

Meeting Date: December 10, 2024  
Agenda Item No. 41  
Distribution Date: December 9, 2024  
Batch No. 01

**From:** [Ramla Sahid](#)  
**To:** [Sleeper, Maggie](#); [Ramirez, Griselda \(BOS\)](#); [Ahmed, Ibrahim A; BOS, District1Scheduling](#); [Kulis, Michael](#); [Elledge, Meghan](#); [Vargas, Cipriano](#); [Wyatt, Donte T](#); [Henson, Eric](#); [Williams, Jenny](#); [Gretler, Darren M](#); [Baxamusa, Murtaza](#); [FGG, Public Comment](#)  
**Cc:** [Clint Carney](#); [Pedro Rios](#); [Meghan Zavala](#); [weallwegotsandiego@gmail.com](#); [Guerline Jozef](#); [Erika Pinheiro](#); [Paulina Reyes](#); [Lindsay Toczylowski](#); [Ymoat Maktitaoui](#); [Katia Hansen](#); [Arcela Nunez-Alvarez \(work\)](#); [Carmen Chavez \(cchavez@casacornelia.org\)](#); [Margaret Baker](#); [chair@sdaila.org](#); [jolyana jirjees](#); [Felicia Gomez](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Re: Item 41: Establish and Fund a Formal Regional Migrant Welcome Network  
**Date:** Monday, December 9, 2024 3:35:37 PM  
**Attachments:** [Item 41 Updated Letter and Memo for Migrant Welcome in SD.pdf](#)

---

Hello everyone,

Here is an updated letter with two new signers: ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties and Chaldean Community Council.

All the best,  
Ramla

On Fri, Dec 6, 2024 at 4:20 PM [REDACTED] > wrote:

Dear Chairwoman Vargas and Honorable Members of the Board,

Attached, please find a letter signed by 20 organizations urging decisive action to establish a formal Regional Migrant Welcome Network. This network is critical to addressing the ongoing and long-term needs of migrants and asylum seekers in our region through a collaborative, sustainable, and equitable approach.

We request your attention to key recommendations outlined in the letter, including:

1. Allocate \$2 Million to a County convened regional Regional Migrant Welcome Network that will work collaboratively to establish a formal and coordinated regional infrastructure and process for migrant welcome. A county-convened Regional Migrant Welcome Network would provide an effective and formal structure to engage impacted regional stakeholders such as the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), Taxicab administrations and others to facilitate onward travel for asylum seekers and address challenges as they arise.
2. Catalyst of San Diego and Imperial Counties will act as the fiscal recipient of funds and convene nonprofit partners.
3. Direct CAO or designee to participate in the Regional Migrant Welcome Network to provide coordination and champion role for infrastructure efforts and intergovernmental affairs.
4. Pass an initial plan with a date to review in 180 days.

Regardless of who is in office, changes in funding, administration, migrant numbers and border realities, San Diego requires a formal networked response that leverages County and nonprofit partner resources to respond ethically and humanely to address the immediate needs of vulnerable families and builds our regional capacity for future challenges.

Thank you for your commitment to fostering a compassionate and inclusive community. We look forward to your response and the opportunity to collaborate in advancing these urgent efforts.

All care,

Ramla

--

**Ramla Sahid**

Executive Director

**Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans — PANA**

[REDACTED] — [panasd.org](http://panasd.org)



Follow:



Contact:

Direct: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

--

**Ramla Sahid**

Executive Director

**Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans — PANA**

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] — [panasd.org](http://panasd.org)



Follow:



Contact:

Direct: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

December 9, 2024

San Diego County Board of Supervisors  
County Administration Center  
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335  
San Diego, CA 92101

**Subject:** Item: 41 – Urgent Action Needed to Create a Formal Regional Migrant Welcome Network

Dear Chairwoman Vargas and Honorable Members of the Board,

The undersigned 22 organizations represent the critical local infrastructure that our County relies on to address the urgent needs of migrants, serving as legal service providers, immigrants' rights advocates, policy organizations, and direct service providers. We write to you today with a renewed sense of urgency regarding the County's ongoing lack of progress in addressing the needs of migrants and asylum seekers in our region. Despite repeated calls for action over the past three years, the County remains far from where it needs to be in developing a robust, sustainable, and equitable response to this humanitarian challenge.

