# Table of Contents

## What is the Community Budget Alliance?

The Community Budget Alliance (CBA) is a coalition of community, labor, and faith-based organizations united to ensure that the City of San Diego’s budget equitably spends public dollars. We believe that City budget decisions must prioritize communities and neighborhoods with the greatest need and actively combat systemic racism, discrimination, and income inequality. We envision a San Diego where budgets and budget processes are transparent, accessible, and designed to give communities decision making power and to ensure our City government is responsible and accountable.

Learn more at cpisandiego.org/CBA

---

## About the FY 2025 People’s Budget

About the FY 2025 People’s Budget.................4

## Housing for All

- Eviction Prevention Program (EPP).................5
- Housing Instability Prevention Program (HIPP)....6
- Long-Term Housing Subsidy Program for Seniors and People with Disabilities.................................8

## Worker Justice

- Worker Justice Fund...............................................10
- Worker Outreach and Education............................12

## Environmental Justice

- Climate Action Plan (CAP).................................14
- City Heights Urban Revitalization (Henwood Park).................................................................16
- Barrio Logan Street Calming Measures.............18

## Divest from Police & Invest in Communities

- Limit SDPD Spending & Re-Allocate Funding.....19
- The I.M.A.G.I.N.E Program..................................21
The Community Budget Alliance (CBA) is a coalition of community, labor, and faith-based organizations united to ensure that the City of San Diego’s budget equitably spends public dollars. We believe that City budget decisions must prioritize communities and neighborhoods with the greatest need and actively combat systemic racism, discrimination, and income inequality. We envision a San Diego where budgets and budget processes are transparent, accessible, and designed to give communities decision making power and to ensure our City government is responsible and accountable.

Learn more at cpisandiego.org/CBA
DEMANDING AN ANTI-RACIST BUDGET FOR SAN DIEGO

We call on the Mayor and City Council to fundamentally change how the City allocates resources and address the long-standing systemic inequities that disproportionately impact people of color and low-income families. We need a budget that breaks these patterns and fosters anti-racism, ensuring that our city’s resources go towards eliminating housing insecurity, stopping wage theft, mitigating climate change impacts, shifting away from policing to community-based services, and creating an environment where all San Diego residents can not just survive, but thrive.

Community Budget Alliance partners develop budget priorities each year alongside Black, Latinx, refugee, immigrant, LGBTQ+, youth, housing insecure, low-income, and other historically disempowered communities. These budget requests meet long-standing community needs and will help the City work towards explicitly reversing racial and economic inequities. We urge the City of San Diego elected officials to include these priorities in the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.
San Diego renters face illegal evictions. Illegal evictions pose a significant threat to renters, especially among low-income households. Legal services and tenant outreach are critical to help tenants defend their rights. However, families that are barely making ends meet often cannot afford access to an attorney or other legal assistance. As a result, low-income individuals and households are more likely to get evicted. Organizations like the Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD) provide free legal services to renters, but the availability of legal services is not keeping up with the demand.¹

The City of San Diego Eviction Prevention Program provides legal representation, targeted education, outreach, and essential information to tenants to help them avoid evictions, take action, and seek justice. In the past two years, the program has provided legal assistance to 1,873 low-income tenants. It has educated 55,797 people through phone calls and outreach, 64,050 people through texts, fliers, emails, and public events. Funding for this program is critical to help low-income families and those at risk of eviction, displacement, and homelessness know their rights and access quality legal services to prevent unjust evictions and keep them housed.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Fully fund the Eviction Prevention program $5 million to support legal representation including language assistance and provide grants/contracts to community organizations for tenant education and outreach to prevent no-fault evictions.

The city-funded this program for the first time in 2022 ($5M) using federal American Rescue Plan Act (APRA) funding. Last year, the Mayor’s office did not fund the EPP. The City Council partially funded the program into the final Fiscal Year 24 budget, but at a lower amount ($3M) than necessary to fully support the need for services.

**Critical Funding Need: $5,000,000 ($3.2M for legal services, $1.8 Tenant education and outreach)**
San Diego’s escalating homelessness crisis underscores the pressing need for proactive measures, such as increased funding for prevention-focused programs, to address the root causes of homelessness. According to the Regional Taskforce on the Homeless, more people entered homelessness in 2022 than any year prior with 13 San Diegans experiencing homelessness for the first time for every 10 San Diegans who were housed through a program. One of the leading causes of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing.

