

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

Homelessness Decreases Again Across Region, Point-in-Time Count Shows



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San Diego County saw another decrease in the number of people experiencing homelessness this year, according to the 2026 We All Count Point in Time Count.

New data from the Regional Task Force on Homelessness shows progress in unincorporated communities and partner cities where the County has expanded housing, outreach and prevention programs.

Hundreds of County employees volunteered in the early morning hours of Jan. 29 to help document the number of people living without shelter across the region.

150 people unsheltered in unincorporated areas — a 16% drop from 2025 and the lowest total in 13 years.

9,803 people unsheltered region-wide , a 1% decrease from last year.

4,695 people sheltered , a 12% increase as more residents access regional services.

To expand emergency and bridge housing, the County’s Office of Homeless Solutions has:

Provided \$10 million in capital grants to partner cities.

Operated programs that serve about 250 households nightly.

Broken ground on the Troy Street Sleeping Cabins, which began construction in April .

The report also shows a 26% decrease in homelessness among transitional age youth, supported by the County’s \$3.6 million annual investment in the Housing Our Youth Program.

Several partner cities saw significant reductions in homelessness following coordinated efforts with the County:

Lemon Grove: 50% decrease after a yearlong County outreach pilot and coordinated transition to City’s encampment resolution housing efforts.

Santee: 64% decrease, supported by County-led \$17 million Encampment Resolution state grant serving communities along the San Diego riverbed.

San Marcos: 76% decrease through joint efforts between the County, the City, local schools and the Sheriff’s Department.

The County also administers programs that help people stay housed or avoid homelessness. These include HomeSafe for older adults, the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program, Community Care Coordination services for people leaving custody, and housing programs that support LGBTQ+ residents.

In partnership with the City of San Diego and the Regional Task Force on Homelessness, the County secures about \$50 million annually in state homelessness funding. The County also helped secure \$22 million in Encampment Resolution Grant funding in collaboration with local cities and Caltrans.

To prevent homelessness, the County has invested nearly \$1.5 million in diversion funds and supports eviction prevention and shallow rental subsidy programs.

The County’s Housing for all Hub offers public dashboards showing progress across programs and access to additional housing resources, services and data.

Since 2017, the County of San Diego has invested more than \$334 million in affordable housing, leveraging excess County land and the Innovative Housing Trust Fund along with other state, federal and local sources. These efforts have created more than 3,445 homes, with another 2,600 currently in development.

County of San Diego news release · May 6, 2026

COUNTY

Official Ballot Drop Boxes Open for June Gubernatorial Primary

Starting Tuesday, May 5, registered voters can return their mail ballot for the June 2 Gubernatorial Primary Election to any of the more than 150 official ballot drop boxes around the county. Mail ballots for the County’s over 2 million registered voters are expected to arrive this week.

The Registrar of Voters has official ballot drop boxes that are red, white and blue and feature the Registrar’s logo along with the County seal. All boxes are labeled “Official Ballot Drop Box” and are made from high grade, heavy gauge stainless steel.

Each official ballot drop box is designed to prevent physical damage and unauthorized access to mail ballots. The boxes feature double-locking access doors, anti-pry door jambs and other anti-theft construction measures. The Registrar’s ballot retrieval team is responsible for collecting ballots inside the box.

After marking their selections, voters should:

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Official Ballot Drop Boxes Open for June Gubernatorial Primary
Seal the ballot in the postage-paid return envelope.

Date and sign the envelope. Voter signature is required for their vote to count.

Return the ballot by mail or drop it off at any of the Registrar’s official ballot drop boxes around the county.

Mailed ballots must be postmarked on or before June 2 and received by the Registrar of Voters no later than seven days to be counted. Ballots returned at official drop boxes or vote centers must be dropped off by 8 p.m. on June 2.

Voters returning ballots by the U.S. Postal Service can sign up for ballot tracking.

In-person early voting is available at the Registrar of Voters office in Kearny Mesa at 5600 Overland Ave., San Diego. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

May 23 : Select vote centers open daily, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

May 30 : All vote centers open daily, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

June 2 , the final day of voting: All vote centers, official ballot drop boxes and the Registrar’s office are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Take advantage of early voting to avoid long lines.