Many of us attended the County staff convened call on 12/4 where County staff shared their plan. We believe that creating a space for long-range thinking, planning, and coordination where all stakeholders take a shared responsibility for addressing this ongoing challenge would be more effective than a fragmented approach which neglects the broader need for sustained, region-wide solutions. **We strongly recommend the establishment of a County-convened task-force led by a regional facilitator from philanthropy and who is not a service provider. This approach would ensure the necessary flexibility and impartiality to effectively convene and coordinate stakeholders, fostering a collaborative and equitable regional response.**

As a border region, San Diego County will continue to receive individuals and families fleeing violence, persecution, climate crises, and systemic oppression. This reality demands a regional approach and networked response that is convened and facilitated by County leadership. We call on the County to meet this responsibility with dignity and compassion by implementing the following key actions:

1. **Hire a Director for the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs**

Hire a director to oversee and coordinate the County's immigrant and refugee affairs and provide the direction necessary for this position to convene partners and implement long-term solutions.

2. **Develop a County Convened Regional Migrant Welcome Network to Develop Welcoming Infrastructure**

Essential elements of welcoming infrastructure, as highlighted in prior public comments and letters, include housing, culturally and linguistically competent case management and legal services, transportation, and trauma-informed services. The County must center and collaboratively work with impacted communities and nonprofit partners incorporating lessons learned from organizations already working on the ground. It must also select and fund a facilitator that is not a service provider with the flexibility and impartiality to effectively convene and coordinate stakeholders.

**3. Dedicated Staff and Regular Meetings**

A sustainable welcoming infrastructure requires dedicated County staff and regularly scheduled convenings with local community-based organizations, philanthropic partners, and other stakeholders. These meetings must focus on building capacity, ensuring alignment with community needs, and fostering collaboration.

**4. Commit to a Timeline for Progress**

We request that the County bring back a detailed plan co-developed by the Regional Migrant Welcome Network within 6 months for further development, including clear steps to operationalize these recommendations.

The County must acknowledge that regardless of changes in federal funding, administration, or border dynamics, the humanitarian need persists. Failure to act risks perpetuating systemic inequities and undermining the health and safety of migrants and our broader community. For years, community members have asked for a regional solution. Yet, despite repeated advocacy, there has been little progress.

We must ask: What is the County's plan? What are staff doing to address this ongoing matter? Do you intend to prepare for the future, or is the assumption that there will be no more migrants or asylum seekers?

San Diego County has the opportunity to lead with bold vision and moral clarity by investing in our local capacity and communities. The County's commitment to equity, sustainability, and collaboration must extend to all who seek refuge here. We urge you to act decisively to ensure that our region remains a beacon of hope for those in need.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to your response and to working together to uphold our humanitarian obligation.

Sincerely,

Ramla Sahid, Executive Director  
Partnership for the Advancement of New  
Americans

Meghan Zavala, Data and Policy Analyst  
Al Otro Lado

Pedro Rios, Director, US-Mexico Border Program  
American Friends Service Committee

Krystle Johnson  
We All We Got San Diego Mutual Aid

Lindsay Toczylofski, President & CEO  
Immigrant Defenders Law Center

Aisha Osman, Director  
Somali Youth United

Katia Hansen,  
President & CEO, UURISE

Elizabeth Lopez, Executive Director  
Southern California Immigration Project

Flower Alvarez Lopez, Co-director  
Universidad Popular

Erin Tsurumoto Grassi, Associate Director  
Alliance San Diego

Michelle Celleri, Chair  
American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)  
San Diego