Rent is unaffordable in San Diego County. The average rent for an apartment in San Diego ranges from $2,446 to $3,655 per month depending on the number of bedrooms. Furthermore, more than 50% of San Diegans are cost-burdened. This percentage is even higher for low-income households and for people of color, with Black families in San Diego being more rent-burdened than anywhere else in the Country. By funding more prevention focused programs, the City can help these families facing severe housing insecurity and reduce the number of people entering into homelessness.
Allocate $20 million in additional funding to support at least 2,000 more families through the Housing Instability Prevention Program (HIPP).

In Fiscal Year 23, the City allocated $3.57 million to create the HIPP run by the San Diego Housing Commission. The City allocated an additional $2.3 million in FY24. The program provides qualifying households in the City a monthly subsidy between $250-$750 for up to 24 months. Families can get help with housing-related expenses such as security deposits, past-due rent, utilities, application fees, or furniture. An estimated 101,869 households in the City of San Diego are severely housing insecure and may qualify for the program.1

Critical Funding Need: $20,000,000

---

1 Estimated by percentage of households with severe cost burden (more than 50% of income goes towards rent.)
The rising risk of homelessness among individuals with fixed incomes, particularly seniors and people with disabilities, highlights the pressing need for a dedicated, long-term support program in San Diego. Current housing policies and limited subsidy programs fail to adequately address their unique challenges. Individuals with a fixed low-income (50% median and below) cannot sustain market rate rent with the current rent increases or rent increase limits per city and state policy. Therefore, they are at an increased risk of experiencing homelessness. Rates of seniors becoming homeless increased by nearly 50% in 2022 compared to 2020.6

Despite the need for supportive services, programs that provide short-term housing subsidies or subsidies where the funding amount adjusts periodically based on median rent, such as the Housing Instability Prevention Program (HIPP), do not meet the unique needs of these individuals. Programs that do help
DEVELOP A LONG-TERM SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR SENIORS & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Seniors and people with disabilities afford rent, such as the Federal Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program have limited funding and an average wait time of 12 years. A dedicated program to provide long-term support to seniors and people with disabilities will increase their housing stability and help curb homelessness and displacement due to a lack of rent control and strong tenant protections in San Diego.

RECOMMENDATION

Create a $20 million additional fund for a long-term subsidy for low-income seniors and people with disabilities. This program would target individuals and households currently on the Federal Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Waitlist with a fixed income.

Critical Funding Need: $20,000,000
The majority of workers with court wage theft judgments continue to go unpaid, highlighting the urgent need for local initiatives to address this issue. Employers stealing workers’ wages is a significant problem that affects all workers, but workers the system undervalues, like recent Black workers/people of color, women, immigrants and workers in industries that pay the lowest wages, experience wage theft at disproportionately high levels.\(^7\) There are systems in place at the state and local level for workers to assert their rights and file wage theft complaints, such as the CA State Department of Labor\(^8\) and the City of San Diego Office of Labor Standards Enforcement.\(^9\) However, often when workers win, employers ignore the decision and refuse to pay the workers their owed wages. \textit{Statewide, only 9\% of workers who won court wage theft judgments received the money owed to them.}\(^10\)

\textbf{Wage theft take many forms including, but not limited to:}

- Paying workers less than the legal minimum wage.
- Failing to pay nonexempt employees time and half for hours worked over 40 hours per week.
- Asking employees to work off the clock before or after their shifts.
- Denying workers their legal meal breaks.
- Taking illegal deductions from wages.
- Confiscating tips from workers.
- Misclassifying employees as independent contractors to pay a wage lower than the legal minimum or to avoid overtime.

Source: CPI Confronting Wage Theft Report

“I was owed about $7,500 but only got like a little under $3,000.”

-a restaurant manager who accepted a settlement
CREATE A WORKER JUSTICE FUND

This problem persists at the local level, where nearly 1,000 workers in the County have not received wages owed to them—lost wages in San Diego County amount to almost $13 million. Local action is critical to helping recover these owed wages. Workers shouldn’t go into debt or risk losing their jobs, homes, and/or food and care for their families because they stand up for their rights on the job.

