

San Diego Newsline

Downtown San Diego news — the budget, public safety, business, and the civic life of America's Finest City

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COUNTY

County Awarded Grant to Waive Permit Fees for Home Cooking Program



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Are you interested in becoming a home kitchen operator? The County's Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ) received a grant from the state to waive permit fees for those who want to operate a Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation (MEHKO).

MEHKOs are home kitchens that operate as mini restaurants. The opportunity to run a business without the overhead costs and infrastructure required of a traditional brick-and-mortar restaurant facility is a game-changer for the existing MEHKOs participants.

"There are so many people that have been able to enter the food industry and fulfill lifelong dreams about business ownership and provide food to the community that previously were unable to," said Executive Director of the COOK Alliance Roya Bagheri, Esq.

All existing MEHKO permits at the start of the program were provided a fee waiver for their next health permit renewal. All remaining funding will be put toward offsetting new MEHKO permit fees.

Fee waivers will be issued on a first come first served basis and will continue until available funds are exhausted or the waiver period ends, whichever comes first. The waiver period runs through May 2025.

To date, there have been 31 new MEHKO permits that have been issued as part of the fee waiver since the start of the fee waiver period. The County used 70% of the money that is available to offset permit

fees for new MEHKO operators.

The program supports equitable access to self-employment to help avoid high start-up costs for many underrepresented groups, such as women, immigrants and people of color, to use their skills to generate income through a traditional restaurant space.

New operators interested in starting a MEHKO are required to submit a Health Permit Application , Standard Operating Procedures , and Food Safety Manager Certificate at the time of application.

DEHQ oversees the MEHKOs program and ensures food safety through inspections, permitting and oversight of the rules of the program.

DEHQ is committed to supporting San Diego's home cooks and offers several resources to support those interested in the MEKHOs program. Visit the Home Kitchen Operations webpage to learn more.

County of San Diego news release · Dec 10, 2024



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COUNTY

Equity Impact Grant Winners Announced

Ten local, small non-profit

organizations are celebrating after winning \$100,000 each in equity impact grants and a year's worth of custom coaching designed to further their missions, advancing equity and belonging throughout the region.

The winners were announced by the County's Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ) on Wednesday.

The recipients applied for the grants through the County's Equity Impact Grant (EIG) Program .

The County and the Nonprofit Institute at the University of San Diego (NPI) developed the program last year. Through this partnership, the County provides the grant funding and NPI provides coaching on leadership, non-profit governance, organizational resiliency and more.

The program was created after community feedback described how small organizations led by people of color encounter difficulties in obtaining government contracts and philanthropic funding. For example, complex grant applications that require significant time and grant writing experience to complete or a lack of grants that would serve their organization.

"These grants will significantly benefit small organizations and the people they serve," said Interim OERJ Director Taryell Simmons. "By awarding these grants, we acknowledge the challenges small nonprofits face. We are proud to support them in building capacity, enabling them to serve even more people who need their services."

This is the second round of funding and coaching for the program. The first group received grants in May.

To be considered for the grant program, applying organizations had to have fewer than five employees and/or operate on \$500,000 or less. The nonprofits also had to show how they are addressing local inequities in one of the areas below:

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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Equity Impact Grant Winners Announced

Education and youth empowerment (early childhood through higher/continuing education).

Restorative justice and alternatives to incarceration.

Wealth building, workforce, and economic development.

The 10 recipients to win funding in this round are:

Better Cuts Mental Health Alliance : Combining the art of barbering with the science of mental health to uplift, connect and transform the lives of men of color, Better Cuts Mental Health Alliance envisions a world where every man of color has access to culturally appropriate mental health services.

Club FBS (Fitteds, Books & Sneakers) : A book club and mentorship program for Black male middle and high school students that seeks to improve the grade-level reading rates of Black males while elevating their social-emotional well-being through character-building and positive masculinity models.

Dreams+Ducats : This educational nonprofit works with students, teachers, schools and school districts to connect classrooms and curriculum more meaningfully to community, culture, careers and the local economy.

Greater than Tech : The organization integrates STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and business principles to help young people in underserved areas learn more about the opportunities these fields can offer the students now and in the future.

Lived Experience Advisors (LEA): LEA works with people who have experienced homelessness to help advocate for positive changes in homelessness service systems.

Mano a Mano Foundation : Creator of the region's first Spanish language educational program about the fentanyl crisis, Mano a Mano works with the Latino community to provide educational services and comprehensive support to families in culturally appropriate ways, including on topics like substance abuse, gangs, domestic violence, mental health, and supporting children inside and outside of the classroom.