Ian M. Seruelo, Chair  
San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium (SDIRC)

Nao Kabashima, Executive Director  
Karen Organization of San Diego

Abdi Mohamoud-Executive Director  
Horn of Africa Community

Krystsina Schchelkunova, Executive Director  
Slavic Refugee and Immigrant Service Org

Dinora Reyna, Executive Director  
San Diego Organizing Project

Etleva Bejko, Executive Director  
Survivors of Torture

Carmen M. Chavez, Esq., Executive Director  
Casa Cornelia Law Center

Ramah Awad, Executive Director  
Majdal: Arab Community Center of San Diego

Margaret A. Baker, DrPH  
South Bay People Power

Jolyana Jirjees, Executive Director  
Chaldean Community Council

Felicia Gomez, Senior Policy Advocate  
ACLU Foundation of San Diego & Imperial  
Counties

## Memo on Migrant Welcome Infrastructure Planning in SD December 4, 2024

### Action:

1. Allocate \$2 Million to a County convened regional Regional Migrant Welcome Network that will work collaboratively to establish a formal and coordinated regional infrastructure and process for migrant welcome<sup>1</sup>.
2. Catalyst of San Diego and Imperial Counties will act as the fiscal recipient of funds<sup>2</sup> and convene nonprofit partners from January 2025 through 2026.
3. Direct CAO or designee to participate in the Regional Migrant Welcome Network to provide coordination and champion role for infrastructure efforts and intergovernmental affairs.
4. Pass an initial plan with a date to review in 180 days.

**Justification.** A coordinated and networked response convened by the county creates a streamlined and efficient system that can respond to fluctuating numbers of asylum seekers, builds capacity for effective County response to future challenges, and accomplishes the following:

1. Humanitarian obligation. San Diego County recognizes its legal and moral responsibility to provide compassionate care for individuals seeking asylum, consistent with international agreements such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980. By ensuring access to temporary shelter, health screenings, and transportation, San Diego County upholds its commitment to human dignity, equity, and inclusion, reflecting its values as a welcoming region dedicated to supporting those fleeing persecution and seeking a safe haven.
2. Economic efficiency and ability to draw down federal dollars. By leveraging federal resources, such as the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, San Diego County demonstrates its commitment to fiscal responsibility and community stewardship. Collaborating with non-profit organizations ensures cost-effective service delivery, reduces duplication of efforts, and maximizes resources, reflecting the County's values of innovation, equity, and partnership in addressing the needs of migrants and asylum seekers.
3. Strengthens regional collaboration and community partnerships. This collaborative approach creates a formal and accountable structure that will enable San Diego County to manage the influx of migrants and asylum seekers effectively, ensuring their immediate needs are met while facilitating their transition to longer-term accommodations or final destinations. A county-convened Regional Migrant Welcome Network would provide an effective structure to engage impacted regional stakeholders such as the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), Taxicab administrations and others to facilitate onward travel for asylum seekers and address challenges as they arise.
4. Builds capacity for future challenges. Regardless of who is in office, changes in funding, administration, migrant numbers and border realities, San Diego requires a formal and

---

<sup>1</sup> Infrastructure needed to include inter-agency communication and coordination, language/ cultural competencies, transportation and travel/airport resources, health/wellness screening, shelter, planning for long-term success, risk and contingency planning, financial sustainability, flexibility of model for adaptation, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Request full disbursement as advance for planning.

networked response that leverages County and nonprofit partner resources to respond ethically and humanely to address the immediate needs of vulnerable families.

5. Let's not let this opportunity to draw down critical federal funds pass when it can help us plan for infrastructure our border region has always needed, and will always need. If not now, when?