If you plan to vote in person, prepare ahead of time by reviewing your voter information pamphlet and marking your selections on the sample ballot. When you enter the voting booth at the

vote center, you may refer to your marked sample ballot to easily transfer your selections to the official ballot.

County of San Diego news release · May 5, 2026

COUNTY
County Sends Ballots for June Gubernatorial Primary

Registered voters can expect their ballots for the June 2 Gubernatorial Primary Election to arrive the week of Monday, May 4. Some voters may receive their ballot over the weekend.

Voters are encouraged to vote early and can return their ballot in one of three ways:

By mail : a postage-paid envelope is provided in their official ballot packet.

At an official ballot drop box : drop boxes are available May 5 through the final day of voting, June 2.

At any vote center starting May 23 : visit sdvote.com for a list of drop box and vote center locations and hours of operation.

The official ballot packet will include voting instructions and an “I Voted” sticker. Additional information, including candidate statements, lists of official ballot drop boxes and vote centers, is available in the voter information pamphlet .

After marking their selections, voters should:

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Take advantage of early voting to avoid long lines.

County of San Diego news release · May 1, 2026

COUNTY
County to Improve 143 Sidewalk, Curb and Gutter Locations

The County is starting a project this summer to repair and replace sidewalks, curbs and gutters at 143 locations in unincorporated communities. The work aims to improve safety, walkability, drainage and accessibility for residents.

The locations include Alpine, Borrego, Boulevard, Fallbrook, Lake Morena/Campo, Lakeside, Lincoln Acres, Mountain Empire, Pine Valley, San Dieguito, Spring Valley and Sweetwater.

Construction is scheduled to begin this summer and finish by mid-2027. The \$1.31 million project is funded through the County’s Road Fund, which includes annual state funding and utility fees. These improvements also support the County’s climate and sustainability goals and help keep neighborhoods connected and safe.

County Public Works has completed similar sidewalk, curb and gutter efforts in past years. Staff will continue to evaluate community needs and identify sites for repair and replacement each year as funding allows.

Before construction begins, residents will be notified through mailers, door hangers, social media and signage with details about project activities.

County of San Diego news release · May 6, 2026

COUNTY
Annual Law Enforcement Memorial Pays Tribute to Fallen Officers Across the County

San Diego-area law enforcement agencies came together Wednesday to honor officers, deputies, marshals and agents who died in the line of duty during the annual San Diego County Law Enforcement Memorial

Courts · Transit · Public safety

ceremony.

This year’s ceremony added the name of Officer Lauren Craven to the Wall of Light at Waterfront Park. Craven, who died on duty last October, was the La Mesa Police Department’s first on-duty death.

The San Diego County Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation selected the theme “A Time to Remember” to support and uplift the families, colleagues and friends of the fallen. Throughout May, the Wall of Light shines blue in recognition of National Law Enforcement Month.

“May we never become so accustomed to safety that we forget who makes it possible,” La Mesa Police Chief Ray Sweeney said.

During the ceremony, the names of all the fallen officers were read aloud. Traditions included a riderless horse to honor fallen officers, three seats of honor representing fallen officers, a three-volley salute, a water salute at San Diego Harbor, mounted patrols from multiple agencies and law enforcement bagpipe players. The Foundation provided paper and pencils so families could make rubbings of their loved ones’ names from the memorial.

For those who could not attend, an online memorial lists the names of all fallen officers from across the region.

County of San Diego news release · May 6, 2026

BUSINESS



Illustration

BUSINESS
Member Spotlight – BASK Digital Media

BASK Digital Media is a full-service digital strategy and marketing agency specializing in public affairs efforts, legislative advocacy, ballot measures, and crisis management across the United States. With nearly two decades of experience at every level, from national issues to local initiatives, our team of 30 delivers unmatched speed, precision, and strategic clarity.

Campaign veterans lead every project and combine bold creative, innovative media strategy, and real-time data analytics to persuade audiences and drive impact. Powered by in-house design,

development, and media placement teams, BASK offers turnkey solutions including digital advertising, ad production, social media management, grassroots advocacy, email and text marketing, website development, and comprehensive data integration.