Our Genetic Legacy : This organization helps young people in the Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) community tell the stories of their ancestral history in a variety of ways, including a drone program designed to record sites important in BIPOC history, a

virtual museum and a history textbook that will be published in 2025.

RISE San Diego : RISE San Diego provides training and support for resident leaders to increase their capacity to make meaningful community change. RISE's vision is for thriving, resident-led urban neighborhoods that provide safe and healthy opportunities for youth and families to live, work and play.

San Diego International Birthing Project : This volunteer organization supports women of color through their pregnancy, baby's birth and motherhood. The San Diego International Birthing Project helps women obtain prenatal care and provides one-on-one support throughout pregnancy. It also offers parenting and life skills for mothers and fathers, mental health referrals, health education and more.

Foundation for Care Integration : The foundation provides financial aid for at-risk older adults and families, including BIPOC communities and individuals with disabilities who cannot bridge the financial gap between their insurance and their health needs. Through home modifications, caregiver support and access to essential medical care, Foundation for Care Integration empowers individuals to live independently and with dignity in their own homes.

For more information about OERJ, visit their website .

County of San Diego news release · Dec 11, 2024

COUNTY

New Golf Cart Sized Machine Will Test for Treatable Diseases in Record Time

A one-of-a-kind machine that works twice as fast as current practices when testing for diseases is heading for the County of San Diego's new Public Health Lab, allowing epidemiologists to more effectively fight the spread of diseases.

Tuesday the County Board of Supervisors approved the spending of \$240,000 to acquire a Diasorin Liaison XL and supporting supplies and equipment.

The golf cart sized piece of equipment can test for tuberculosis, chickenpox, shingles, measles, mumps and rubella.

The faster testing is particularly important for tuberculosis (TB) where local cases are trending up.

The machine's automation features reduce staff hands-on time by 75 percent. The Diasorin Liaison XL will be ready for use when the new county Public Health Lab

opens in late spring 2025 .

Unlike traditional skin testing for TB, the Diasorin can test a person's blood to aid the diagnosis of latent TB infection.

“The biggest challenge in preventing TB is that many people are unaware they have it,” said Dr. Ankita Kadakia, MD, County interim public health officer. “Latent or dormant TB can be easily treated, yet an estimated 85% of active TB cases come from untreated latent TB. Latent TB sleeps in someone's body until they develop conditions such as immune suppression which causes the TB to wake up and cause disease. We estimate 175,000 people in San Diego County have latent TB infections,”

The machine's speed is expected to increase the number of tests for TB. It will find greater numbers of unknown infections which will allow more people to get treatment.

More information is available on the County's Public Health Lab webpage and the County's Tuberculosis webpage .

County of San Diego news release · Dec 10, 2024

COUNTY

Law Enforcement and Children Celebrate the Holidays Early at Shop with a Cop 2024

San Diego County Probation hosted this year's Shop with a Cop Dec. 7 as a way to spread holiday magic to more than 300 children selected by area schools to participate in the festive annual event.

“As the Probation Chief, I can tell you our officers and staff participate in this event every year because it brings them so much joy to be part of this special day for the children in our communities,” San Diego Chief Probation Officer Tamika Nelson said. “Our department really enjoyed hosting this year's event and I want to thank all the officers, staff, and elves who helped raise funds and organize the event, and, of course, our generous donors.”

The event, which started in 1994, includes more than 300 officers from over 30 local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in San Diego County. All the officers and law enforcement staff volunteer to take part in the fun event.

The event is sponsored by local law enforcement agencies, SeaWorld, Target, and STAR/PAL.

Children are paired with law enforcement officers and taken to SeaWorld, where they are treated to breakfast and a special dolphin show put on just for them.

Afterward, the children and their law enforcement “partners” caravan to Target, where each child is given a \$200 gift card to shop for themselves and their families. Volunteers also help make the holidays enjoyable by wrapping gifts for the children to share with their loved ones.

Santa even made an appearance and was available for visits and photos.

“We thought Probation did an absolutely amazing job as the host agency for Shop with a Cop! Their organization, dedication, and enthusiasm truly made the event special for the kids and the community,” said Andy Wiese, Interim CEO for STAR/PAL, a not-for-profit San Diego organization that builds relationships between youth and law enforcement through various leadership and mentoring programs.

Probation passed the hosting duties to El Cajon Police Department for 2025.

County of San Diego news release · Dec 9, 2024

COUNTY

Public's Help Sought to Identify Train Victim

The County Medical Examiner's Office is asking if anyone recognizes the woman with the script tattoo depicted in a forensic rendering of a train victim who died Aug. 12.