December 9, 2024

San Diego County Board of Supervisors  
County Administration Center  
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335  
San Diego, CA 92101

**Subject:** Item: 41 – Urgent Action Needed to Create a Formal Regional Migrant Welcome Network

Dear Chairwoman Vargas and Honorable Members of the Board,

The undersigned 22 organizations represent the critical local infrastructure that our County relies on to address the urgent needs of migrants, serving as legal service providers, immigrants' rights advocates, policy organizations, and direct service providers. We write to you today with a renewed sense of urgency regarding the County's ongoing lack of progress in addressing the needs of migrants and asylum seekers in our region. Despite repeated calls for action over the past three years, the County remains far from where it needs to be in developing a robust, sustainable, and equitable response to this humanitarian challenge.

Many of us attended the County staff convened call on 12/4 where County staff shared their plan. We believe that creating a space for long-range thinking, planning, and coordination where all stakeholders take a shared responsibility for addressing this ongoing challenge would be more effective than a fragmented approach which neglects the broader need for sustained, region-wide solutions. **We strongly recommend the establishment of a County-convened task-force led by a regional facilitator from philanthropy and who is not a service provider. This approach would ensure the necessary flexibility and impartiality to effectively convene and coordinate stakeholders, fostering a collaborative and equitable regional response.**

As a border region, San Diego County will continue to receive individuals and families fleeing violence, persecution, climate crises, and systemic oppression. This reality demands a regional approach and networked response that is convened and facilitated by County leadership. We call on the County to meet this responsibility with dignity and compassion by implementing the following key actions:

1. **Hire a Director for the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs**

Hire a director to oversee and coordinate the County's immigrant and refugee affairs and provide the direction necessary for this position to convene partners and implement long-term solutions.

2. **Develop a County Convened Regional Migrant Welcome Network to Develop Welcoming Infrastructure**

Essential elements of welcoming infrastructure, as highlighted in prior public comments and letters, include housing, culturally and linguistically competent case management and legal services, transportation, and trauma-informed services. The County must center and collaboratively work with impacted communities and nonprofit partners incorporating lessons learned from organizations already working on the ground. It must also select and fund a facilitator that is not a service provider with the flexibility and impartiality to effectively convene and coordinate stakeholders.



**3. Dedicated Staff and Regular Meetings**

A sustainable welcoming infrastructure requires dedicated County staff and regularly scheduled convenings with local community-based organizations, philanthropic partners, and other stakeholders. These meetings must focus on building capacity, ensuring alignment with community needs, and fostering collaboration.

**4. Commit to a Timeline for Progress**

We request that the County bring back a detailed plan co-developed by the Regional Migrant Welcome Network within 6 months for further development, including clear steps to operationalize these recommendations.

The County must acknowledge that regardless of changes in federal funding, administration, or border dynamics, the humanitarian need persists. Failure to act risks perpetuating systemic inequities and undermining the health and safety of migrants and our broader community. For years, community members have asked for a regional solution. Yet, despite repeated advocacy, there has been little progress.

We must ask: What is the County's plan? What are staff doing to address this ongoing matter? Do you intend to prepare for the future, or is the assumption that there will be no more migrants or asylum seekers?

San Diego County has the opportunity to lead with bold vision and moral clarity by investing in our local capacity and communities. The County's commitment to equity, sustainability, and collaboration must extend to all who seek refuge here. We urge you to act decisively to ensure that our region remains a beacon of hope for those in need.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to your response and to working together to uphold our humanitarian obligation.

