

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 Registrar Calls for Poll Workers Ahead of the Nov. 3 Election

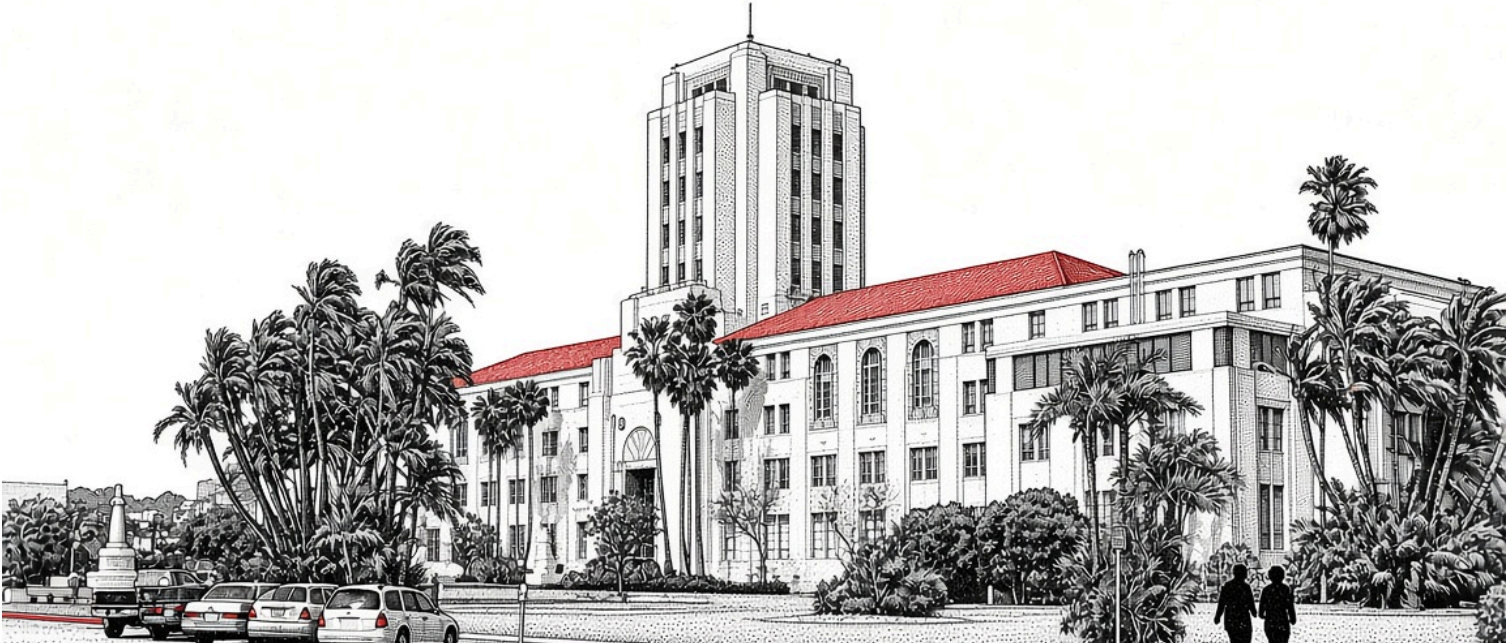


Illustration from a photo by Edward O'Connor (hober) · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0

The Registrar of Voters is calling on community members to sign up as poll workers for the Nov. 3 Gubernatorial General Election .

The recruitment push coincides with National Poll Worker Recruitment Day and highlights the essential role poll workers play in keeping elections secure, accessible and running smoothly. Poll workers receive a daily stipend for their service.

The need for poll workers is highest in Carlsbad, central San Diego, Oceanside, and Vista, where additional workers are required to staff nearby vote centers.

To support accessible elections, the Registrar is also seeking bilingual poll workers who can assist voters in 15 languages.

Federal law requires the Registrar's office to provide bilingual speakers and voting materials for voters who speak:

State and county rules also require bilingual speakers at select vote centers in:

Poll workers are needed throughout the voting period, not just on Election Day. Vote centers operate for up to 11 days beginning Oct. 24, offering multiple options for shift coverage.

