

Coming Together? Or Tearing Apart?

A Report on the State of Our Community Fabric.

MAY 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** Why OneSD? Why Now?
- 2** OneSD at a Glance.
- 4** The Challenges We Face.
- 6** Why It Matters.
- 7** What We Measure.
- 8** The State of Our Community Fabric.
- 10** What the Data Tells Us.
- 12** What Our Partners Are Saying.
- 14** What Comes Next.
- 15** How You Can Take Action.
- 16** Join Us.
- 17** Survey Information and Sources.

OneSD™ is an initiative of the Burnham Center for Community Advancement (BCCA). For more information on BCCA, or to get involved, visit burnhamcenter.org.

Why OneSD? Why Now?

To Our Community,

At its inception, the Burnham Center for Community Advancement (BCCA) consulted with over 100 local leaders to identify key priorities for BCCA's work. **One message was clear—concerted, urgent efforts were needed to heal our community fabric**, rebuild trust in each other and our governing institutions, and foster the collaboration we need, despite our differences, to solve the problems our region faces.

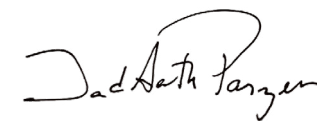
San Diego is not alone in facing these challenges. The Pew Research Center documented **a stunning decline in social trust** in the United States over the past 50 years. According to the Center in 1972, 46% of people said most people can be trusted and 53% said the federal government can be trusted. The Center's 2023-24 poll revealed **those numbers are now 34% and 17%, respectively**. San Diego can choose a different path, grounded in a shared responsibility for our region's future.

To pave this path forward, BCCA, along with dozens of community leaders and partners, created OneSD—an organized and sustained platform to align organizations across the San Diego region around a shared commitment to **collaborative cross-sector problem solving**.

This inaugural baseline report draws on existing data and a survey conducted by BCCA of almost 850 residents of San Diego County. It establishes **a starting point for measuring progress** toward the ambitious goal of OneSD: Building a San Diego region defined not by what divides us, but by what we can build together.

We invite you to join us.

Stronger Starts Together.



Tad Seth Parzen
President and CEO
Burnham Center for Community Advancement

OneSD at a Glance.

MISSION

Strengthen our region by **reversing trends of division, fostering collaboration** across divides, and **solving real-world challenges** together.

FOCUS AREAS

Build trust among San Diegans and with our civic institutions.

Foster collaboration, connection, and engagement with each other and our communities.

Ensure San Diegans feel safe and welcome when participating in civic and social life.

Prioritize problem solving over polarization.

MEMBERS

OneSD is a coalition of **50+ partners** representing a wide spectrum of our community, with BCCA serving as the organizing platform aligning and catalyzing their work. See page 16 for a complete list of OneSD partners.



“Complex problems can be solved only by cross-sector coalitions.”

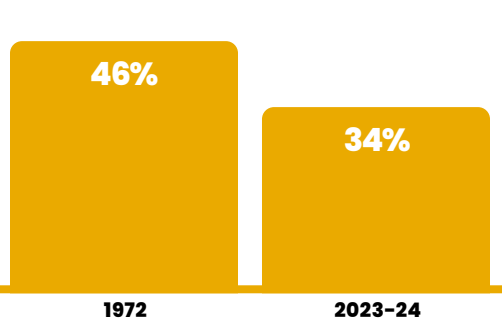
Stanford Social Innovation Review 2011



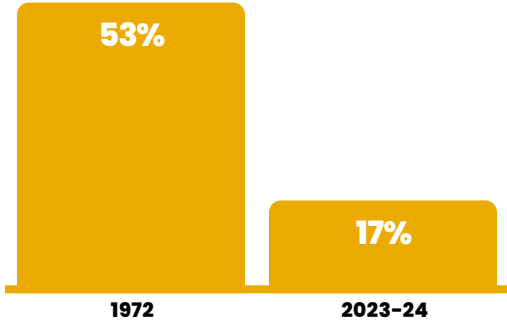
The Challenges We Face.

OneSD responds to a fundamental challenge of our time—**increasing division, declining social trust, and rising hostility**. These challenges are nationwide.

