

# 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

## Wildfire Preparedness and Defensible Space



Illustration from a photo by Edward O'Connor ( hober ) · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0

As part of Wildfire Preparedness Week, CAL FIRE teamed up with California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara and the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety to demonstrate the significantly different burn rates between a home that has been hardened against wildfire and one that has not been.

The hardened home was built with fire resistant materials and included defensible space, the regular home used typical building materials and did not include defensible space. Embers quickly burned the regular home to the ground.

CAL FIRE offers more information on home hardening .

County of San Diego news release · May 7, 2025

### COUNTY

## County Releases Recommended Budget to Public

Editor's note: This story was updated May 22, 2025. The June 9 date for the budget public hearing meeting has been changed to 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 3. The earlier budget hearing will take place that same day beginning at 9 a.m.

The County released a balanced, \$8.62 billion recommended budget Thursday that prioritizes vital services and the region's needs while addressing funding challenges.

It is an increase of \$85.8 million or 1% over the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Adopted Budget.

Ongoing challenges include slowing tax revenues, rising costs, uncertainties about the economy and unknown changes in upcoming state and federal funding.

Despite these uncertainties, the recommended budget is designed to

protect core services for residents in the region and continues investments in issues important to San Diegans.

The balanced budget limits spending compared to recent years and prioritizes mandated programs as well responsibilities in the unincorporated area where the County delivers services similar to a city.

The operational plan shows a decrease in recommended staffing, 190 fewer positions or 0.9% less than last fiscal year for a total recommended staff of 20,281.25. The County reduced staffing through attrition, eliminating some vacant positions and streamlining some operations.

The budget continues to invest in housing, homeless solutions and behavioral health.

It leverages new funding opportunities to invest more than \$100 million in behavioral health resources, supporting long-term recovery through community-based treatment, prevention and alternatives to jail and emergency rooms.

And it helps more than 1 million San Diegans who need access to safety net programs that are critical to ensuring people and families have the food and support they need, programs such as CalWORKs, Medi-Cal and CalFresh.

It increases investments in public safety, with additional funding to provide care for youth and adults in our custody, deploy more ambulances and to support programs such as Alternatives to Incarceration and job training, mental health and substance use disorder treatment. It also establishes a Community Engagement Unit in the Office of Emergency Services.

The budget shows the County's commitment to environmental sustainability. And the current recommended budget protects current hours and locations at parks and libraries.

The County budget touches nearly everyone in the region in some way and is

shaped by public input throughout the year.

Regionally, County government provides services like:

Criminal prosecution, detention facilities and emergency preparedness

Food and restaurant inspections, and beach and bay water monitoring

In the unincorporated area, County government provides things a city government would typically do like:

Some cities also contract with the County to provide services.

Nearly half of the County's funding comes from the state and federal government but that money must be used for certain programs. The rest comes from property taxes, fees for services and other sources.

You can learn more about the recommended plan by reviewing an executive summary or the full recommended budget plan .

You can also give your feedback in person and online. An in-person open house is scheduled for 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 22 at the County Operations Center. A virtual open house will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 28. To find out more and register, visit Engage San Diego County .

You can also leave comments now and until 5 p.m. on June 12 at Engage San Diego County .

You can watch, listen and participate in budget presentations, hearings, deliberations and adoption at upcoming Board of Supervisors meetings. Visit the Clerk of the Board's website or call 619-531-5434 to get additional details about hearings and request translation services.

Budget hearings take place at 9 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. on June 3.\* (See Editor's note at top of story about date change)

Budget deliberations and adoption are scheduled for June 24. The adopted

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# DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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## County Releases Recommended Budget to Public

budget takes effect July 1.

Below are funding highlights in several priority areas – housing and homelessness, behavioral health, public safety, infrastructure, support for vulnerable populations and environmental sustainability:

\$132.1 million to help house vulnerable populations, develop affordable and supportive housing and achieve self sufficiency for families.

\$29.4 million for 40,000 building inspections, plan reviews, mobile home safety and streamlining the development process to advance new housing.

\$15 million for the Regional Homeless Assistance Program.