A daily stipend of \$145 from Oct. 24 to Nov. 2

\$240 on Election Day due to expanded hours

Additional pay for bilingual poll workers: \$5 extra per day and \$10 extra on Election Day

Be a U.S. citizen registered to vote in California or a lawful

permanent resident

Have reliable transportation to and from the assigned vote center

Complete two days of in-person training (paid a \$95 daily stipend)

Be available to work four or 11 days, including extended hours on Election Day

Poll workers open and close vote centers, assist voters, answer questions and complete stipend paperwork.

The Registrar is seeking team members with strong customer service skills, leadership, flexibility, patience, and integrity. All poll workers must serve in a professional and nonpartisan manner.

Applications are available at sdvote.com . For more information, call 858-565-5800 or email pollworker@sdcounty.ca.gov .

County of San Diego news release · Aug 11, 2026

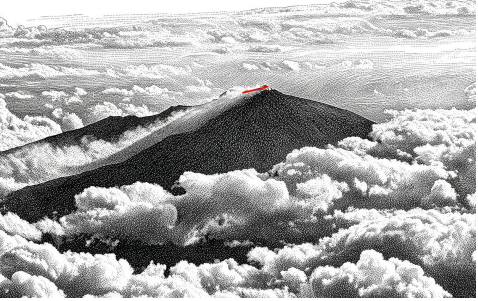


Illustration from a photo by gnuckx · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0

COUNTY Hundreds Receive Food as County Launches Safety Net Bridge Program

More than 500 people received free staple foods and resources Saturday at the South Region Live Well Center in Chula Vista, marking the launch of the County's year-long food distribution program.

The County is partnering with the

San Diego Food Bank and Feeding San Diego to host regular food distribution events at six County locations through Aug. 2027 .

The County's Live Well on Wheels Mobile Office and eligibility services staff will also be on-site to help people enroll in benefits, answer questions and connect them to resources.

The event locations were selected based on communities most at risk of losing benefits due to federal changes.

The food distribution program is part of the County's broader Safety Net Bridge effort. Other components include the WorkReady Hub with 211 San Diego , which provides a one-stop location for people who need to fulfill work requirements and the Live Well Community Toolkit , where community organizations and residents can learn about federal changes and available resources .

Groups and organizations can request a presentation from the County's community outreach team to explain how federal changes impact CalFresh and Medi-Cal recipients. So far this year, more than 120 presentations to over 6,000 people have taken place.

Anyone with questions about their benefits can call the County's Access and Customer Service Call Center at 1-866-262-9881, Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Option 6 connects callers with staff trained on CalFresh impacts and resource referrals.

More information on the distribution schedule is available online or by calling 2-1-1.

The Board of Supervisors approved \$1 million for a food distribution program on June 25 as part of the Safety Net Bridge effort, designed to support about 93,500 people at risk of losing CalFresh benefits. The food distribution events are the first component of the program to launch. Later this year, the Board is expected to consider a pilot

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

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Hundreds Receive Food as County Launches Safety Net Bridge Program

project that would support those at risk of losing Medi-Cal.

The Safety Net Bridge effort is one of several County efforts to help residents navigate federal benefits changes. Additional resources are available at the County’s Federal Impacts Assistance Hub .

County of San Diego news release · Aug 11, 2026

COUNTY Palomar College EMS Corps Students Participate in Real Life Emergency Drill

Palomar College Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Corps students participated in a real-time emergency drill exercise with the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District.

The County’s EMS Corps program is a 20-week training program with 400-plus hours of combined classroom learning with hands-on fieldwork and mentorship. Each participant works directly with an EMS professional and completes 20 hours of field time with ambulance agency partners.

The program supports youth who may be involved in the foster care system, juvenile justice system, or who face other barriers to becoming Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).

County of San Diego news release · Aug 10, 2026

COUNTY San Diego County Confirms First Clade I Mpox Case

The California Department of Public Health confirmed Wednesday that a San Diego County resident has Clade I mpox. County health officials say the patient likely contracted the virus while traveling internationally to an area where Clade I mpox is circulating.

The County is monitoring all identified contacts, and no one has reported symptoms.

Risk to the general public remains very low.

If you develop mpox-like symptoms—such as rash, fever, swollen lymph nodes—especially after travel or potential exposure, contact your healthcare provider.