The Pew Research Center documented a consistent decline in social trust within the United States over the last fifty years. Many people feel it, and national data confirms it:



Respondents who said most people can be trusted.
Pew Research Center 2025



People who said the federal government can be trusted.
Pew Research Center 2025

Only 39%

of adults in the United States feel connected to others.
U.S. Surgeon General 2023

Nearly 1/3

of Americans believe that violence may be necessary to get the country back on track.
PBS 2025

San Diego County Is Not Immune to These Trends.

The dozens of conversations BCCA held throughout the San Diego region to inform the approach of OneSD echoed the data, confirming that **our region’s community fabric is under strain**. When the data and ground-level experience match, we know that we need to act.

60%

increase in hate crimes in San Diego County between 2021 and 2024.
SANDAG 2024

61%

of elected officials surveyed in San Diego County have experienced threats and harassment.
California Threats and Harassment Initiative 2024

Only 34%

of San Diegans say most people can be trusted.
Pew Research Center 2025

Ranked 20th

in trust, out of the 34 largest U.S. metropolitan areas.
Pew Research Center 2025

Why It Matters.

Societies and communities thrive when trust is high and when residents feel connected instead of isolated. **High levels of social trust fuel economic growth** (*Our World in Data*) and support a wide range of important social goals—quality of government, access to education, protection of rights, prevention of violence, and more.

To build the San Diego we all want—a **dynamic region where all can thrive**—we have no choice but to strengthen our community fabric, foster collaborative problem solving, and reweave the sense of connection and trust necessary to address the challenges our region faces.

OUR GUIDEPOSTS



Opportunity for All

Creating a region where everyone can participate, everyone can contribute, and everyone can thrive.



Collaboration and Respect

Building bridges and fostering collaboration through civil civic dialogue and mutual respect.



Stronger Together

Fostering a stronger, more connected region through shared purpose and collective action. By coming together to solve problems across divides, we strengthen our region.