Investigators have been unable to identify her since that time and are asking for the public's help.

The woman, believed to be Caucasian and between 50 and 60 years old, stood about 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighed about 110 pounds. She had curly brown hair and brown eyes.

The woman also had a distinct text or script tattoo on her left forearm, Medical Examiner Investigator Jennifer Wright said.

She was struck near the Carlsbad Boulevard bridge at 7:30 p.m. by a northbound Coaster commuter train in Carlsbad and died at the scene. She did not carry any identification and attempts to identify her with fingerprint technology have been unsuccessful.

If you think you recognize this woman, please contact the Investigations Unit of the San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office at (858) 694-2905 regarding Case Number 2024-02413.

County of San Diego news release · Dec 6, 2024

COUNTY

Community Gardens Grow Veggies, Fruit, Flowers and Friendships

What was once a vacant lot in Linda Vista now blossoms with fresh produce, flowers and budding friendships. The site boasts a new community garden – just one of seven that County Aging & Independence Services (AIS) helped bring to life.

AIS used state funds to buy supplies like fertilizer, shovels, trowels, garden sheds and more. In all, AIS supports more than 20 new and existing community gardens in various ways.

The Bayside Community Center worked with several partners to build the garden located within Linda Vista Park and celebrated its opening in June.

The transformed lot attracts new and long-time gardeners alike. The site also draws in people of all ages. You'll see families with children, college students and older adults. Some live at the newly opened Levant Senior Cottages nearby.

Two of the residents met each other working at the garden instead of the complex where they live.

And that's where community gardens really live up to their name—they create community. They grow food but they are also places to meet people, socialize, learn new skills and forge friendships.

“It's so important to have a place where people can gather and make lasting connections,” said Aging & Independence Director Jennifer Bransford-Koons. “No matter what your age, community gardens allow everyone to work together side by side, as well as learn from, and about each other, in ways that foster that sense of community we all need.”

Intergenerational gardens like these are located throughout the region, with one at the Spring Valley Community Center and another at the Lakeside Community Center . The County Library branch in Ramona also has one.

If you're interested in learning about an AIS supported community garden near you, contact Intergenerational Coordinator Pam Plimpton at pam.plimpton@sdcounty.ca.gov .

Additional County-related gardens are located at the Sweetwater Community Garden in Bonita, the Tijuana River Valley Community Garden , Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve and Rancho Guajome Adobe .

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY (CONTINUED)

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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Community Gardens Grow Veggies, Fruit, Flowers and Friendships

The County also supports the Master Gardener Association of San Diego County. Visit their site to find additional garden locations, and how to start or restore a community garden.

These efforts reflect the County’s commitment to sustainability. It is core to the County’s mission and part of the new County vision: a just, sustainable and resilient future for all.

County of San Diego news release · Dec 5, 2024

COUNTY
Immigrant and Refugee Welcome Center Opens in North County

The Inland Immigrant and Refugee Welcome Center opened in Escondido Thursday, making it the second location in the region where people can go, regardless of immigration status, and receive help accessing services they are eligible to receive.

Here in San Diego County,

immigrants, including refugees, make up more than 20 percent of the population.

The newest Welcome Center is located inside the North Inland Live Well Center and offers a safe, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive environment for immigrants and refugees.

The Welcome Center provides a comprehensive service hub with vital resources and information for immigrants and refugees and is located near key County departments such as Aging and Independence Services, Child Family and Wellbeing, a

Family Resource Center, Public Health Center, and Military and Veterans Resource Center.

Services include resettlement assistance, legal aid, employment support, family health and wellness, and access to self-sufficiency programs like CalWORKS, Medi-Cal, and CalFresh.

The Welcome Center’s space also allows for partnerships with community organizations who offer workshops, presentations and often use space within the Welcome Center to provide services.

The County’s first Welcome Center opened in March 2023 and is located at the South Region Live Well Center in National City .

The two Welcome Centers were developed out of ongoing community listening sessions over the past two years, to help better understand gaps between what immigrant and refugee families are eligible for and services received.

