



## OUR PRINCIPLES

Everyone should live  
in a safe, thriving, and  
inclusive society.

Everyone should have  
the opportunity for  
economic advancement.

Everyone should have  
access to a clean and  
sustainable environment.

WELCOME

June 30, 2024

As we reflect on the past fiscal year, we are filled with profound gratitude for the incredible journey we have shared. It has been a year of significant milestones and growth, and we want to take a moment to express our heartfelt thanks for your support and commitment.

Your trust, collaboration, generosity, and belief in our mission are the cornerstones of our shared success. This year we experienced remarkable growth, expanding collaborations, developing and implementing new and innovative solutions, and adding a Chief Financial Officer, Vice President of Workforce Development, and more researchers! As a think tank, we are only as good as our people, and we are fortunate to have an extraordinary team of in-house experts. These achievements are a testament to our collective efforts and shared vision.

Also, in this report and our updated website, you'll see our transition to the name "Policy & Innovation Center" –to reflect our current and future work, including projects beyond San Diego County.

As we move forward, we do so with purpose and optimism. The foundation we have built together is solid, and the future is full of promise. We invite you to look back at the year's highlights and look forward to the possibilities for continued growth with you at our side.

With sincere gratitude,



*Susan L. Guinn*  
**Susan Guinn, Esq.**  
President & CEO



*BH*  
**Ben Haddad**  
Chair, Board of Directors



July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

# Highlights



*“Smart policy delivers tangible benefits to San Diegans’ well-being and prosperity in the short and long term. As I craft legislation that makes a real impact in San Diegans’ lives, I am frequently guided by the Policy & Innovation Center’s sharp analysis, data-driven research, and collaborative approach.”*

**RAUL CAMPILLO**

*San Diego City Councilmember  
(District 7)*







*“Every day, it is no secret that pivotal alliances and partnerships drive impact. Real change requires long-term and effective collaborations. We’re proud of what we’re building together to foster thriving, equitable communities.”*

SUSAN GUINN  
*President & CEO, Policy & Innovation Center*

# People Working Together

FOCUSED ON GROWTH

# Our Partnership with The Brookings Institution

The partnership with The Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. is unique in that it is the first time in Brookings' 100-plus-year history that it partnered in a region to test national best practices, co-produce research, and assist in building a local think tank, the Policy & Innovation Center. This multi-year relationship helps local government and agencies plan for and mitigate risk concerning climate change, housing shortages, and inequities in workforce development. In addition, we collaborate to bring intellectual and financial capital to the region.

This year, Brookings Metro, in conjunction with the Policy & Innovation Center, analyzed how climate risk data can be better understood and leveraged in local communities. The team researched flooding, heat, and wildfire impacts across the City of San Diego and developed policy recommendations. Based on an analysis of FEMA data by the Policy & Innovation Center and the Brookings Institution, flooding events in the county have increased by over 200% since 2000. For context, that's four times the national increase of 50% over the same period. Climate change will likely exacerbate this trend, as more intense precipitation events are expected to become more frequent. One hundred-year floods may be annual events. Through data-driven insights, we are finding more ways to create resilient sustainable communities.

***"In the past year, Brookings has partnered with the Policy & Innovation Center on climate risk analyses, workforce development opportunities, and understanding the funding needs of regions. We are producing insightful research and policy analysis that's applicable to both local and national audiences."***

**ROBERT PUENTES**

*Vice President & Director of Brookings Metro*







# Government & Agency Council

Facilitated by the Policy & Innovation Center and the Brookings Institution, the Government & Agency Council is comprised of representatives from the County of San Diego, 18 municipalities, and core local agencies. Its purpose is to promote cross-jurisdiction collaboration, secure and leverage federal and state funding, find solutions, share expertise, and determine research gaps to support action. This year, focus areas included identification of federal funding opportunities, water research, infrastructure and flood resources, and granular mapping and analysis of regional climate risks.

**Members of the Government & Agency Council include:**

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| County of San Diego         | City of La Mesa                               |
| City of San Diego           | City of Lemon Grove                           |
| City of Carlsbad            | City of National City                         |
| City of Chula Vista         | City of Oceanside                             |
| City of Coronado            | City of Poway                                 |
| City of Del Mar             | City of San Marcos                            |
| City of El Cajon            | City of Santee                                |
| City of Encinitas           | City of Solana Beach                          |
| City of Escondido           | City of Vista                                 |
| City of Imperial Beach      | San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) |
| Port of San Diego           | Metropolitan Transit System (MTS)             |
| San Diego Airport Authority |   |

# Research for the Common Good

Applying equity-focused research to our region's most pressing challenges.