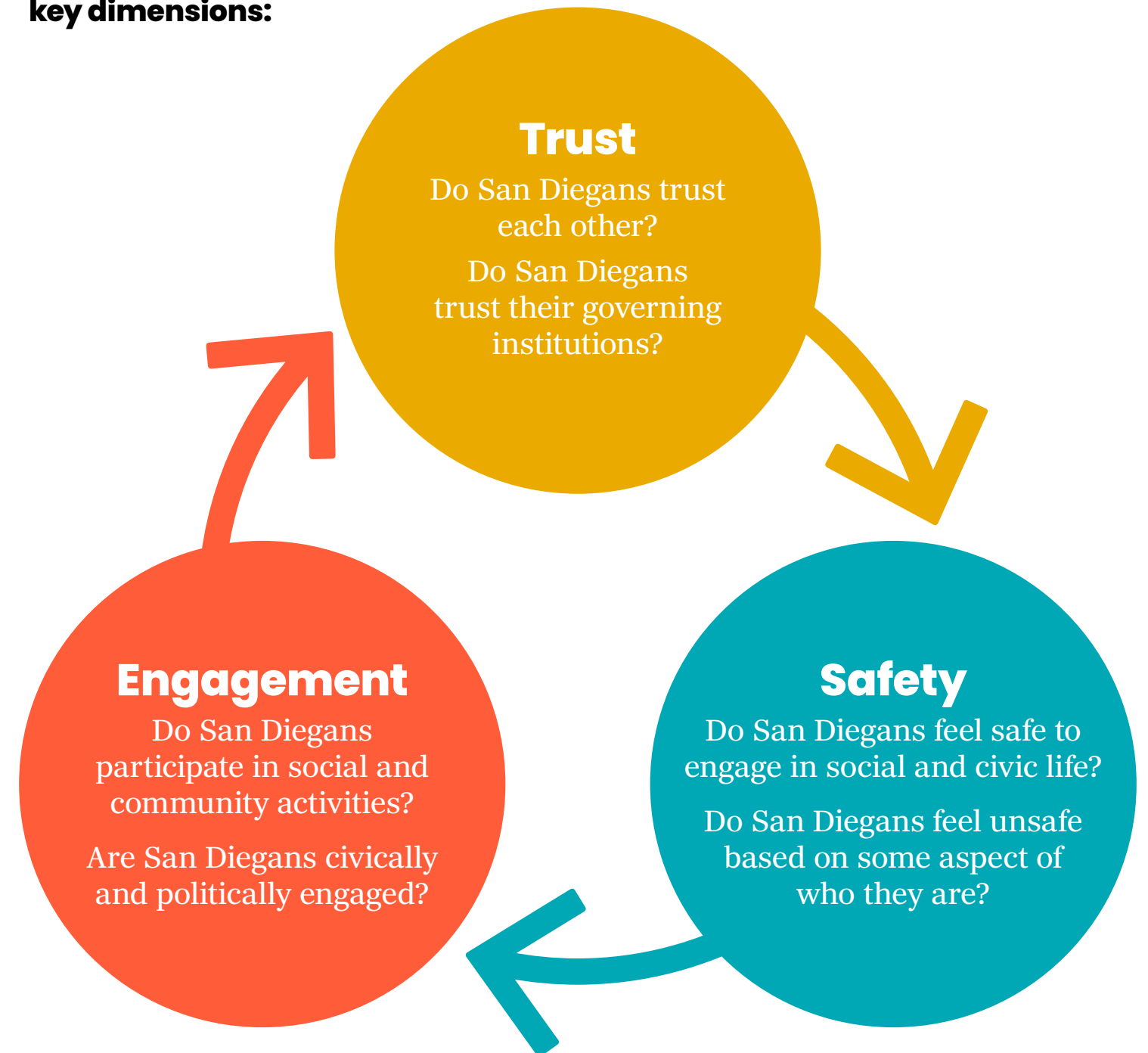


Innovation

Embracing bold, creative approaches to bring our communities together and address issues that divide us. By creating a vision of the future we want for our region, we catalyze innovative strategies to make that future real.

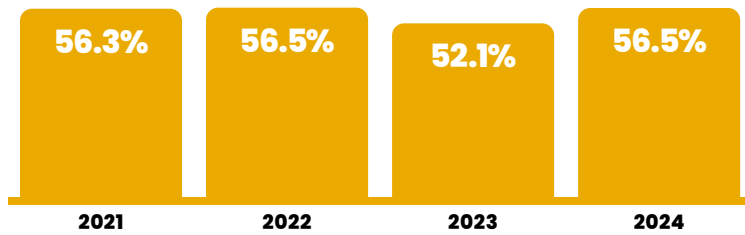
What We Measure.

We track three key dimensions:

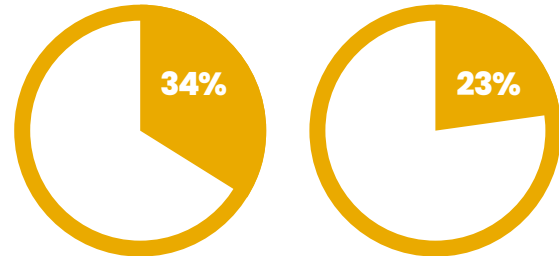


The data in this report is a snapshot taken at the launch of OneSD, drawn from existing data and our own baseline survey. We will continue to track these metrics and plan to repeat the OneSD Survey every year. Our **community fabric is complex**—the data doesn't tell the whole story, but it does provide a concrete benchmark to ensure that OneSD is making progress toward its goals.

Trust



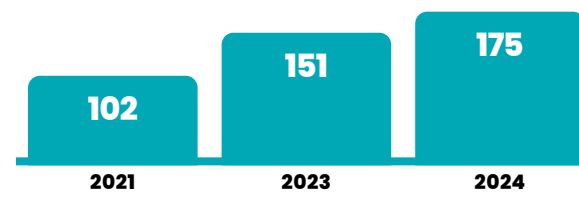
Residents who have confidence in San Diego's government institutions.
University of San Diego 2024



San Diegans who say "most people can be trusted."
Pew Research Center 2025

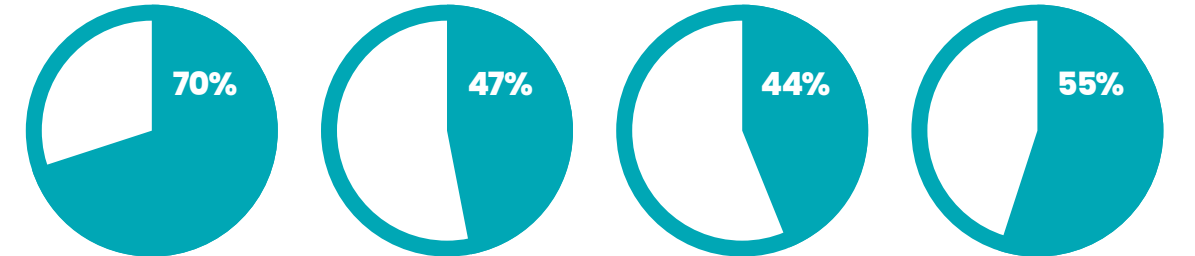
Respondents who have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of trust in San Diego city and county officials.
OneSD Survey 2026