RECOMMENDATION

Create a Worker Justice Fund with initial funding of $500,000 to provide financial assistance to workers who have not received money owed to them after winning their wage theft judgment. Contract with the County of San Diego Office of Labor Standards Enforcement to administer and manage the fund.

A Worker Justice Fund provides financial assistance to workers experiencing wage theft by replacing wages lost while they wait for employers to pay the wage theft judgments against them. This helps workers cover housing and other necessities, preventing them from further financial hardship. The County of San Diego Office of Labor Standards Enforcement started a Worker Justice Fund in June 2023 that provides up to $3,000 from the Fund while the County works to recover money from the employer. The City should provide funding to the County to administer this program for City of San Diego residents who are eligible, so the City does not need to create a new, duplicate program.

Critical Funding Need: $500,000
I was part of a case by the Labor Commissioner of more than 500 people. So, it’s very good that there is information, that there are organizations that go to the workers and give us an update on what is happening to us.”

-Naxhili Perez, former Janitor at the Cheesecake Factory

When researchers ask workers about workplace practice we find that wage theft is common, but official reports of employers stealing wages are low, highlights the need for increased worker outreach and education. Workers cannot assert their rights unless they know what those rights are. CPI’s 2017 Confronting Wage Theft report estimated that there are 40,000 instances of minimum wage violations in San Diego and Imperial Counties. Employers not paying minimum wage is only one type of wage theft, so total wage theft is likely much higher.
However, despite this high estimated amount of wage theft, the number of complaints the City receives is extremely low (39 complaints in Fiscal Year 23). Many workers do not file complaints out of fear of retaliation and/or lack of information on their rights and how to file claims with the City. In addition, the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement (OLSE) does minimal worker outreach to ensure workers know about the office.

“In those organizations they taught us how to defend ourselves because there were many details we were unaware of.”

-Jesus Montes, a worker at a dairy farm in Central Valley

RECOMMENDATION

Provide $100,000 in ongoing funding for the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement to partner with community-based organizations and worker centers to reach and educate low-income workers about their rights, how to assert them in the City of San Diego, and ensure they know the Worker Justice Fund is available.

Critical Funding Need: $100,000
The City of San Diego outlined funding commitments in the Climate Action Plan (CAP) to combat climate change but has not delivered on those promises, pointing to the need for increased funding to support these commitments in the Fiscal Year 25 budget. In Fiscal Year 23, the City of San Diego unanimously approved an updated CAP, and staff developed an associated Climate Action Implementation Plan (CAIP) to guide how the City will achieve climate goals. The implementation plan helps ensure that the City achieves the goals in the CAP by outlining projects and funding needed and specifically prioritizing projects that ensure equitable implementation.

Some of the goals of the Climate Action Implementation Plan for 2030 are:

- Phasing out 45% of natural gas usage from existing buildings
- Install 31 new roundabouts
- Increase the urban canopy by 28%
- Restore 350 acres of salt marshland and other tidal wetland habitats
- Diverge waste and gas from landfills at a rate of 82%
Based on this, each department made specific Fiscal Year 24 budget requests in alignment with the CAIP totaling $109M. According to the Independent Budget Analyst, there are still more than $92.9 million in unfunded requests related to the CAP across all City departments since the Mayor’s proposed Fiscal Year 24 budget only funded 16% of the department CAP requests. This significant underfunding sets a dangerous precedent and threatens the City’s progress toward its climate goals, specifically to achieve net zero by 2035.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Fully fund the City of San Diego’s Climate Action Plan (CAP), which takes bold steps to improve the air we breathe, our communities, and our overall quality of life.

Should limited resources be an obstacle to full funding, the Fiscal Year 25 budget should utilize Council Policy 900-22 to prioritize projects that make the biggest equity impacts.