The two dose JYNNEOS vaccine provides the strongest protection against both Clade I and II mpox. It is recommended for people at higher risk, those with potential exposure, and travelers who anticipate close or intimate contact while abroad. The JYNNEOS vaccine is available through healthcare providers and County Sexual Health Clinics .

“It is really important for anyone at risk of contracting mpox complete both doses of the vaccine,” County Public Health Officer Dr. Sayone Thihalolipavan said. “Completing the series offers the best protection against severe illness, including painful

blisters that take a month to heal, and in some cases lead to hospitalization.”

Mpox spreads through close physical contact or sharing personal items with someone who is infected. Symptoms can include a painful rash, sores and sometimes flu-like illness. Avoiding contact with people who have rashes or scabs, not sharing personal items and frequent handwashing help reduce risk.

Clade I mpox, linked to Central Africa, has become more common in Eastern Africa and other parts of the world in recent years. Most Clade I cases outside of Africa are associated with travel, though some areas have reported local spread. Clade I may be more severe than Clade II, which has been present in San Diego County since 2022.

San Diego County has reported 27 cases this year, mostly among people who were not fully vaccinated. All cases involve men between 17 and 53-years-old.

For mpox updates, text COSD MPOX to 98256. More information is available on the County’s mpox webpage.

County of San Diego news release · Aug 10, 2026

COUNTY Smart Back-to-School Shopping Starts with Checking Your Receipts

Back to school season is here, and so is the shopping spree that comes with it.

As you stock up on

supplies, clothes and lunch-box essentials, it’s the perfect time for a quick reminder: always double check your receipts. Even the best stores can accidentally overcharge — and those small errors add up.

Most of us are still shop in person. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Quarterly Retail E-Commerce Sales report , online sales make up just under 17% of all retail purchases — meaning about seven out of every 10 shoppers are still visiting malls and stores where cash registers and price scanners can make mistakes.

To help customers be sure they’re charged accurately, the County’s department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures inspects more than 1,345 local businesses and 19,579 price-scanning devices every year. That includes scales, scanners, and other pricing equipment.

Even so, every year, even the best businesses have occasional overcharges. Between January and July this year, 18.4% of every business inspected — about one in six — had overcharge errors. The average overcharge was \$2.02.

Two dollars may not seem like much, but repeated small errors can add up and chip away at your budget. That is why it pays to pause to check receipts.

Verify receipts and flag any price differences with store staff right away.

Watch the screen as each item is scanned — stores are

Courts · Transit · Public safety

required to show the price before the sale is complete.

Bring sales advertisements with you to confirm prices.

Remember: stores cannot legally charge more than their lowest advertised, posted or quoted price.

Plan ahead by watching for sales, flea markets, garage sales, clearance events, etc.

Make a list to help you stay focused on what you need.

Compare prices for at least five different sources to find the best values.

Don’t buy everything at once — spread purchases over several weeks or months to take full advantage of future sales and true bargains.

Use the County’s Tell Us Now app , call 1-888-TRUE SCAN (1-888-878-3722) or email wm.awm@sdcounty.ca.gov to report overcharges you can’t resolve in-store.

County Agriculture, Weights and Measures protects consumers, businesses and the local economy by ensuring accuracy in pricing, weighing and measuring devices countywide. AWM inspects thousands of scales, scanners and commercial devices each year, verifies pesticide and agricultural standards, and provides clear, accessible consumer resources. The department’s work helps safeguard public trust, marketplace fairness and the health of the communities we serve.

County of San Diego news release · Aug 6, 2026

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy



Illustration

BUSINESS Member Spotlight: Soloquent

35% of B2B sales reps leave every year, jumping to 42% at small companies

Each departure can cost \$85,000 or more when factoring in recruiting, onboarding, training, lost revenue, and the toll on team morale

Best-in-class companies keep turnover below 20% , achieved through smarter hiring, stronger training, and better sales management

The good news? This is a solvable problem.

Soloquent Inc. helps small and mid-sized businesses stop the revolving door and start growing revenue predictably. The company works directly with sales leaders and business owners to tackle the primary root causes of turnover and stalled growth through proven skill development programs and hands-on management mentoring.

