship her cookies nationwide, have a flagship store with a second location coming and have established Maya's Cookies as a local vegan staple. Maya believed in the company from the beginning, now, with the success she has, she gives back to the community and provide resources to other black business owners working to make their dreams a reality.

Ellen is deeply committed to dismantling systems that perpetuate injustice, isolation and powerlessness. Through her visionary leadership and civic engagement, Ellen serves as the Chair of BAPAC, Chair Leon Williams San Diego County Human Relations Commission, Co – Chair of San Diego VOAD's Long Term Recovery Group, and many other advisory boards. She was instrumental in creating BAPACSD's integrated advocacy campaigns and monthly community convenings to advance issues in criminal justice reform, police accountability, homelessness, education, voter education, outreach, environmental justice and economic development. She has received numerous local, state and national awards for her leadership abilities and community contributions. She graduated from San Diego State University with a B. S. in Public Administration with an emphasis in Human Resources Management, and pursued graduate studies in Educational Leadership. Over a 33 year period, Ellen led human resources departments at SDSU and UCSD.



Ellen Ewings-Nash
Chair, Black American Policy
Association of California, San Diego

Kazeem Omidiji
Director of Community Relations,
San Diego Gas & Electric



In Kazeem's current role at SDG&E, he oversees corporate philanthropy, employee engagement and relations with nonprofit and community-based organizations in San Diego County and south Orange County. Previously, he worked for KPMG US LLP as a Manager within the Deal, Advisory, & Strategy practice focusing on strategy consulting in the digital transformation space for the Utilities and Transportation sectors. His career also includes several key positions in engineering, project management, regulatory affairs, business services, and construction within the energy sector. He currently serves on the board of directors for San Diego Blood Bank, San Diego Tourism Authority, Partnership for a Better San Diego and Southwestern College President's Advisory Council. In 2023, he was recognized by the SD Business Journal as a Top 50 Black Leaders of Influence, and by the County of SD Black Chamber of Commerce with its Corporate Community Leader Award. Kazeem holds a BA degree in Electrical Engineering from the University Nevada, Las Vegas.

At the start of the millennium, Gregory was a college student looking for work, barely making ends meet, living in Phoenix and driving a busted car with no air conditioning. That's when he learned about an opening for a position as a compliance officer with the U.S. Department of Labor enforcing equal employment opportunity and affirmative action regulations. His role with the federal office set the foundation of a career dedicated to safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable. As seventh chancellor of SDCCCD, Gregory is responsible for a billion dollar annual budget and all operation for a system that stands as the largest provider of workforce training and higher education in the region. The legacy he wishes to leave is one of hope. He hopes his work will have strengthened the foundation of the organizations he serves such that they create more public value and better serve the full diversity of their communities well beyond his many years of service.



Gregory A. Smith
Chancellor, San Diego
Community College District

Fred Sotelo

President & CEO,
Cerveza XTECA



Fred stands out as a paragon of social entrepreneurship and community leadership in San Diego. As President & CEO of Cerveza CTECA, Fred has not only led a successful Latino-owned craft beer company but also poured his heart into community and sustainable development. Cerveza XTECA has become a community pride, gracing the shelves of local Walmart, Snapdragon Stadium, Sprouts, and mom-and-pop stores, even reaching as far as Sacramento with plans for national expansion. Fred envisions removing barriers for Black and Brown youth to realize their potential, contributing to a healthy community. His innovative approach to education through his volunteer work and the creation of TRIBE (Training Right In Business & Education) Program showcases his commitments to empowering youth. By integrating AI technology into business education, he has provided students with invaluable tool to enhance and scale their ideas, fostering confidence and creativity within the TRIBE program in the County of San Diego Juvenile Court Schools.

Samantha serves as the Executive Director of JIREH Providers, an organization passionately dedicated to advancing health, equity and justice. Driven by a profound love for community and guided by her faith, Samantha brings fierce advocacy and compassion to the work of fighting systemic issues in community health. Under Samantha's leadership, JIREH has formed powerful partnerships with local organizations and healthcare providers to create innovative pathways to critical resources- breaking beyond traditional approaches in service delivery. Looking forward, she is determined to disrupt the status quo in maternal health disparities among Black women, bringing much-needed change to an injustice overlooked. Samantha's impactful work has earned her recognition from various institutions for her dedication to diversity and equity. she continues to be a bold advocate for policy reforms and strategic alliances that promote health justice, elevating the rights and voices of marginalized communities.



Samantha Williams

Executive Director,
JIREH Providers



Tony Young

Prior CEO, San Diego
Workforce Partnership

Tony is a highly experienced community leader with over three decades of government and programmatic expertise in San Diego County. He most recently served as Interim CEO of SDWP where he drove strategic efforts to address the local labor market needs and expand workforce development programs. From his early days as an educator with the San Diego Unified School District to his civic service as a City Councilmember, Tony possesses a profound understanding of pressing issues in San Diego County and how they intersect with resident challenges and aspirations as they pertain to workforce, training and talent. In 2014, Tony founded both Civic Link Strategies, a public affairs firm, and RISE San Diego, a nonprofit dedicated to advancing urban leadership through civic engagement to effect meaningful community change. Tony earned a degree in Socioeconomics from Howard University, teaching credentials from the University of San Diego and completed the Executive Education program at Harvard Kennedy School.

FROM THE COMMUNITY

“The Urban League is the gift that keeps on giving, from generation to generation...there needs to be an Urban League, we have to have a voice for our children... we thank [the ULSDC] for giving our children the opportunity to find out who they are along their journey.”

- Project Ready Parent, 2023

“You guys saved my life.”

-Integrative Services Client, 2024

“I met with a counselor, stuck to the budget, got the grant and bought a condo. Without the counseling support I’m not certain how long it would’ve taken me to become a homeowner.”

-Homeownership Client, 2024

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**URBAN LEAGUE
SAN DIEGO COUNTY**