Over \$6 million in grant funds remain available to help those experiencing homelessness in the San Diego Riverbed and Plaza Bonita areas.

\$3.6 million to help youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness get into permanent housing.

\$2.6 million for homeless encampment cleanup and assistance in the unincorporated area and on County property.

\$1.6 million to operate Bancroft and Magnolia Safe Parking Programs for people sleeping in their cars. A third safe parking site is planned to open temporarily in Grantville in summer 2025.

Starting construction on 60 Troy Street Sleeping Cabins to provide emergency shelter and services to an estimated 140 people each year in the unincorporated communities.

16 affordable housing developments partially funded by the County are under construction regionwide. Another 18 developments are in the works.

\$500-a-month rental subsidy for nearly 400 low-income, rent-burdened older adults.

\$13.1 million increase to provide housing, including short-term rental assistance, for people with serious behavioral health conditions.

\$26.2 million increase for substance use outpatient services.

\$24 million increase for mental health case management, residential services, subacute care services, and new partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient hospitalization services for children and adults.

\$22.9 million increase for

capital improvements to improve, expand and preserve licensed board and care facilities for adults and seniors.

\$17.2 million increase for substance use and mental health treatment programs.

\$15 million to expand the behavioral health workforce and develop a new training and tuition program.

\$14.6 million increase for two new Crisis Stabilization Units in El Cajon and Chula Vista.

\$6.9 million for a major renovation at the Polinsky Children's Center for a new 16-bed children's mental health crisis residential facility that will provide short-term, individualized stabilization services.

\$3.5 million to enhance fire and emergency medical services in Dulzura, Pauma Valley and East Otay Mesa areas.

\$3 million for a biometric health monitoring system to detect medical distress in youth in custody.

\$3 million to improve a temporary space during the construction of a new Sheriff's substation in Ramona.

\$840,000 and five employees to the Office of Emergency Services to further support disaster recovery efforts and community engagement.

\$2.2 million invested in Probation's Less Restrictive Placement program, a community-based program to support justice-involved youth in a less restrictive environment, helping them safely and successfully reintegrate into society.

\$14.3 million toward the purchase of a helicopter for expanded firefighting and search and rescue missions.

\$1.2 million to buy two ambulances for the unincorporated area.

\$1.9 million for the Medical Examiner's decedent transportation services and toxicology equipment.

\$5.7 million to support the Sheriff's medical and mental health services contracts.

\$9 million for services to Probation clients, primarily to support contract cost increases related to youth health care services.

Six Probation employees including an additional canine officer to support Probation youth.

A new Resource and Reentry Hub is planned to help formerly incarcerated people get the resources and support they need to successfully reenter the community.

\$48.3 million for road safety including traffic signals, curb ramps, pedestrian

crossings, guardrails and new sidewalks and bike lanes.

\$47.8 million to operate 33 branch libraries, four electric vehicle outreach vans, five automated book kiosks and the e-Library.

\$35.9 million to operate 158 park facilities, 58,459 acres of parkland and 389 miles of trails.

\$29 million to improve Sheriff's jails, including upgrades to fire alarm systems, security equipment and additional technology to support safety, security and code compliance.

\$9 million to update the East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility.

\$5.7 million increase for a total of \$71.3 million to maintain 2,000 miles of County roads.

An increase of \$145,000 for a total of \$4.8 million to clean culverts, channels and storm drains to help prevent storm flooding.

\$1.5 million to build a fire training tower.

Rebuilding of the Mira Mesa Epicentre into a County-operated community center scheduled to open in fall 2026.

New Casa de Oro Library to open in spring 2026.

A new mobile veterinary surgical unit to begin delivering spay/neuter and basic pet wellness services to unincorporated areas with the highest need.

\$843.5 million to help more than a million people with no other means of support get access to CalFresh food assistance, Medi-Cal health coverage, CalWORKs and other public assistance.

\$489.1 million to strengthen and keep at-risk families and children together.

\$154.9 million to help families who support foster and adopted children.

\$11.5 million increase for a total of \$223.5 million for In-Home Supportive Services for vulnerable adults and persons living with disabilities.