Higher return on their sales investments

Stronger, more confident sales and management teams

Soloquent’s core program is built on the Amazon best-selling book P3 Selling™: The Essentials of B2B Sales Success , a complete, modern

playbook for B2B selling that equips sales professionals with the skills they need to win and gives managers a clear framework to lead their teams effectively.

Soloquent’s goal is to serve as a trusted advisor , committed to reducing costs and helping grow sales revenue businesses can count on.

Greg Nutter, President Winner: “Best B2B Book of All Time”

www.soloquent.com
<https://soloquent.com/p3-selling-workshop>

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Jul 24, 2026

BUSINESS TJRV Update: Advancing the Conversation & We Need Your Input

The Chamber continues to elevate transboundary pollution as a regional priority on both sides of the border.

Earlier this month, Vice President of International and Public Affairs Kenia Zamarripa participated on a discussion hosted by the San Diego World Affairs Council to explore the impacts of transboundary pollution, current response efforts, and next steps. The Chamber also met with the North America Development Bank, the U.S. Consulate, industry leaders from Tijuana, and officials from the Mexican section of

the IBWC to discuss opportunities to further strengthen collaboration in mitigating the transboundary pollution.

The County of San Diego’s Office of Economic Development and Government Affairs continues to advance an economic impact study on the Tijuana River Valley transboundary pollution crisis. The survey should take between 5-20 minutes to complete depending on the track (business, resident, visitor, or organization).

This study is expected to be finalized and presented to the Board of Supervisors in October.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Jul 23, 2026

Publish your DBA the easy way. newfbn.com · (951) 262-7611

AROUND CALIFORNIA

Statewide news

CALIFORNIA

Newsom-Appointed Judge Orders Release Of Illegal Immigrant One Day Before Martinez Fatal Stabbing

A Venezuelan national with prior burglary charges fatally stabbed a 68-year-old homeowner in his front yard the day after a superior court judge ordered him released from custody.

Residents are questioning recent court decisions after a man illegally present in the country fatally stabbed a Martinez homeowner while the victim worked in his

garden.

Marcos Iriarte-Valdez faces murder charges in the Aug. 6 death of Todd Stewart, who was attacked around 5:09 p.m. outside his Francis Court residence. Neighbor video recorded the assault, after which the suspect drove away in a Cadillac SUV.

Department of Homeland Security records identify Iriarte-Valdez as a criminal illegal alien from Venezuela who also holds Spanish citizenship. Immigration and Customs Enforcement lodged a detainer against him with Contra Costa County Jail on Aug. 8.

Authorities arrested Iriarte-Valdez the following evening at his home. He remains in custody on high bail while facing murder charges that include special-circumstance allegations tied to fleeing a burglary attempt in some reports.

Court documents show Iriarte-Valdez had been on pretrial release for residential burglary charges involving people present, stemming from April 29 incidents in Orinda. On or about Aug. 4 he was taken into custody for an alleged violation of home-detention monitoring.

The next day, Aug. 5,

Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge Nichelle N. Holmes ordered him released on his own recognizance and returned to the home-detention program. Police later confirmed the electronic monitoring device was not placed on him until after the homicide the following day.

The sequence has prompted criticism because Holmes was appointed to the bench by Gov. Gavin Newsom in March 2024. The killing occurred the day after the judge's release order.

Local reporting indicated Iriarte-Valdez was under pre-trial supervision with home

detention and electronic monitoring for the earlier burglary case. The ankle monitor had been removed during his brief custody.

Stewart, 68, was gardening in his own yard when attacked. The case has raised questions about pretrial release decisions and their effects on community safety.

Law enforcement has not commented further on the investigation. Iriarte-Valdez is being held pending further court proceedings on the murder counts.

San Diego Newsline · Based on reporting by California Globe · Aug 12, 2026

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



Check your receipts before they empty your wallet

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

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

COMMENTARY

Union Veto Power Over AI in Schools Threatens Innovation and Burdens Taxpayers

California Policy Center fellow Mark Moses warns that San Francisco and Los Angeles school districts have handed teachers unions effective control over artificial intelligence tools, blocking potential gains for students while costs soar.

California's biggest school systems have taken a step that stands out even in a state known for strong public-sector unions, according to Mark Moses, a senior fellow with the California Policy Center.