BASK has had the honor of supporting over 450 high-stakes initiatives and campaigns including some of California’s most consequential ballot measures and legislative efforts. We offer our clients turn-key services, meaning they can rely on us to deliver an end-to-end marketing program in a quick turn, fast-paced environment.

BASK doesn’t just execute campaigns, we also build the tools that power them. Our suite of proprietary solutions is designed to enhance performance and deepen engagement. This includes InfluenceEdge™, our

proprietary tool to reach key decision makers and policy insiders, as well as AdvoSTORY™, our “share your story” platform that enables advocacy efforts to seamlessly capture grassroots supporter video testimonials.

Streamlined Process. Fast Turnarounds. Comprehensive Strategy. BASK turns complex challenges into real strategies that win.

Website URL: BASKDigital.com Contact Information: hello@baskdigital.com

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Apr 29, 2026

BUSINESS
Member Spotlight – Rivair Apartment Homes

Located in West Mission Valley, Rivair is a brand-new apartment community, consisting of 316 homes, offering studio, 1 and 2 bedroom floor plans in a community

designed with high-end finishes, functional spaces, and offering an incredible lifestyle.

Inspired by the natural elements, Rivair was intentionally designed to reflect the balance of water, grounding earth, shimmering lights and open air. From material selections to shared spaces, the community draws influence from its surrounding environment, creating a seamless connection between modern living and the natural landscape that defines Mission Valley. Located across from Fashion Valley Mall, each residence features polished quartz countertops, USB outlets, stainless steel appliances, and wood-style plank flooring, creating a clean, modern look that doesn’t compromise function. That same thoughtful approach to urban living extends beyond individual homes—where integrated storage and in home washers and dryers support

daily routines—to shared spaces designed to encourage interaction and community engagement.

Apartment interiors are further elevated through Rivair’s thoughtfully curated SALT and SAND interior design packages. These two distinctive palettes draw inspiration from coastal textures and natural tones. SALT offering a lighter, airy aesthetic, and SAND embracing warmer, grounded hues. Each package allows residents to choose an interior style that aligns with their personal sense of comfort while maintaining Rivair’s cohesive, design-forward vision.

On-site amenities such as the WATER YARD, which includes a saltwater pool and spa, SUMMIT, a rooftop terrace, and FLUX, a fully equipped fitness center are designed to complement the surrounding neighborhood rather than compete with it,

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BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

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Member Spotlight – Rivair Apartment Homes

while its proximity to Fashion Valley Mall and Fashion Valley Transit Center puts the city’s best dining, shopping, and nightlife

within easy reach. Rivair also incorporates energy-efficient systems across the community for responsible resource management, demonstrated by its LEED Gold certification.

A strong focus on community is at the core of Rivair’s

approach to San Diego living. Throughout the year, the on-site team hosts events such as social gatherings, cooking classes, and networking mixers to foster connections and help residents feel more at home. These efforts, paired with attentive service and

clear communication, help create an environment that feels welcoming, responsive, and well cared for.

Rivair is proud to be part of the Mission Valley community and to play a meaningful role in the continued growth and vitality of San Diego’s

central corridor. More information is available at <https://www.rivairapartmenthomes.com/>.

Find your element at Rivair Apartment Homes.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Apr 29, 2026

AROUND CALIFORNIA

Statewide news

CALIFORNIA

LAPD Chief Warns City Lacks Funding for Adequate 2028 Olympics Security

Police Department would need an additional 6,000 to 7,000 officers and 700 to 800 patrol vehicles as it loses more than 500 officers per year mainly to attrition, with LA28 confirming zero police or other safety budgets.

Los Angeles Police Department Chief Jim McDonnell told the City Council Budget and Finance Committee that the city

needs to increase its security measures for the 2028 Summer Olympics.

McDonnell said the department lacks the proper funding to staff the officers needed beyond minor overtime and a shared security pool with other agencies.

According to McDonnell, "LA28 confirms that they have zero police or other safety budgets. While they do have a security budget, it doesn't cover law enforcement."