Sincerely,

Ramla Sahid, Executive Director  
Partnership for the Advancement of New  
Americans

Meghan Zavala, Data and Policy Analyst  
Al Otro Lado

Pedro Rios, Director, US-Mexico Border Program  
American Friends Service Committee

Krystle Johnson  
We All We Got San Diego Mutual Aid

Lindsay Toczykowski, President & CEO  
Immigrant Defenders Law Center

Aisha Osman, Director  
Somali Youth United

Katia Hansen,  
President & CEO, UURISE

Elizabeth Lopez, Executive Director  
Southern California Immigration Project

Flower Alvarez Lopez, Co-director  
Universidad Popular

Erin Tsurumoto Grassi, Associate Director  
Alliance San Diego

Michelle Celleri, Chair  
American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)  
San Diego

Ian M. Seruelo, Chair  
San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium (SDIRC)

Nao Kabashima, Executive Director  
Karen Organization of San Diego

Abdi Mohamoud-Executive Director  
Horn of Africa Community

Krystsina Schchelkunova, Executive Director  
Slavic Refugee and Immigrant Service Org

Dinora Reyna, Executive Director  
San Diego Organizing Project

Etleva Bejko, Executive Director  
Survivors of Torture

Carmen M. Chavez, Esq., Executive Director  
Casa Cornelia Law Center

Ramah Awad, Executive Director  
Majdal: Arab Community Center of San Diego

Margaret A. Baker, DrPH  
South Bay People Power

Jolyana Jirjees, Executive Director  
Chaldean Community Council

Felicia Gomez, Senior Policy Advocate  
ACLU Foundation of San Diego & Imperial  
Counties

## **Memo on Migrant Welcome Infrastructure Planning in SD December 4, 2024**

### **Action:**

1. Allocate \$2 Million to a County convened regional Regional Migrant Welcome Network that will work collaboratively to establish a formal and coordinated regional infrastructure and process for migrant welcome<sup>1</sup>.
2. Catalyst of San Diego and Imperial Counties will act as the fiscal recipient of funds<sup>2</sup> and convene nonprofit partners from January 2025 through 2026.
3. Direct CAO or designee to participate in the Regional Migrant Welcome Network to provide coordination and champion role for infrastructure efforts and intergovernmental affairs.
4. Pass an initial plan with a date to review in 180 days.

**Justification.** A coordinated and networked response convened by the county creates a streamlined and efficient system that can respond to fluctuating numbers of asylum seekers, builds capacity for effective County response to future challenges, and accomplishes the following:

1. Humanitarian obligation. San Diego County recognizes its legal and moral responsibility to provide compassionate care for individuals seeking asylum, consistent with international agreements such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980. By ensuring access to temporary shelter, health screenings, and transportation, San Diego County upholds its commitment to human dignity, equity, and inclusion, reflecting its values as a welcoming region dedicated to supporting those fleeing persecution and seeking a safe haven.
2. Economic efficiency and ability to draw down federal dollars. By leveraging federal resources, such as the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, San Diego County demonstrates its commitment to fiscal responsibility and community stewardship. Collaborating with non-profit organizations ensures cost-effective service delivery, reduces duplication of efforts, and maximizes resources, reflecting the County's values of innovation, equity, and partnership in addressing the needs of migrants and asylum seekers.
3. Strengthens regional collaboration and community partnerships. This collaborative approach creates a formal and accountable structure that will enable San Diego County to manage the influx of migrants and asylum seekers effectively, ensuring their immediate needs are met while facilitating their transition to longer-term accommodations or final destinations. A county-convened Regional Migrant Welcome Network would provide an effective structure to engage impacted regional stakeholders such as the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), Taxicab administrations and others to facilitate onward travel for asylum seekers and address challenges as they arise.
4. Builds capacity for future challenges. Regardless of who is in office, changes in funding, administration, migrant numbers and border realities, San Diego requires a formal and

---

<sup>1</sup> Infrastructure needed to include inter-agency communication and coordination, language/ cultural competencies, transportation and travel/airport resources, health/wellness screening, shelter, planning for long-term success, risk and contingency planning, financial sustainability, flexibility of model for adaptation, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Request full disbursement as advance for planning.

networked response that leverages County and nonprofit partner resources to respond ethically and humanely to address the immediate needs of vulnerable families.

5. Let's not let this opportunity to draw down critical federal funds pass when it can help us plan for infrastructure our border region has always needed, and will always need. If not now, when?