## PLANNING A THRIVING ECOSYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH COUNTY

The Policy & Innovation Center's comprehensive report, "Planning a Higher Education Ecosystem in South County: A Workforce & Education Needs Assessment," identified gaps in needed baccalaureate degrees, which community colleges could offer. The research was commissioned by City of Chula Vista and Southwestern College.

Chula Vista is the largest city in California without baccalaureate degree programs, despite significant need. More than a quarter of San Diego County's 2.24 million jobs require a bachelor's degree at entry, and about 70% of today's priority occupations – those that pay good wages and are accessible to recent graduates – require a bachelor's degree. The Policy & Innovation Center's research positioned Southwestern College to begin offering four-year degrees, and through demonstrated need, attract synergistic universities to South County.

## CREATIVE ECONOMY REPORT

The creative economy in San Diego supports almost 170,000 jobs across the region, including 76 unique occupations. The Policy & Innovation Center's research, commissioned by the City of San Diego, analyzed how 71 creative industries in San Diego, ranging from digital media and music to architecture, interior design and fashion, contributed more than \$10 billion to the region's economic impact, workforce and local economy.

## EQUITY INDICATORS REPORT

The Policy & Innovation Center along with the County of San Diego's Office of Equity and Racial Justice and the Office of Evaluation, Performance, and Analytics developed the first regional Equity Indicators Report. The report found stark disparities by race, ethnicity gender, immigration status and disability status. The aim of the research is to inform government investments and track progress toward decreasing inequities.

*"The Policy & Innovation Center is bringing research and policy insights to help address San Diego's housing crisis. Through their partnership with Brookings Institution, they are testing innovative ideas and solutions in San Diego – with the hope that together we can make our region a place everyone can enjoy and call home."*

**HEIDI VONBLUM**

*City of San Diego Planning Director*





## SAN DIEGO ECONOMIC EQUITY REPORT

Commissioned by the San Diego Foundation and researched and written by the Policy & Innovation Center, this report found that one in ten San Diegans live in poverty, including 86,000 children, due to a lack of self-sufficient wages and the high cost of housing, utilities, transportation and food in the region. This report demonstrates a pressing need to address the region's economic challenges and invest in sustainable solutions for its diverse communities. The report was informed by the Equity Indicators Report.

## CALIFORNIA JOBS FIRST

On behalf of the State of California, the Policy & Innovation Center and the Centers of Excellence at the San Diego and Imperial Community Colleges conducted rigorous research, community forums, and surveys to inform the California Jobs First Regional Plan for the counties of San Diego and Imperial. Using this information, the Southern Border Region will set economic priorities for state investments. This work resulted in a \$14M award from the state for equitable economic development, and enables our region to apply for up to \$135M in future grants.

## SAN DIEGO COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ANALYSIS

On behalf of the County of San Diego and its contractor Ascent, the Policy & Innovation Center analyzed the region's climate action plan (CAP) to provide insight, cost benefit analysis, and practical applications to assist policymakers with regional implementation. The research identifies the communities in the unincorporated areas that will be disproportionately affected by the implementation of the CAP, and recommendations for next steps.

## OLDER ADULTS IN THE WORKFORCE

San Diego's senior population is growing, and the cost of living is rising, but more seniors report struggling to find well-paying jobs. The Policy & Innovation Center partnered with the San Diego Workforce Partnership to pilot a research-driven workforce development program targeted to the needs of older job seekers. Evidence from this evaluation will inform senior services across the country, especially as Baby Boomers stay in the workforce longer. The work received statewide recognition at the California Commission on Aging's General Meeting.