Safety



Hate crime victims.
SANDAG 2024

San Diegans who consider the following issues a major or moderate problem:
OneSD Survey 2026



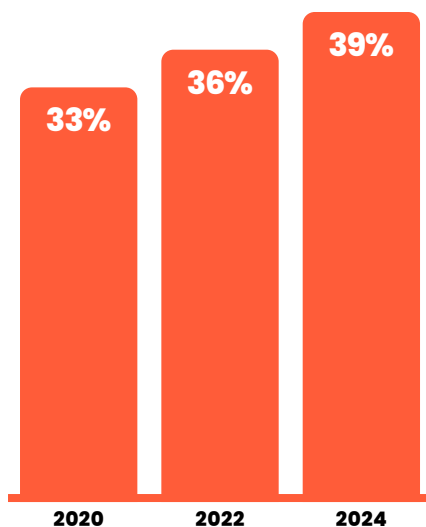
61%

of elected officials surveyed have experienced threats and harassment.
California Threats and Harassment Initiative 2024

The State of Our Community Fabric.

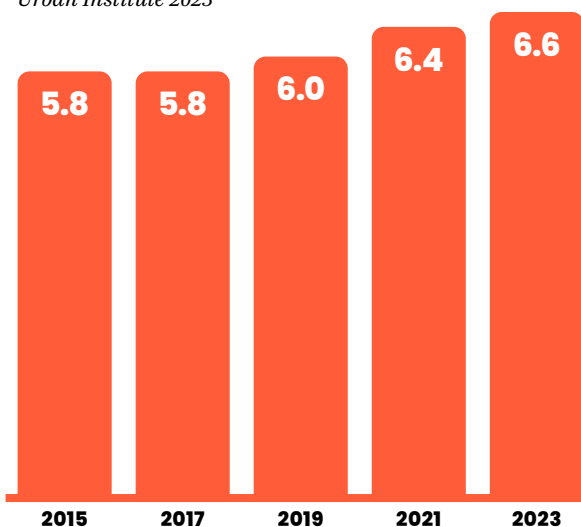
Engagement

San Diego County households that volunteered with nonprofits.
University of San Diego 2024



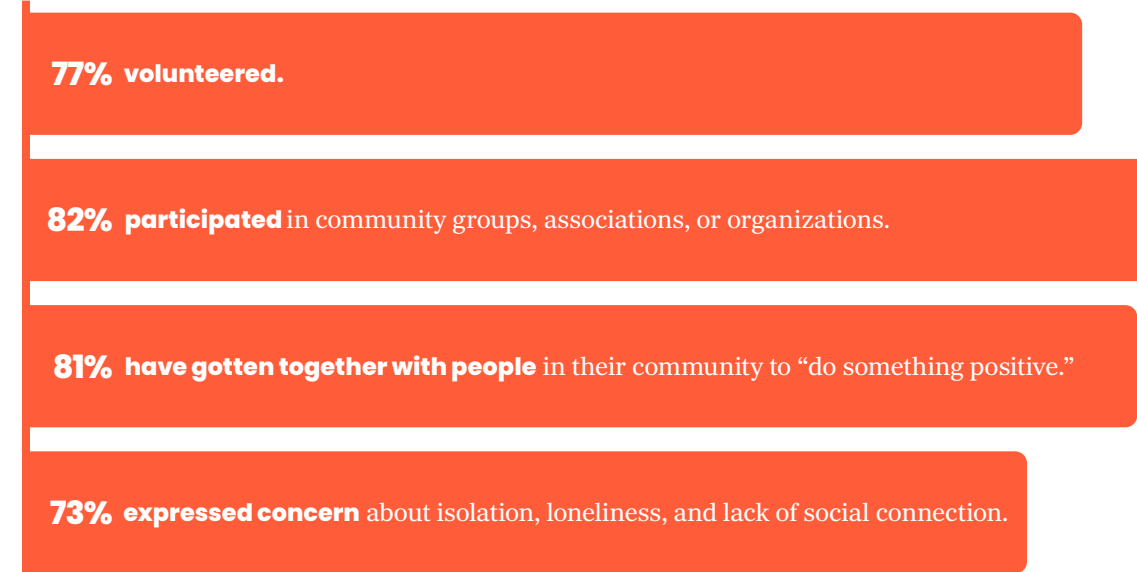
22 hours volunteered each quarter, on average, by San Diegans—the lowest number in the last eight years.
University of San Diego 2024