**Critical Funding Need:** $92,900,000 in Fiscal Year 24 unfunded requests and additional Fiscal Year 25 department requests
Disparities in access to parks and green spaces within San Diego highlight the need for more parks in low-income neighborhoods. According to the National Park Score Index released by the Trust for Public Land, which rates parks based on acreage, investment, amenities, access, and equity, **San Diego ranks 24th among the U.S. 100 largest cities**. However, when comparing cities by their equity score, San Diego ranks 74th. City Heights and other low-income neighborhoods lack the recommended amount of park space based on their populations. Furthermore, existing parks, including Henwood Park in City Heights, do not receive sufficient maintenance. In areas that already lack green spaces, maintaining existing parks is crucial to combat environmental racism that impact the social, emotional and physical health of communities of color.
Allocate 750k to complete the General Development Plan for Henwood Park. Renovations being considered include new playground structures, seating areas, shading, lighting, and accessibility needs of park visitors.

The preliminary cost estimate for the project is $3,160,000. Actual costs will be determined after the design is complete. City Council approved $750,000 in Fiscal Year 24 to fund the initial design phase. We are requesting an additional $750,000 to cover the costs associated with the next phase of the project.

Critical Funding Need: $750,000
San Diego has the sixth-worst air quality for ozone in the nation, with portside communities like Barrio Logan experiencing the worst air quality levels in the City. In addition, residents of Barrio Logan have a higher asthma rate than more than 90% of zip codes across California. Residents in Barrio Logan fought for designated truck routes years ago to ensure trucks going to and from the port are not polluting the neighborhood. The routes were approved, but how the City enforces them has been an ongoing struggle. The community does not support more police presence to enforce routes. Trucks traveling from the Port of San Diego continue to drive through Barrio Logan, causing toxic air pollution and unsafe conditions for residents despite the truck route ordinance, pointing to the need for other interventions to stop trucks from driving in the area. Rather than using police enforcement and ticketing truck drivers, who are often working people from the same communities, traffic calming measures that physically prevent trucks from driving through the neighborhood can help slow traffic, increase safety, create multi-use streets, push trucks away from these more minor community roads, reduce police presence, while improving air quality.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Allocate $6M to build traffic calming measures in Barrio Logan to reduce truck traffic on residential roads that are not part of the approved truck routes.

Locations: Boston Ave and 30th St, Beardsley and Newton. The City previously committed $500K to feasibility studies for these measures, but funding is still needed for design and implementation.

**Critical Funding Need: $6,000,000 (about $3,000,000 per roundabout)**
Pouring more money into police budgets has not resulted in improved safety, but has perpetuated a cycle of over-policing in low-income communities of color. Since 2020, among all police stops, the share of Latinx people stopped by police has increased. Black folks make up 6% of the population in San Diego, yet they account for 20% of stops, proving why decreasing policing and criminalization is crucial to our communities.

$1 of every $3 of City General Fund spending is spent on policing.
Over the past decade, the police budget has disproportionately increased by 47.6% compared to other City departments and services.

Reallocating some of the funds currently allocated to the police towards social services, mental health support, and community programs offers a more effective way to achieve greater safety and lead to a more effective use of taxpayer money.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Do not expand SDPD’s budget. Reallocate any proposed increases to programs such as the HIPP, Tenant Outreach and Education, Language Access, and other CBA priorities instead of criminalization.

Critical Funding Need: Not Applicable
In light of budget cuts and looming deficits within the San Diego Unified School District, vital school programs and funding for educational enrichment programs by external providers face the risk of elimination and/or not being funded, highlighting the need for the City to step in. One program facing cuts is the I.M.A.G.I.N.E. Program (Inspirational Mentoring Agents Generating Incredible Nourishment & Empowerment) provided by the nonprofit Youth Empowerment (YE). The I.M.A.G.I.N.E. curriculum builds healthy schools, communities, and meaningful connections through group mentorship. The program provides social/emotional support using restorative practices through weekly restorative circles and one-on-one mentoring, where needed. Lived-experience mentors provide trauma-informed care focused on the whole health of the students: social, emotional, physical, and mental health, including practices to make positive connections between mind and body. In addition to working with students, the program provides programming and mentorship for school staff, teachers, and families.

The program focuses on the needs of low-income/economically disadvantaged and overburdened neighborhoods. In addition, the program hires formerly incarcerated individuals, individuals from communities of color, and other youth/young adults who have not had much opportunity to thrive in their community to help them create positive change and do meaningful work.
RECOMMENDATION

Provide $1M for the I.M.A.G.I.N.E. Program (Inspirational Mentoring Agents Generating Incredible Nourishment & Empowerment).