***“The partnership between the Policy & Innovation Center and Southwestern College has been a critical one for San Diego. Our collaborative work is charting a vision forward in the creation of educational and workforce opportunities in the San Diego region. The focus of this work is inclusive of communities in the San Diego region that need focus as it pertains to educational and economic opportunities both now and in the future. Our partnership is centered on elevating our entire community so that everyone can participate in the economic strength and vitality of this binational region. I am proud to partner with the Policy & Innovation Center in this work.”***

**DR. MARK SANCHEZ**

*Superintendent / President, Southwestern College*





“The Policy & Innovation Center is an incredible partner to both San Diego State University and the broader region, they actively engage a variety of stakeholders to seek and secure federal, state, and philanthropic funding for initiatives critical to the people who live and work in San Diego and Imperial Counties. The breadth of expertise at the Policy & Innovation Center provides the region with end-to-end support of complex issues, from data driven research and planning to implementation of ideas for the benefit of our community.”

JOHN MCMILLAN  
Assistant Vice President of Economic Development,  
San Diego State University



Grant partners include the following entities:

- Trailhead Strategies
- Social Finance

Grant partners include the following entities:

- The County of San Diego
- The City of Oceanside
- The City of Imperial Beach
- The City of Carlsbad
- The City of San Diego
- The Port of San Diego
- The City of Encinitas
- San Diego Foundation
- San Diego Audubon
- Resilient Cities Catalyst
- Scripps Institution of Oceanography/Sea Grant
- Ocean Science Trust & Regional Climate Collaborative
- Regional Climate Collaborative

Grant partners include the following entities:

- Imperial Valley Workforce Development Board
- Imperial Valley Small Business Development Center
- Imperial Valley Wellness Foundation
- San Diego State University
- SDSU School of Nursing
- Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program
- United Domestic Workers
- San Diego County Building and Construction Trades Council
- San Diego & Imperial Valley Labor Council
- Imperial County
- Jobs for the Future
- Imperial County Economic Development Corporation
- Controlled Thermal Resources
- Northend Alliance
- Futuro Health
- IBEW Local 569 Imperial County

# Resources for the Region

## Adding and activating capital to strengthen the San Diego region.

Resources to the Region

The Policy & Innovation Center led applications and coalitions, resulting in approximately \$74M in government awards to the region through September of 2024. Policy & Innovation Center’s grant writers also helped organizations and entities secure an additional \$40M to support economic development, quality jobs and environmental resilience.

Grants to Watch:

**Behavioral Health Workforce Program/\$60,000,000** The Policy & Innovation Center received a five-year state award through the County of San Diego to design and operationalize a \$60M plus grant to attract, retain, and empower behavioral health professionals. Through a zero-interest revolving loan fund and a no-cost scholarship program, we are committed to cultivating new talent and elevating existing professionals.

This program will expand access through outreach strategies to engage under-resourced individuals, people with lived experience, and culturally and linguistically competent professionals to serve in communities of concern across the region. We aim to empower over 2,100 individuals through the revolving loan fund and upskill 700 professionals to meet the region’s evolving needs.

**NOAA/\$44,200,000** Of the 869 proposals submitted to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 120 made it to the next round, including 59 implementation projects, one of which was led by the Policy & Innovation Center. We are hopeful that the Policy & Innovation Center’s \$42.5 million-dollar coastal climate resilience application will be one of the 15 awardees selected by the federal government.

The proposal was informed by the San Diego Regional Coastal Resilience Roadmap, a strategic action plan developed by the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative and other partners that conducted extensive consultation with communities, analysis of existing planning efforts, surveys and focus groups.

**Lithium Valley Recompete/\$50,000,000** The Policy & Innovation Center led proposal to revitalize the economy in Imperial Valley was one of only two projects in California to be selected as a Recompete Finalist in the Biden-Harris Administration’s Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program for a \$50 million federal grant. If awarded, the Lithium Valley Recompete Initiative will fund workforce training, economic development, and social services that will prepare the previously agriculture-dependent Imperial Valley region to compete nationwide as a source of lithium battery sourcing and manufacturing.



# Ideas Brought to Life

Using research and resources to develop creative, effective, and equitable solutions.

## OTAY VALLEY REGIONAL PARK RESTORATION PLANNING

The Wildlife Conservation Board awarded \$409,000 to the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County to lead a project in conjunction with Policy & Innovation Center, to restore a 15-acre site within Otay Valley Regional Park.

The project will explore how the site can best conserve native wildlife and biodiversity while engaging the community, creating greater habitat connectivity within the park, and improving water quality.

## REGIONAL UTILITY MAP

Policy & Innovation Center researchers created a Regional Utility Map which provides an in-depth analysis of internet speeds, electricity usage, charging stations, digital infrastructure, and broadband coverage. The tool identifies disinvested communities and opportunities for targeted investments.