The South County Family Justice Center opens in 2025 and will offer comprehensive trauma recovery services to those who need it. The one-stop shop will be like the North County Family Justice Center in San Marcos.

Continued funding to provide 1.5 million meals to older adults at community spaces and for pickup or home delivery.

Two community gardens are being developed for Spring Valley and Ramona to increase food security for low-income communities.

\$23.6 million to protect the region's watershed and for

new green infrastructure projects.

\$4.1 million to install new electric vehicle charging stations for the public and for fast electric vehicle chargers for County vehicles in rural areas.

\$1.6 million increase for a total of \$4.1 million to implement the Climate Action Plan.

\$1.7 million to monitor and report beach and bay water quality.

\$1.6 million to reduce greenhouse gases.

\$1.3 million to improve the Tijuana River Valley through dredging and habitat restoration.

\$1 million to plant 2,000 trees on County property to lower greenhouse gases.

\$267.3 million to prevent epidemics and the spread of disease and ensure access for all through public health centers, home visiting programs and pharmaceutical services.

Funding to operate a new \$93 million state-of-the-art public health lab that will protect the public by testing for infectious diseases.

\$1 million to operate Safe Destination Nights, an after-school program serving 8,000 youths.

\$15.6 million to help protect public health by monitoring and treating 1,600 known mosquito breeding sites.

County of San Diego news release · May 1, 2025

### COUNTY

## County Contributes \$12.5 Million to 81 Units of New Supportive Housing

County Supervisors today voted unanimously to contribute about \$12.5 million in partnership with the San Diego Housing Commission and City of San Diego on an 81-unit permanent supportive housing development at 7798 Starling Drive in San Diego.

This will be the seventh County-supported affordable housing development since 2020 to be approved under the State Homekey and now Homekey+ program. The housing will support veterans and people living with a behavioral health challenge who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

The County contribution will help fund renovations and about \$5.5 million for ongoing operating costs, including supporting 40 units for people with behavioral health conditions.

The County's support of prior Homekey efforts has resulted in 616 supportive units across six developments in the City of San Diego:

The Starling Drive location was identified by the San Diego Housing Commission as a potential Homekey+ development. The existing property was renovated in 2022 converting an office building to 90 residential units that are currently being used as short-term vacation rentals.

The County's overall commitment to affordable housing includes:

Five completed developments totaling 274 units this fiscal year.

Seventeen developments with 1,522 units under construction.

Nineteen upcoming developments totaling 1,770 units.

Since 2017, the County has invested more than \$325 million into affordable housing, using excess land, its Innovative Housing Trust Fund, and other state, federal and local funding sources administered by the County. Those funds have helped open doors to over 2,588 homes with 3,292 more on the way.

More information on the County's ongoing response to the affordability crisis can be found at the Housing Blueprint .

County of San Diego news release · May 6, 2025

### COUNTY

## Flag Football Brings Youth and Officers Together

Justice-involved youth and law enforcement came together for a day of mentorship and teamwork during a special game of flag football at the Youth Transition Campus on April 26.

The event was part of the Youth Athletic Leadership Academy (YALA), a partnership between the San Diego County Probation Department and the San Diego Police Department.

YALA focuses on building leadership, teamwork and community connection among justice-involved youth through sports and mentorship.

County probation officers, San Diego police officers, representatives from the Chargers Community Outreach Team, and juveniles at the Youth Transition Campus teamed up for a friendly and spirited game of flag football.

The day began with motivational talks that focused on resilience, accountability and the importance of personal growth for youth as they prepare to reenter the community. Following the speeches, everyone took to the football field for some friendly

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY (CONTINUED)

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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Flag Football Brings Youth and Officers Together

competition and fun.

“YALA is more than just a sports program, it is a way to show our youth that they’re not alone,” said Ricardo Rivas, gang intervention officer with the San Diego Police Department. “Through mentorship and teamwork, we’re helping them see a path forward and giving them tools to succeed.”

Through team-based recreational events, YALA offers youth in juvenile facilities

like the Youth Transition Campus a chance to build life skills and develop trust with community and law enforcement partners.