Membership associations per 10,000 residents. San Diego compares poorly to the national median, which is 8.3.
Urban Institute 2023



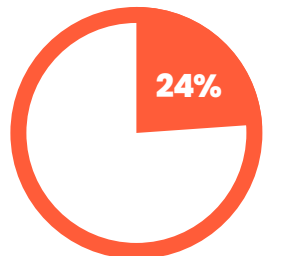
Membership associations include civic, sports, religious, political, labor, business, and professional organizations; fitness and bowling centers; and golf clubs.

Key findings on engagement (in the past 12 months):

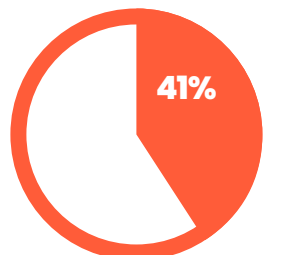


OneSD Survey 2026

Barriers to engagement:



San Diegans who felt "somewhat" or "very" unsafe participating in political or civic activities.



Residents who felt "somewhat" or "very" unsafe walking in a neighborhood that's not their own.

WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

In looking at both existing data and the OneSD Survey, a clear picture emerges. The San Diego region has deep problems—and enormous potential. This dual reality represents the rationale for OneSD. We see the problems every day: **lack of connection, low levels of trust,** and the fundamental challenge of addressing **hate crimes, polarization, and political violence.**



People are concerned about **loneliness** and a **lack of connection**—and many also have **fears** that hinder participation in their communities.

Reduced trust in each other and our institutions. Lack of trust undermines engagement with our communities and public life participation.

Routine threats and harassment of election officials impose a human cost, while undermining our political institutions and civic life.

Hate crimes are rising and people believe hate crimes, political violence, and violence against migrants pose a real threat to our communities.

We also see that if we work together, align our efforts, and tap into the core belief of residents that things can get better. San Diego has the potential to solve these problems. **We can heal and strengthen our community fabric**—and make San Diego a model for the rest of the nation.

This potential is the “why” of OneSD.



San Diegans can work together to improve their communities. Among respondents to the OneSD Survey:

80% agree “I have the ability to improve my community.”

74% expressed pride in their community.

Only 9% said they are not comfortable working with someone who disagrees with them.

What Our Partners Are Saying.

In the interviews OneSD conducted with partners, we see the same theme of problems, plus potential to solve them—**if we come together.**

There is no one way to be a San Diegan.

Deana Mackey
Executive Director, KPBS

San Diego County is big! Alongside all the other forms of diversity that are more often discussed, geographic diversity poses a challenge to the aspiration of creating OneSD.

The poles in our political system are given these bullhorns. We are forgetting that there is an entire centrist middle that actually agrees on more than they disagree about.

Sara Brown
Regional Director, American Jewish Committee, San Diego

The national environment and social media pose a challenge and an opportunity for the work of OneSD. Both clearly create dynamics that can foster hostility and undermine local engagement and trust.

We lose the ability to listen and talk through the hard things... we don't actually have time to be uncomfortable.

Samuel Tsoi
Director of Leadership and Professional Development,
Nonprofit Institute, University of San Diego

We need to get comfortable with having difficult conversations and create spaces where we can do so.

San Diego is well-positioned to be a model for the rest of the nation. We have a tradition of collaboration, openness, and working together.

We must challenge ourselves to go beyond comfortable collaboration... This work, helping San Diego come together across divides to build lasting solutions, is more critical than ever to our region's prosperity and global competitiveness.

Mark Cafferty
President and CEO, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation

The launch of San Diego Football Club has brought that unity mentality.

Edith Sanchez-Cruz
OneSD Coalition Member

Community happens everywhere—in churches, at Little League fields, at concerts, in schools, in corporate events, at our Universities, in Balboa Park, and at Padres, SDFC, Waves, and Seals games.

What Comes Next.

This report is just the beginning of our work as OneSD. Throughout the rest of 2026 and beyond, we will:



Continue to collect data.

In one year, BCCA will release the first annual OneSD Progress Report as we continue to refine our strategy and sharpen the initiative.