In early 2026, the San Francisco Unified School District purchased up to 12,000 ChatGPT accounts for its educators and staff. Yet shortly afterward, following a brief strike, the district accepted contract language

from its teachers union that prevents artificial intelligence from being used to reduce, eliminate or reorganize work performed by union members without the union's explicit written consent.

The agreement also stops the district from citing productivity improvements generated by AI as a reason to adjust staffing levels or workload demands, Moses writes. The final signed version of this language has not been

released publicly.

Months later, the Los Angeles Unified School District followed a similar path in its 2025-2027 contract with United Teachers Los Angeles. The ratified language bars advanced technology, including artificial intelligence, from replacing positions or tasks usually handled by bargaining-unit employees unless the union agrees in writing.

Moses notes that LAUSD

had initially suggested a narrower restriction limited to generative AI and set to expire, but a neutral fact-finder endorsed the union's broader version, which the district then accepted.

Even within California's labor-friendly environment for government workers, these provisions go too far, the former public-sector manager argues. Normally, managers must give unions notice of

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COMMENTARY (CONTINUED)

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Union Veto Power Over AI in Schools Threatens Innovation and Burdens Taxpayers

workplace changes and bargain over their effects on employees, but they retain the ultimate right to decide. Requiring written union approval removes that authority entirely.

These clauses contain no deadlines for union responses, no criteria for denials and no process for appeals, according to Moses. While teachers may reasonably fear budget-driven layoffs, existing rules already require negotiation over workforce reductions. A veto power is a far stronger barrier.

Across the broader economy, employers are not using AI primarily to eliminate jobs, the California Policy Center fellow reports. Data from Gartner indicates only about 1 percent of workforce reductions stem directly from AI-driven productivity. Census Bureau findings show that 66 percent of companies adopting AI apply it only to enhance existing tasks, with employment drops linked to the technology in just 2 percent of firms.

Instead, Moses writes, organizations are focused on reshaping roles so the same positions involve different

expectations for how work is completed. Boston Consulting Group estimates that 50 to 55 percent of U.S. jobs will be transformed within the next two to three years.

Major technological shifts have always carried uncertainty at the start, he observes. Spreadsheets and smartphones fundamentally altered fields through trial and error, not through negotiated permission to experiment. The new contracts do more than promote caution; they outlaw testing AI’s potential without union approval first.

Private schools operate without these limitations and will likely explore beneficial applications for learning, Moses predicts. He compares the union restrictions to the taxi medallions of an earlier era, which shielded existing players, increased costs and eventually crumbled when better options emerged.

The result, according to the Center fellow, is an expanding productivity bubble in public education. Unlike private businesses, districts pass the costs of stagnation on to students and taxpayers. Those hit hardest are families unable to choose other schools.

The true loss is educational opportunity for children. If AI delivers even part of its potential as a personalized tutor, the biggest beneficiaries

would be students from families who cannot afford private tutoring. Just as the internet democratized access to information, AI could provide adaptable academic support to help advanced learners move ahead and assist those who need extra help.

Moses highlights LAUSD’s challenges: enrollment fell from 746,831 students in 2002 to 408,083 in the 2024-25 school year. Nearly half of its elementary schools are half-empty or worse. Per-pupil spending has almost doubled over ten years to about \$27,000, with roughly 90 percent of the budget going to personnel. The district is running a \$2 billion deficit this year and has brought in consultants to plan school closures.

An organization facing fiscal pressure can address costs by altering what it does or how it does it. By blocking the second option, the AI restrictions leave LAUSD with fewer tools at a time when it is more inclined to broaden its mission than shrink it, he contends. The district approved the contract on June 16, 2026; two weeks later the county education office issued the district its first “lack of going concern” warning.

The fellow adds that teachers unions often portray criticism of the current system as hostility toward educators or resistance to fair pay. Yet the unions’ own bargaining

positions limit the ability to reward excellence. State law ties salaries to years of training and service, and districts cannot deviate without union consent.

These AI clauses compound the problem, Moses explains. Districts grant substantial raises—an average of 13.86 percent at LAUSD, with no increase below 8 percent—while contractually forbidding the productivity gains that could justify higher compensation. The financial burden falls on taxpayers who have no seat at the bargaining table and on students whose schools face consolidation.