He added that existing funds are "for all agencies involved in the Olympics, not

just the LAPD, and it will be restricted primarily to police officer overtime."

The chief stated the department would need an additional 6,000 to 7,000 officers and 700 to 800 patrol vehicles to meet security demands for the international event.

Those requirements come as the LAPD is already losing more than 500 officers per year, mainly due to attrition.

Olympic organizers have claimed the federal government would assist with security, but LAPD officials described that assertion as "inaccurate," citing insufficient

funding.

The warning follows past Olympic security incidents, including the 1972 Munich Games where gunmen breached the Olympic Village, killed all hostages after a failed rescue attempt and caused the Games to be delayed, as well as the 1996 Atlanta Games where a pipe bomb killed one person and injured more than 100 others.

During the meeting, Los Angeles City Council member Eunisses Hernandez asked, "Do they all need to be cop cars? Can we not use school buses?"

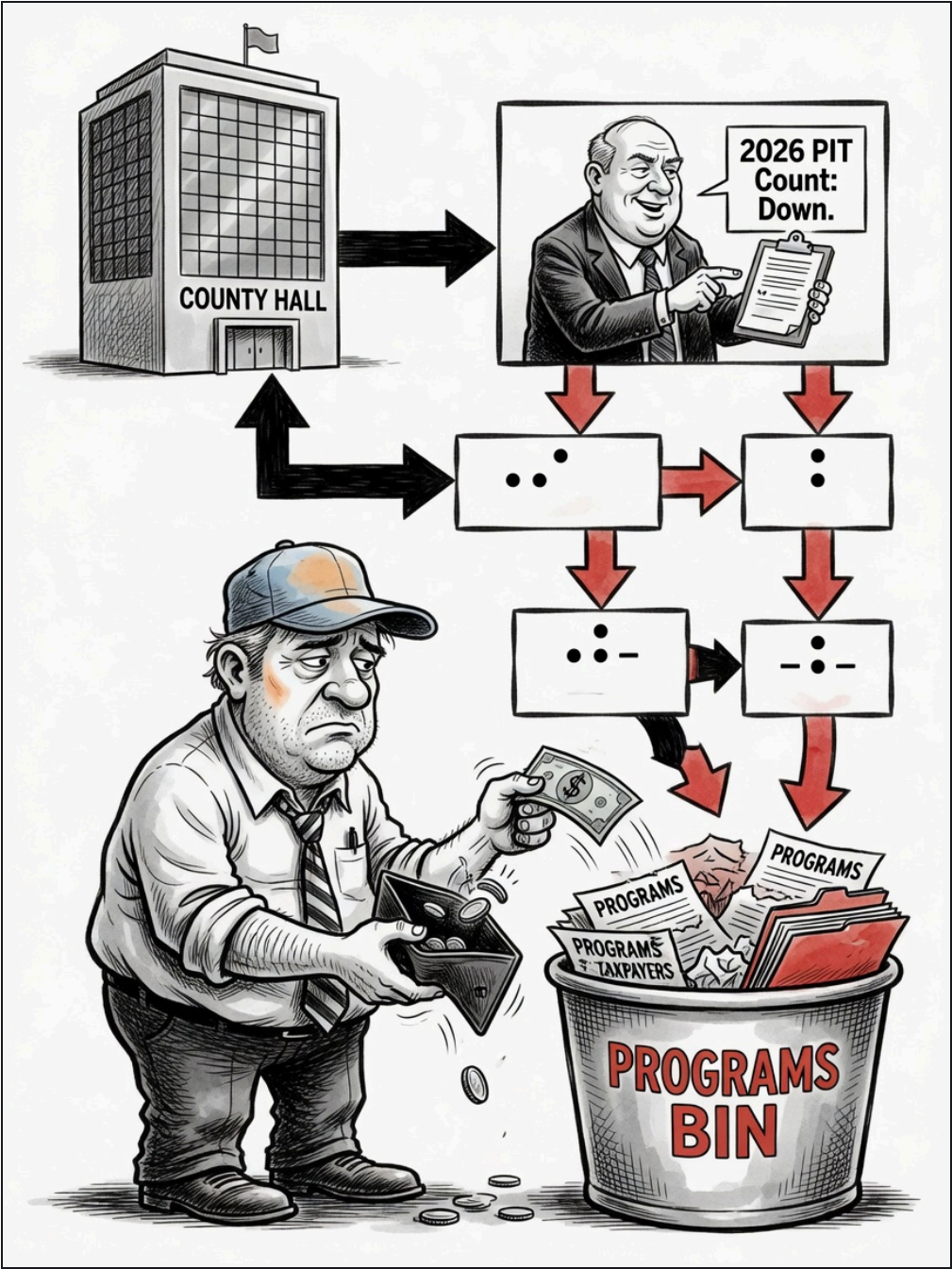
Jacie Prieto Lopez, vice president of communications and public affairs, responded that the group is "grateful that the Administration and Congress recently appropriated \$1 billion in security funding to support planning and operations, including reimbursements to local and state law enforcement."