This funding would support the program at existing school sites (Alba Community Day School, Bell Middle School, Hamilton Elementary, and Rosa Parks Elementary) and additional sites (Hoover Cluster and Crawford Cluster Schools). Many youth in the district don’t have basic needs and security, so a portion of the funding would also go to youth transportation, clothes, food, healthcare, mental health support, etc.

Critical Funding Need: $1,000,000
San Diego’s diverse immigrant population faces challenges in accessing resources and services needed for successful integration into the local community, underscoring the need for increased City support for immigrants. Although immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers make up about 23% of the total population in the city, many are disconnected and unsupported by the city government and have limited access to resources and services to facilitate their integration into the local society. The City established the Office of Immigrant Affairs in 2022 to advance immigrant rights and craft policies and services to support immigrant families in San Diego. Funding the office helps increase access to city services, support immigrants through the naturalization process, increase community engagement efforts, provide education services, and gather community input about how to best support immigrant and refugee families.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Ensure the Office of Immigrant Affairs continues to receive full funding.

Critical Funding Need: $490,000
CONTINUED FUNDING FOR
CITYWIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS

The City of San Diego’s failure to provide language access to non-English speaking residents excludes people from accessing needed services, civic engagement, and participation. We need to see the City expand the language access program to ensure diverse residents can actively engage in civic processes and access city services. According to the US Immigration Policy Center at UCSD, the foreign-born population in the City speaks at least 70 different languages and dialects, and approximately half (50.9%) of the foreign-born population in the City are limited English proficient (LEP). Despite this, the City of San Diego currently has a weak infrastructure to allow non-English speakers to participate in city matters. The City Clerk’s office has made recent efforts to make City Council and Committee meetings more accessible, but they are still under-resourced to meet the demand and lack language capabilities in many commonly spoken languages in San Diego.

In Fiscal Year 23, the city allocated $300,000 for a citywide language access program to ensure residents can access, understand, and engage in public decision-making in city council meetings, committee meetings, publications, citywide programs, community engagement efforts, and all city-provided services. The funding was supposed to support translation of city documents, materials, applications, and live interpretations during community meetings and in-person interactions with members of the public. However, city departments and resources on the city website vary in language accessibility, with many city resources only available in English and/or Spanish. Expanded language access programs would remove barriers and ensure that all voices are heard, able to participate in civic processes, and receive culturally competent city services. Every service and program must be accessible to all regardless of language needs.
CONTINUED FUNDING FOR CITYWIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS

RECOMMENDATION

→ Conduct a city-wide, district-by-district linguistic diversity study to guide City hiring practices and outreach efforts.

→ Allocate $300,000 in ongoing funding to increase city-wide language access. All public-facing meetings and materials should be available in at least nine languages (Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Filipino, Korean, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Oromo, and Vietnamese).

→ Support an ongoing $50,000 allocation (approved in Fiscal Year 2021) to Community Planning Groups to expand language access and community participation in San Diego.

→ Fund contracts for community interpreters who are thoroughly vetted by community-based organizations to ensure interpreters have dialect and cultural competency.

→ Translate city agendas, public communications, and press releases into multiple languages and provide subtitles for City Council meetings on Webcast/City TV to improve access to government events, communications, and services.

→ Ensure the process to request language services is more accessible and attainable.

→ Hire youth ambassadors to disseminate information about youth programs, services, resources, and scholarships.

Critical Funding Need: $350,000
1. City of San Diego Eviction Prevention Program Update, San Diego Housing Commission, 2023. [https://sandiego.hylandcloud.com/211agendaonlinecomm/ Documents/ViewDocument/Item%206.pptx.pdf?meetingId=5780&documentType=Agenda&itemId=226881&publishId=791690&isSection=false]


8. How to File a Wage Claim, State of California Deapartment of Industrial Relations, August 2023. [https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/howtofilewageclaim.htm]

9. Compliance Department, City of San Diego, 2023. [https://www.sandiego.gov/compliance/violation-complaint]

10. Wage theft whack-a-mole: California workers win judgements against bosses but still don’t get paid, CalMatters, September 2022. [https://calmatters.org/california-divide/2022/09/california-wage-theft-cases/]


END NOTES