## WATER INNOVATIONS

Through support from the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, the Policy & Innovation Center is providing policy recommendations, funding solutions, and much needed water research to address water affordability and assist local water utilities facing a range of interconnected challenges stemming from operational and capital pressures. Inflation has increased the cost of capital projects, while stringent federal regulations have increased the cost of compliance in daily operations. Further, efforts to conserve water, while environmentally necessary, reduce demand and revenue, creating a financial strain for water utilities as they look to secure cash flow to maintain high-cost infrastructure. In 2025, the Policy & Innovation Center will release a series of reports offering potential financial options and other strategies including alternate revenue sources to enhance resilience.

In addition, the Policy & Innovation Center developed a Water Innovations Navigator, a public technology platform designed for government and agency staff, water districts, experts in water solutions, and innovators to share new and tested technology. The tool is available on our website.



## LOCALLY LED, SUSTAINABLE FISHING

The Policy & Innovation Center secured a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to work with the San Diego Fishermen’s Working Group to address the barriers to bringing local fish to market. The goals of the project are to strengthen and shorten the region’s supply chain to increase local fish purchasing, grow the percentage of profits captured by local fishermen, and raise the profile of the local fishing community.

The project includes a public fish festival, “Local Fish, Global Flavors,” that will bring together local chefs and fisherman to highlight dishes using locally sourced seafood with the aim of increasing purchasing.

*“The Policy & Innovation Center has partnered with the County to identify innovative solutions to common challenges in water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure. Their research and expertise can help advance approaches to aid water affordability, and climate resiliency stormwater projects that will improve water quality and beautify communities. We look forward to our continued partnership and delivering positive outcomes for our community.”*

### RICH WHIPPLE

*P.E., Deputy Director, Department of Public Works, Land Development Division, County of San Diego Land Use and Environment Group*







# Economic Roundtable

The Policy & Innovation Center partnered with the County of San Diego, the San Diego Workforce Partnership and the University of San Diego to present the 40th Annual San Diego County Economic Roundtable. This year's event featured San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank President Mary Daly, one of 12 people who collectively decide the cost of borrowing money in the world's largest economy. Daly was interviewed by Policy & Innovation Center Chief Economist Daniel Enemark about her forecasts and insights on the economy.

# Awards

Policy & Innovation Center staff and board members have been honored with community-based business and leadership awards in FY 2023-2024 including:

**2023 Businesswoman  
of the Year**  
Nonprofit Category,  
San Diego Business Journal  
*Awarded to Susan Guinn, Esq.*  
President & Chief Executive Officer

**2024 Board Leader  
of Influence**  
San Diego Business Journal  
*Awarded to Ben Haddad*  
Board Chair

**2024 40  
Under 40**  
San Diego Metro  
*Awarded to Dr. Karen Boyd*  
Director of Research

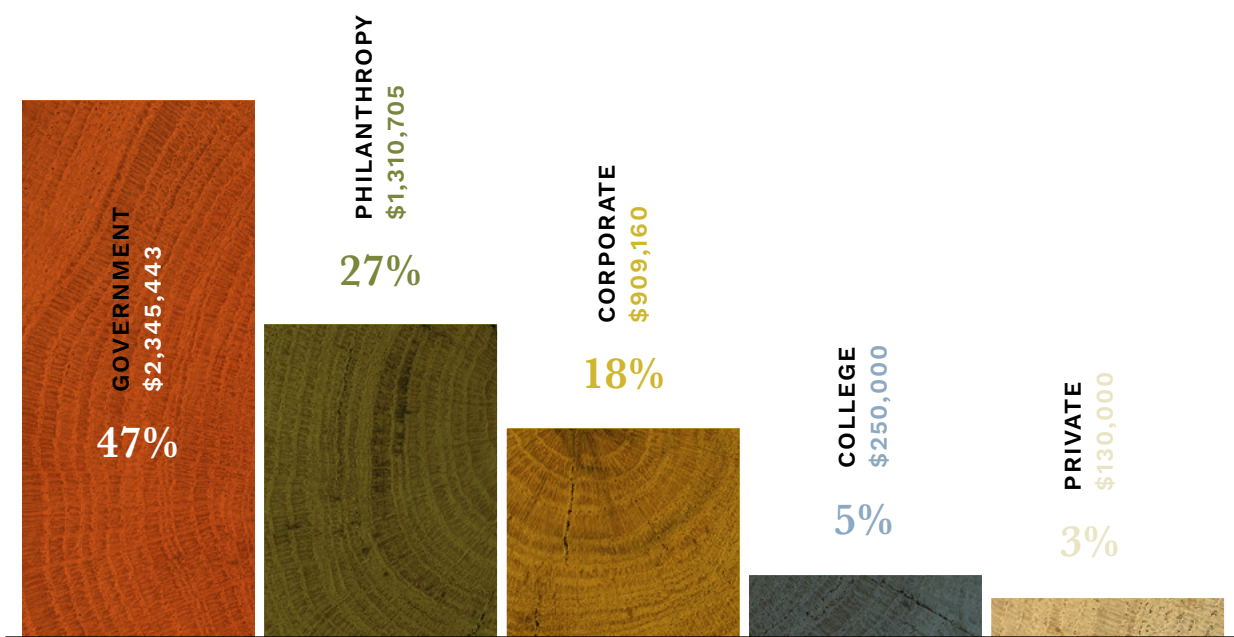
**2024 Nonprofit  
& Corporate  
Citizens Award**  
Outstanding Social Responsibility  
Award Finalist  
*Awarded to  
Policy & Innovation Center*