The Welcome Center is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

County of San Diego news release · Dec 5, 2024

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

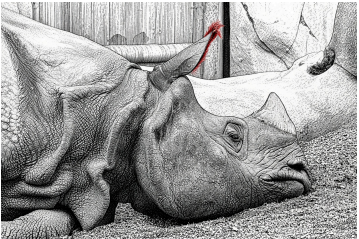


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BUSINESS
Member Spotlight: AMAROK

AMAROK is a leading provider of cutting-edge perimeter security solutions, focused on protecting businesses from theft and vandalism. Originally founded in 1973, AMAROK started as a guard dog company before evolving into a security powerhouse. The company’s signature product, The Electric Guard Dog™ Fence, revolutionizes security by providing an effective, multi-layered deterrent that is proven to prevent 99% of external theft post installation. Today, AMAROK offers a comprehensive range of integrated solutions, including electrified security fences, video surveillance, and alarm systems, designed to safeguard properties 24/7.

AMAROK’s security systems protect 8,000+ commercial businesses across various industries, including warehousing, trucking, construction, equipment rental, manufacturing, auto services and many more. AMAROK’s

electrified security fences are battery-powered from solar energy, minimizing environmental impact while offering continuous, reliable protection without the need for power grids. This green solution is not only efficient but also cost-effective, reducing operational security expenses while enhancing asset protection.

In addition to electrified security fencing, AMAROK integrates video surveillance and alarms into their layered security approach, creating an end-to-end solution that detects and deters threats. Their systems are monitored around the clock, offering real-time notifications and immediate responses to security breaches. With these services, businesses can protect their property, people, and profits while minimizing liability and insurance costs.

AMAROK has earned a reputation for reliability and customer service, providing tailored security assessments and flexible solutions for various business needs. Their mission is to stop crime before it happens, offering peace of mind and a strong return on investment for commercial businesses nationwide.

Schedule your free expert threat assessment today.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Dec 11, 2024

BUSINESS
From the Desk of Veronica Perondi – December 2024

Reflecting on a Year of Leadership and Connection

As the year comes to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on the accomplishments, transitions, and opportunities that have shaped LEAD San Diego this past year. It’s been a year of growth, learning, and meaningful impact (and not just for me!).

First, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the LEAD Board members who concluded their terms and rolled off this year.

Leon Clark (19), Vice President – General Manager, E.W. Scripps Company – KGTV

Gerardo Godinez, Partner-In-Charge, San Diego, Moss Adams

Rosa María Hernández (20), President & Founder, The Vida Effect

Steven Jones, Ph.D. (20), Chief Executive Officer, Global LeaderSHYFT, Inc.

Hernán Luis y Prado (15 & 23), Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Workshops For Warriors

Margie Newman Tsay (15 &

17), Founding Partner, Intesa Communications Group

Idara Ogunsaju (17), Founder & Consultant , The Antorge Group, LLC

Kari Pelters (15), Vice President, Global Finance, Hunter Industries

Brittany Santos-Derieg (19), Chief of Staff, Office of the President, San Diego State University

Timothy J. Shields (18), Managing Director, The Old Globe

Many of these dedicated individuals have been on the board since LEAD’s merger with the Chamber and played a vital role in ensuring a smooth transition. As we bid them farewell, it’s another opportunity to embrace change as a chance to welcome fresh perspectives and new ideas. I’m a fan of Adam Grant’s work and he has wisely said, “Progress is impossible without change.”

Looking back on 2024, LEAD has so much to celebrate:

We welcomed 131 new alumni to the LEAD community, each one now part of a growing network of nearly 4,000 leaders.

Through the Leadership Action Team (LAT) projects in Impact, we partnered with six nonprofit organizations and some of our alumni are continuing to support these

partners long after their projects ended.

The Advance program was supported by 22 exceptional mentors , who shared their time, experiences and encouragement with our cohort.

Across all three programs, more than 160 speakers brought their unique insights and expertise to help develop our community leaders.

One of LEAD’s greatest attributes is its ability to bring people together across industries and sectors, breaking down silos and fostering meaningful connections. Our region is stronger because of the relationships and collaborations that grow through LEAD.

As we look ahead to 2025, our mission remains clear: to create a network of leaders equipped with the skills, insights, and passion to positively transform our community. I am excited to work alongside the LEAD Board, LEAD and Chamber staff, and our incredible alumni community to build on LEAD’s legacy and ensure its continued success.

Here’s another year of progress, connection, and impact. Thank you for being part of the LEAD story – we couldn’t do it without you.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Dec 3, 2024

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State grant waives their fees
THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

Opinion — the views of the writers named, not news reporting

ABOUT THIS PAPER San Diego Newsline covers downtown San Diego first —	City Hall, the Gaslamp Quarter, East Village, Little Italy, Barrio Logan and the	waterfront — and the county around it. Every item names its source; read the originals	and our standards at sandiegonewsline.com.	
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SAN DIEGO NEWSLINE

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