County of San Diego news release · May 7, 2025

COUNTY

Probation Youth Learn Life Skills While Helping the Community

Young people from the Probation Department’s Youth Transition Campus (YTC) are supporting community members in need by taking part in a food packaging initiative with a local church.

The YTC is an open setting campus that replaced Juvenile Hall and leverages a rehabilitative program for youth that includes educational services, career and technical courses, and treatment-based programming to help youth transform their lives.

YTC youth in the service project help and package food provided by the church into bags that will be given to people in need. Other partners in the effort include Feeding America, Walmart, Smart and Final, and Aldi.

The project provides a life-line to local families while

that also teaching important skills to the students.

“This hands-on involvement not only provides essential aid to the community but also fosters a sense of purpose and responsibility among participants. It’s a reminder that everyone has the capacity to contribute positively,” Senior Probation Officer Melissa Prudencio said.

She oversees the program, along with Senior Probation Officers Fernando Gonzalez and Pamela Guzman. The youth help every week and have expressed that it is a meaningful experience.

One of the teens told her, “This is the first time I’ve done something like this. It feels good to help others, and I would like to continue doing this

Prudencio said that for many, it marks a beginning – of service, of responsibility and of hope.

County Probation officers share a mission to protect public safety by supporting their clients to restore their lives, families and communities.

County of San Diego news release · May 6, 2025

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

BUSINESS

Member Spotlight: Brain Treatment Center & Braincare Performance Center, clinically powered by Wave Neuro technology

You invest in your business – when was the last time you invested in your brain?

Running a business, managing teams, and staying on top of everything takes mental clarity, focus, and resilience. But stress, anxiety, and burnout can make it harder to perform at your best. What if there was a way to reset and optimize your brain function?

At Brain Treatment Center (BTC) in San Diego and Brain Performance Center (BPC) in Cardiff, we use MeRT (Magnetic e-Resonance Therapy) – a groundbreaking, drug-free treatment designed to help your brain work at its best. MeRT helps improve mental clarity, focus, and overall brain function by encouraging healthier brain-wave activity. It’s personalized to your unique brain, making it more precise and effective than traditional approaches.

Business owners, professionals, and athletes looking to boost focus, energy, and performance

Individuals struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, or PTSD

Those recovering from concussions, brain injuries, or neurological conditions

Anyone who wants to feel sharper, more balanced, and in control

If you’ve been feeling mentally drained or not at your peak, now is the time to take action. Visit BTC or BPC’s website or call today to see how this technology could help you think clearer, feel better, and perform at your best.

Brain Treatment Center – San Diego  
braintreatmentcenter.com  
619-255-2101

Brain Performance Center – Cardiff  
braincarecardiff.com  
858-306-1070

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Apr 30, 2025

BUSINESS

Trade and Tariffs Update

President Trump declared

April 2nd as Liberation Day with an executive order declaring a national emergency arising from U.S. goods trade deficits. The executive order imposed a 10% baseline tariff that went into effect on April 5th and reciprocal tariffs to over 180 countries while exempting Canda and Mexico due to USMCA provisions. However, our North American partners were not exempt from 25% tariffs on imported vehicles and auto parts that went into effect April 3rd.

Some countries retaliated to reciprocal tariffs including China, imposing tariffs to U.S. imports, and prompting President Trump to respond with an increase effective immediately. The trade war with China has led to multiple increase in tariffs, now standing at China being subjected to 245% levies and the U.S. subjected to 125%. The Administration later announced a 90 day pause on all other reciprocal tariffs and conveyed it is looking into separate tariffs on semiconductor chips and certain electronics. Effective July 14, the Administration also plans to impose 20.91% tariffs on

tomatoes imported from Mexico, as the U.S. withdrew from a bilateral agreement aiming to protect domestic tomato growers.

In the latest efforts to prevent tariffs, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni visited the White House where President Trump assured there will be 100% be a European Union tariff deal and is working his way to make other deals with other countries. On the other hand, Governor Newsom is also holding conversations with trade partners around the world to encourage them to invest in California and maintain stable trading relationships. His latest action is suing the Trump administration, challenging the president’s constitutional authority to enact tariffs.