Catalyze funding for OneSD partners.

Beyond resources, we know that investments in trust, connection, and collaboration will pay huge dividends across every important measure of quality of life.



Communicate the vision of OneSD.

Our goal is to create an identity for San Diego as a place where all are welcome and all can thrive.



Foster meaningful collaboration across our region.

OneSD is already planning:

A roundtable of all eighteen cities in San Diego County to create strategies for a more welcoming civic environment—so all residents can participate in public life.

A powerful event series to have hard conversations about the issues dividing us as San Diegans.

Collaborative work with schools and youth-serving organizations to assure that our youth (and our future) experience the benefits of honest dialogue and working together for a better community.

An Art and Trust Summit to identify the role of arts and our creative community in building trust and strengthening connection.

A partnership with the San Diego-Tijuana International Jazz Festival to show how music can create meaningful connections between people from all backgrounds.

A visionary effort to create a San Diego “Long Table”—thousands of neighbors breaking bread together in Balboa Park, the cultural heart of San Diego.

This work will culminate in the inaugural **Three Days, OneSD celebration** in late 2026, when coalition partners will hold community events throughout the region highlighting OneSD’s mission and vision—and celebrating progress made towards our shared goals.

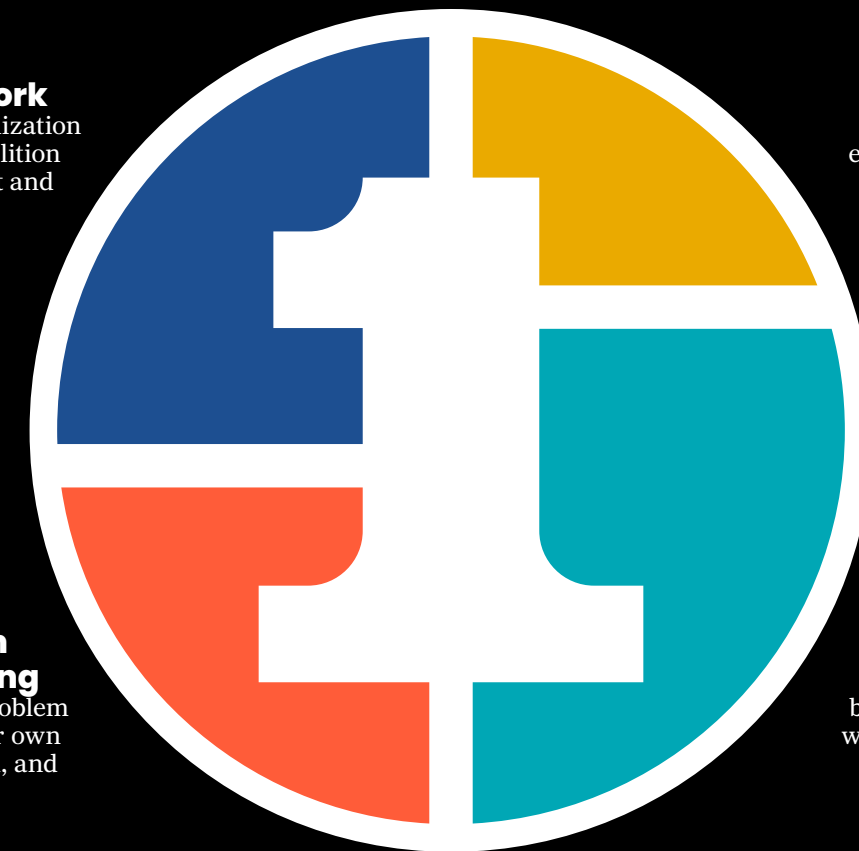
An **Impact Map** has been developed to compile all the initiatives of the OneSD coalition. To learn more about these initiatives and to receive a copy of the Impact Map, reach out at OneSD.org.

How You Can Take Action.

San Diego’s future is not something that happens to us; it is something we build together. The challenges are significant, but the willingness, pride, and belief in progress are already present in our community. If we work together and act with purpose, **we can strengthen our community fabric** and make San Diego a model for the nation. Join us in shaping a stronger, more unified region—because stronger starts together.

Join the OneSD network and align your organization with a growing coalition committed to trust and collaboration.

Engage in the conversation by participating in events and discussions that bring diverse voices together.



Champion trust-building and constructive problem solving within your own organization, team, and community.