Fiscal Year 2024 Financials July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, Unaudited

REVENUES



TOTAL REVENUE  
\$4,945,309

EXPENSES

TOTAL EXPENSES, NET ASSETS  
\$4,809,499

BALANCE SHEET ITEMS

CASH	DEFERRED REVENUE
\$2,408,438	\$2,169,454



# Our Team

## The Brookings Institution Collaborators

Adie Tomer Senior Fellow	Jenny Schuetz Senior Fellow	Joseph W. Kane Fellow
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## Policy & Innovation Center Staff

Susan Guinn, Esq. President & Chief Executive Officer	Christine Dolan VP, Chief Financial Officer	Victoria Vasquez Executive Assistant & Board Liaison
Emily Wier VP, Chief Policy & Strategy Officer	Michelle Zaloom Controller	Leeanne Singleton Senior Resilience Officer
Daniel Enemark, Ph.D. VP, Chief Economist	Niloufar Nasrollahzadeh Research & Analytics Associate	Gloria Rivera Accounts Payable Administrator
Amanda Wagner VP, Chief Workforce Development Officer	Gabriela Gonzalez Economic Analyst	Tiffany Frost Operations Administrator & Compliance Specialist
Karen Boyd, Ph.D. Director of Research	Tedi Doychinova Network Engagement Officer	Fernanda Herrera Economist
Rachel Lozano Castro Director of Innovation	Josh Jacobsen Government Relations & Policy Officer	Gabriela Stone Economic Analyst
Jamal Russel Black Senior Officer, Analytics & Impact	Clint Smith Project Engineer	
Alicia L. Jurek, Ph.D. Economist	Arnold Cerdinio Accountant	

## Policy & Innovation Center Board of Directors

Ben Haddad BOARD CHAIR Principal, <i>California Strategies</i>
Dr. Constance Carroll VICE CHAIR, AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE President & CEO, <i>California Community College Baccalaureate Association</i>
Jim Howell BOARD TREASURER, FINANCE & ADMIN COMMITTEE CHAIR Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, <i>San Diego Foundation</i>
P. Kay Coleman IMMEDIATE PAST BOARD CHAIR & CURRENT VICE CHAIR President & CEO, <i>Del Mar Venture Group</i>
Lisa Cuestas CHAIR, AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE Chief Executive Officer, <i>Casa Familiar</i>
Mel Katz BOARD SECRETARY, GOVERNANCE & NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR Co-founder & Executive Officer, <i>Manpower Staffing Services of San Diego</i>
Ernest Rady BOARD MEMBER Chairman & CEO, <i>American Assets Trust</i>
Susan A. Davis BOARD MEMBER Former U.S. Congressperson
Michel Anderson VICE CHAIR, FINANCE & ADMIN COMMITTEE Principal, <i>Michel Anderson &amp; Associates</i>
Mark Stuart BOARD MEMBER President & CEO, <i>San Diego Foundation</i>
Susan Guinn, Esq. President & CEO, <i>Policy &amp; Innovation Center</i>

WORKING TOGETHER







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