This month, the Chamber led its annual binational delegation trip to Washington, D.C., where trade and economic development were a top priority. On our meeting with Mexican Ambassador Esteban Moctezuma, he expressed optimism due to strong bilateral ties and ongoing communication between

economic, foreign affairs, and public safety authorities. In our meetings with Department of State, Small Business Administration, and Department of Commerce, top-level officials underlined the importance of business delegations which continue to be a powerful mechanism to educate decision makers on our region’s contribution to national economy and elevate regional priorities such as infrastructure and policies that our businesses need to thrive.

The Chamber continues to actively voice opposition on tariffs in partnership with state and nationwide partners including the U.S. Chamber who has shared an online tool to highlight how trade helps boost growth in the U.S. We welcome your input on how tariffs and/or the uncertainty of tariffs has impacted your business – please reach out to kzamarripa@sdchamber.org to share your story.

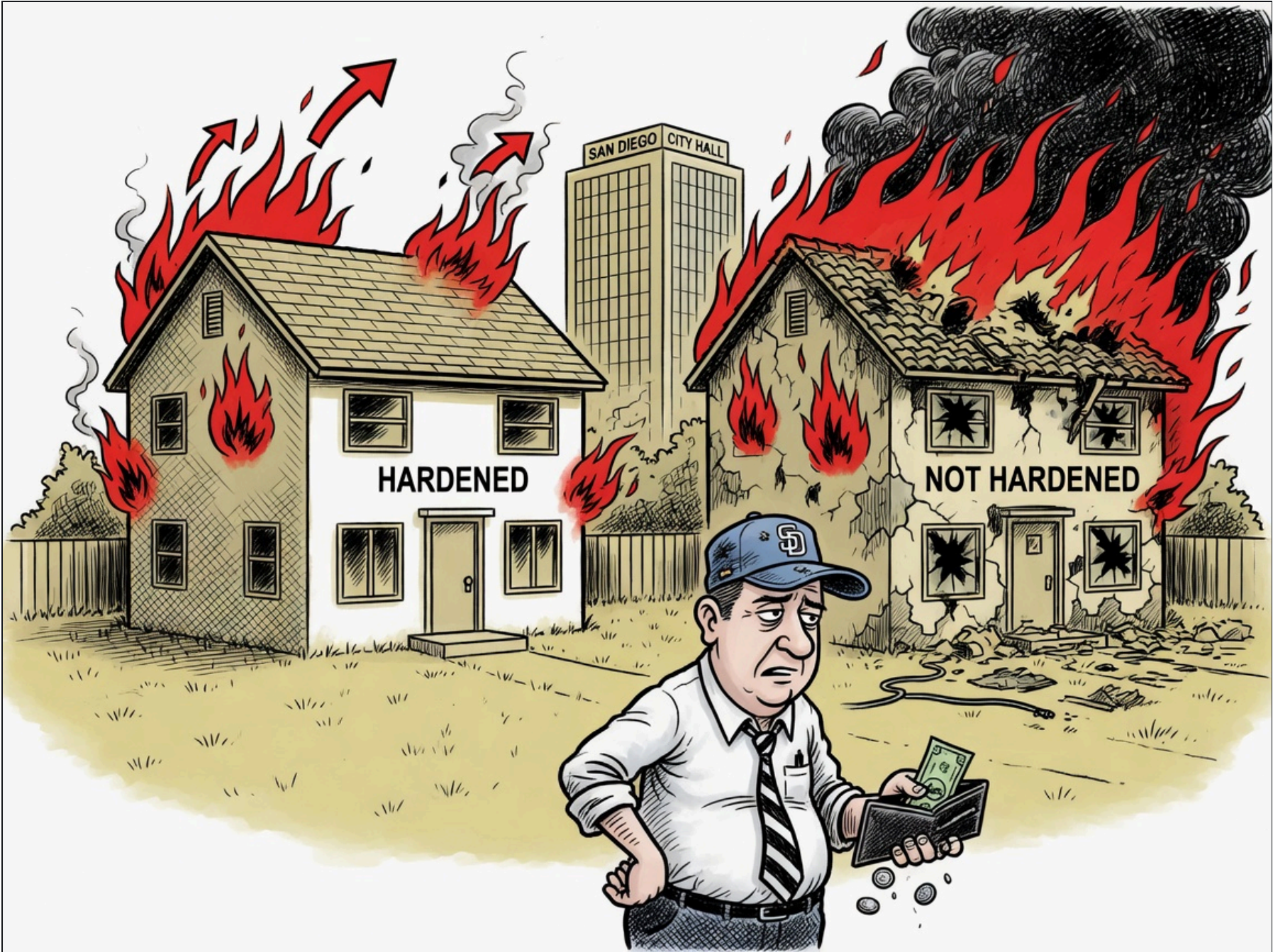
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Apr 22, 2025