Invest in the mission by supporting OneSD’s work to drive long-term, region-wide impact.

Use this report to better understand the challenges and opportunities, and help shape solutions that move our region forward.

Join Us.

The challenges facing our region are real, but so is our opportunity to lead. At the Burnham Center for Community Advancement, we hear a clear and urgent call from community leaders across San Diego: **It is time to rebuild trust, strengthen connections, and solve problems together.**

The data confirms both the depth of the challenge and the scale of the opportunity. People are experiencing loneliness and a lack of connection; trust in one another and in institutions is low; and concerns about harassment, hate crimes, and political violence are rising. At the same time, a strong **majority of San Diegans believe they have the ability to improve their community**, take pride in where they live, and are willing to work with those who hold different perspectives.

This combination of challenge and potential is the reason OneSD exists: to align our efforts, tap into this shared belief in progress, and **build a region defined not by division, but by what we build together.**

WHO'S AT THE TABLE

OneSD is a growing coalition of leaders, organizations, and community members from every sector of our region committed to strengthening the community fabric of San Diego.

Nonprofit & Philanthropy	Heal the Earth	Media	Government & Law Enforcement
YMCA of San Diego County	SAY San Diego	Voice of San Diego	San Diego Unified School District
Tijuana Innovadora	Jewish Family Service	Univision	San Diego County District Attorney's Office
Tariq Khamisa Foundation	Prebys Foundation	KPBS	San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Anti-Defamation League, San Diego	San Diego World Affairs Council (SDWAC)	inewsourc	San Diego Police Department
National Conflict Resolution Center	Somali Family Service of San Diego	Arts and Culture	
Urban League of San Diego County	Council of Philippine American Organizations (COPAO)	California Center for the Arts, Escondido	
Catalyst of San Diego & Imperial Counties	Amplified Impact Partners	San Diego Dance Theater	Elected Officials
Rotary International, District 5340	House of Pacific Relations	Vanguard Culture	Mayor Todd Gloria, City of San Diego
The Chicano Federation	DEEP San Diego	Visions Museum of Textile Art	Mayor John McCann, Chula Vista
United Way of San Diego County	Opportunity Collaboration	Private Sector	Mayor Ron Morrison, National City
San Diego LGBT Center	Addiction Research Institute	Capzone Group	Mayor Alysson Snow, Lemon Grove
San Ysidro Health	Feeding San Diego	Movement Matters Collective	Councilmember Raul Campillo, Seventh District
Downtown San Diego Partnership	Longer Tables San Diego	San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce	Assemblyperson Darshana Patel, Seventy-Sixth District
Nonprofit Institute, University of San Diego	Autism Society San Diego	San Diego Black Chamber of Commerce	Supervisor Joel Anderson, County of San Diego, Second District
Kinship Fund	Religious & Faith-Based	San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation	
United Women of East Africa	American Jewish Committee	Military-Focused	
	Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego	San Diego Military Advisory Council	
		Blue Star Families	

The Burnham Center for Community Advancement would like to acknowledge the following supporters of OneSD. Thank you for your support, for the vision you have shown, and for believing that when we invest in strengthening our community, we all benefit.

Kurt Chilcott	Elaine Galinson & Vernita Todd	Peter Zahn
Dennis Cruzan	Dan Epstein	Natasha Wong
	Jack Raymond	Sandra Timmons & Richard Sandstrom

If you would like to become a supporter of the OneSD initiative, please contact Tad Parzen, President and CEO of the Burnham Center for Community Advancement.

SURVEY INFORMATION

The OneSD Survey was open February 2, 2026–March 5, 2026. BCCA and OneSD members designed the survey in consultation with Polco, a survey firm specializing in community and civic engagement. Polco managed the survey and promoted it through both email and text. BCCA and OneSD members also promoted the survey to their networks. The survey was available in the eight threshold languages of San Diego County. BCCA received 847 responses to the survey. Respondents came from 84 of the 142 Zip Codes in San Diego County and were diverse along ethnic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, ideological, and income lines.

This baseline report includes key findings from the survey. For more information on the survey and to inquire about additional findings that were not included in the report, please contact BCCA.

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Note: The 2024 Report indicates 66% of officials from San Diego, Riverside, and Imperial Counties reported harassment. Although this number is not broken down by county in the report, the lead researcher on the project shared in a personal communication that this number is 61% for San Diego County.

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OneSD.org