Prieto Lopez said her office would look further into the security costs.

San Diego Newsline · Based on reporting by California Globe · May 4, 2026

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

AB 1383 Would Gut PEPRA and Worsen California’s Pension Crisis

The vice president of government affairs and education policy at the California Policy Center warns that a bill advancing in the Legislature would sharply increase public pension costs and undermine the safeguards enacted over a decade ago.

A measure quietly advancing through the state Legislature would dismantle key elements of California’s 2013 pension overhaul and push the state back toward the unsustainable spending that originally triggered those changes, according to the vice president of government affairs and education policy at the California Policy Center.

AB 1383, authored by Assemblymember McKinnor, would broaden the definition of compensation counted toward pensions, lower the retirement age for public safety employees from 57 to 55, introduce a new 3 percent at age 55 formula, and let unions and employers bargain away the employee share of pension costs that the reform law made mandatory.

The vice president notes that modeling conducted by the Reason Foundation’s Pension Integrity Project estimates the bill would add more than \$12 billion in costs over 30 years, a figure that

could reach \$14 billion if investment returns fall below expectations.

The vice president, who previously helped shape the original pension reform effort both as a legislative staffer and as director of the Pension Reform Project at Reason Foundation, argues that he understands the political price paid to secure the 2013 law and the damage that would follow from undoing it.

California’s long-standing “California Rule,” upheld by courts for over a century, prevents reductions in promised benefits once an employee begins work, forcing governments to cut staff rather than adjust compensation during tight budgets, the vice president explains.

During periods of strong markets in the late 1990s, lawmakers approved Senate Bill 400, which enriched benefits and allowed contribution holidays based on the mistaken belief that high returns would last forever. When the dot-com bust and the 2007-2009 recession hit, unfunded liabilities surged by more than \$100 billion, leading to municipal bankruptcies in Stockton, Vallejo and San Bernardino, according to the vice president.

Even former Gov. Gray Davis, who signed the 1999 legislation, later acknowledged that the benefit expansion was a mistake, the vice president reports.

In response, Gov. Jerry

Brown advanced a 12-point reform plan that became the Public Employees’ Pension Reform Act, or PEPRA, signed in 2012 and effective in 2013. The law set lower benefit formulas for new hires, raised the retirement age for safety workers to 57, required three-year final compensation averaging, capped pensionable pay, banned retroactive increases and pension holidays, and mandated equal sharing of normal costs between employees and employers, the vice president writes.

Although some elements of Brown’s plan were dropped due to union pressure, the vice president writes that PEPRA has produced roughly \$5.8 billion in savings since 2013 according to CalPERS, with another \$25 billion projected over the next decade if the law’s provisions stay in place.

Today, about 64 percent of active CalPERS members fall under the lower-cost PEPRA formulas, and that share will grow as older workers retire, according to CalPERS via the vice president.

Yet unfunded liabilities remain daunting. The vice president cites CalPERS data showing \$179 billion in unfunded obligations at the end of the 2023-24 fiscal year, up from \$114 billion in 2015, with total statewide public pension debt now exceeding \$200 billion. In 2025 alone, taxpayers contributed \$23.4 billion to CalPERS, much of it covering past shortfalls.