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Hardened homes or hardened wallets?

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

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

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| <b>ABOUT THIS PAPER</b><br>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 sandiegonewslne.com. |  |
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MORE NEWS

Downtown, City & County

**COUNTY**  
**Celebrating our County Nurses**  
It is National Nurses Week, and the County wants to thank all nurses, including the nearly 500 public health nurses, for the excellent care they provide to San Diego County residents every day.  
Each year, from May 6 to 12, nurses across the nation are honored for their work, compassion and dedication to improving the health of others. Nurses Week is part of a month-long celebration.  
County public health nurses provide care across all populations, through all stages of life and work with patients during their most vulnerable times. They serve thousands of clients annually at six public health centers, Edgemoor Skilled Nursing Facility, the Psychiatric Hospital, and San Diego detention centers.  
Public health nurses also promote public wellness in

underserved and at-risk communities by providing critical information about health issues, nutrition, disease prevention and immunization. County nurses meet people where they are, including home visits to more than 1,200 families.  
“Public health nurses are vital to the health of our communities,” said Dr. Ankita Kadakia, County interim public health officer. “Their compassion, empathy, and commitment to those they serve is inspirational and provides a strong foundation for excellence in the public health workforce.”  
Public health nurses cover a wide range of disciplines including disease prevention and investigation, vaccinations, health promotion, long-term care, behavioral health services, homeless outreach, services for older adult persons with disabilities, sexual wellness, harm reduction, and environmental safety.

This year’s theme for National Nurses Week is “The Power of Nurses,” honoring the critical role nurses play in healthcare and the positive impact they have on lives and communities. Nurses bring comfort in times of distress, knowledge to improve quality of life and clinical expertise to promote healing.  
Thank you, public health nurses, for your commitment, strength, and sacrifice so San Diego County residents can live well and thrive.  
County of San Diego news release · May 6, 2025  
**COUNTY**  
**County Investigating Salmonella Outbreak Linked to Local Restaurant**  
County public health officials are investigating an outbreak of salmonella linked to dining at Aladdin Mediterranean Café in the Clairemont area of San Diego.  
County epidemiologists have identified 14 confirmed

and probable cases associated with this outbreak ranging between 18 and 79 years of age. Five people have been hospitalized.  
People who reported getting sick ate food from Aladdin Mediterranean Café between April 25 and April 26, 2025.  
The County’s Environmental Health and Quality Department is investigating along with Public Health Services. No source of the outbreak has been determined, however once the investigation is complete and it is determined there is no ongoing risk, the restaurant will be cleared to resume operation.  
Aladdin Mediterranean Café voluntarily closed when notified of the situation to allow health officials to do more testing and interview staff and continues to work closely with the County.  
Salmonella causes an infection called Salmonellosis.

Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea that might have blood or mucous, abdominal cramps and fever. Symptoms generally begin 12 to 72 hours after eating contaminated food. Illness from salmonella can last 4 to 7 days. Most people recover without treatment.  
People who are at higher risk for serious illnesses from salmonella include:  
People who dined at Aladdin Mediterranean Café in the Clairemont area April 25–26, 2025, and feel ill with any of the symptoms listed should consider contacting a healthcare provider as needed.  
As of April 28, the County has identified 184 cases of Salmonellosis in 2025 across the region. In 2024, there were 753 cases identified, compared with 685 in 2023 and 683 in 2022.  
County of San Diego news release · May 2, 2025