In the private sector, competitive pressure aligns employers and workers around the need to raise productivity to support better wages. Government school districts lack that incentive because funding arrives automatically through per-pupil state allocations. Students and taxpayers absorb the price of inaction, and they are absent from negotiations. Meanwhile, unions actively participate in the elections that determine school board membership.

The California Teachers Association is now seeking to extend similar AI limitations statewide through its “We Can’t Wait” campaign, which coordinates contract deadlines across 32 districts representing 80,000 educators. United Teachers Los Angeles

has called for an outright ban on replacing staff with AI or other technology.

Moses questions how boards approve such far-reaching concessions. State law requires public disclosure of major provisions and costs before ratification, yet only compensation figures are quantified. Surrendering operational authority that affects long-term finances receives no such scrutiny.

He recommends that every governing board ask three questions before approving labor deals: what decision-making power is being relinquished, what is the cost of giving it up, and how expensive would it be to regain it.

History will not conclude that artificial intelligence failed California’s public schools, Mark Moses writes. It will record that the state bargained away its opportunity to discover what the technology could achieve.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Aug 8, 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

Aug. 12 Pop Up to Offer Same Day Apostille Services

The San Diego County Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk, working with the California Secretary of State’s office, will host the third Apostille Pop Up Shop of 2026 on Wednesday, Aug. 12.

The one-day event will provide same day apostille and domestic partnership services from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the assessor/recorder/county clerk’s office in the County Administration Center.

Past pop-ups have helped residents prepare documents for overseas travel, military deployment, international education and marriage certification.

An apostille certifies the authenticity of documents for international use, including vital records, school transcripts, military documents and legal or business paperwork. The certification verifies the signature of a California public official

through the Secretary of State.

Domestic partnerships are available to two adults in a committed relationship. Under California law, registered domestic partners have rights and responsibilities similar to spouses.

Mailed apostille and domestic partnership requests can take four to six weeks and may require resubmission if documents are incomplete. The popup provides same day service with onsite review.

The event brings convenient, local access to services typically offered only in Los Angeles or Sacramento. The last pop-up, held in June, served 647 customers, issued 1,513 apostilles and processed 24 domestic partnerships.

Location: ARCC Downtown Office, County Administration Center 1600 Pacific Highway, Suite 273, San Diego, CA 92101

Appointments: Not required; walk-ins welcome

Parking: Free underground

parking via Ash Street entrance

Documents: Original documents only; no photocopies

Apostille Fees (California Secretary of State)

\$6 special handling fee per public official’s signature

Payment: Visa, MasterCard, personal check or money order

\$33 standard filing fee (both partners under 62)

\$10 filing fee (if either partner is 62 or older)

Payment: Visa, MasterCard, personal check or money order

More information: www.sdarcc.gov/apostillepopup

County of San Diego news release · Aug 7, 2026

COUNTY

County Launches Third Round of Shallow Rental Subsidy Program for Older Adults

Nearly 200 older adults will start receiving a \$500 a month

in rental assistance next year through the County’s third round of the Shallow Rental Subsidy Program .

The County is now accepting applications and will continue until 195 qualified households are accepted. Monthly payments to landlords are expected to begin in early 2027.

The program offers \$500 a month for 18 months to low-income older adults age 60 and older who are struggling with rising rental costs and are at risk of losing their housing.

“This rental support gives older adults a better chance to stay in their homes and avoid homelessness. It is a practical step toward meeting the needs of our aging community ,” said Dijana Beck, director of County Office of Homeless Solutions. To qualify, applicants must be severely rent burdened with a household income at or below 30 percent of the Area Median Income .

People who have questions

can email their full name and contact information to AHHSseniorprogram@equitasolutions.com or call (619) 780-3684.

The Shallow Rental Subsidy Program is part of the County’s broader efforts to expand housing support and strengthen safety-net services for residents who need them most . The program launched as a pilot in 2023 after data showed that a quarter of people experiencing homelessness in San Diego County were older adults. Funding for the third round was approved in the fiscal year 2025-26 Second Quarter Operational Plan Status Report and Budget Adjustments, and carried forward into the fiscal year 2026-27 amended budget.

County of San Diego news release · Aug 6, 2026