The vice president breaks down AB 1383’s three main provisions. Raising the pensionable compensation cap would add costs measured in the low hundreds of millions annually at first, with a present value reaching billions. Lowering the safety retirement age and adding the 3 percent at 55 formula would boost first-year normal costs by about \$338 million and increase the present value of future benefits by \$3.6 billion, according to the modeling he cites.

Allowing negotiation away of the 50 percent employee cost-sharing rule would remove a core PEPRA protection and leave taxpayers without a voice in deals struck between unions and managers, the vice president warns.

Taken together, these changes would lift CalPERS’s projected 30-year costs from \$485 billion to \$497 billion under optimistic 6.8 percent annual returns, or as much as \$14 billion more under realistic scenarios, according to the Reason Foundation analysis cited by the vice president.

The vice president rejects the argument that the bill is needed to solve recruitment and retention problems for police and firefighters. He points out that PEPRA’s safety formulas remain among the most generous nationally and that past benefit expansions sold on similar grounds, such as SB 400, ultimately backfired.

If higher compensation is required, the vice president suggests using direct pay raises, bonuses or better working conditions instead of creating hidden, long-term pension liabilities.

The vice president also criticizes the bill’s process, saying it would allow benefit enhancements through private memoranda of understanding without adequate public notice or independent actuarial review, repeating the rushed approach that made PEPRA necessary in the first place.

Given current economic risks including market volatility, possible recession and federal funding uncertainty, the vice president concludes that adding hundreds of millions in new annual pension costs is especially unwise.

The commentary ends by stressing that passing AB 1383 would saddle local governments and future taxpayers with obligations that could take a generation to repair.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · May 1, 2026

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.

MORE NEWS

Downtown, City & County

COUNTY

Supporting and Protecting Seniors During Older Americans Month

May is Older Americans Month, a time to promote healthy aging, highlight the challenges older adults face and celebrate efforts to enhance their quality of life. This year’s theme, “Championing Your Health,” encourages conversations and actions that support physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing at every age.

Residents 85 years and older are the fastest-growing age group in San Diego County and protecting all older adults from fraud remains a top priority.

The San Diego Elder Justice Task Force reports that in 2025, the region saw about 1,800 victims of senior fraud, with losses exceeding \$140 million. That figure does not include cases that went

unreported because of fear, shame and embarrassment.

“Fraud targeting older adults can be financially devastating, but there also are long-term consequences to their mental and physical health like severe depression, anxiety, insomnia and intense feelings of shame or self-blame,” said Allison Boyer, Director of County Aging & Independence Services. “Victims may suffer from higher blood pressure, accelerated cognitive decline, and even the inability to afford housing or medication.”

Fraud Prevention and the San Diego Scam Jam Tour

The San Diego Scam Jam Tour is a series of free fraud-prevention events taking place in 12 cities across the county starting Thursday, May 7. Hosted by AARP and supported by the County of San Diego’s Scam and Fraud Education Support Team (SAFEST), the three-month

tour offers interactive learning sessions led by fraud experts.

Participants will learn about common tactics used by scammers and practical steps older adults can take to avoid becoming victims.

The County urges older adults and family members to download the Don’t Get Hooked Toolkit available in multiple languages . The toolkit includes tips for identifying scams, instructions on how and where to report fraud, and steps to protect yourself and loved ones.

The San Diego County District Attorney’s Office also offers resources, including its “Stop. Hang Up. Tell Someone.” campaign and detailed information on the most common types of scams targeting older adults.

In 2019, County Aging & Independence Services launched the Aging Roadmap , a regional guide designed to

support older adults through personal care, affordable and age-friendly housing, accessible transportation and opportunities for social connection.

Meals and Senior Dining : Hot, nutritious meals for adults 60+ at nearly 30 locations, many with transportation options.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS): Household and personal care assistance for eligible older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Feeling Fit Club/Tai Chi : Inclusive fitness programs that support physical health, connection and independence.

AIS Call Center: A central resource for information on AIS services, community programs and assistance for older adults, caregivers, and people living with disabilities. Specialists also take reports of suspected elder and dependent adult abuse.