

# San Diego Regional Energy Network

*2024 Annual Report*

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## Executive Summary

In 2024, the San Diego Regional Energy Network (SDREN) began its work to advance decarbonization, increase energy efficiency and support historically underserved communities throughout the San Diego region. After receiving regulatory approval from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) via Decision 24-08-003, SDREN focused on establishing its administrative infrastructure, hiring staff and laying the groundwork for programs that will serve businesses, public agencies, tribal communities, residents, local workforce, building professionals and more. These efforts, guided by SDREN's overarching aim to fill service gaps and complement existing utility offerings, included submission of regulatory filings, convening an advisory committee, and coordination with key regional partners, such as San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E).

With a budget of \$124 million allocated through 2027, SDREN is poised to deploy energy efficiency programs that are tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities in San Diego County. Among its primary goals are promoting environmental equity, catalyzing collaboration, and championing community-driven solutions. With 2024 being a year of planning and foundational activities, it set the stage for a robust expansion of services in 2025.

## About the San Diego Regional Energy Network

SDREN operates as a locally administered portfolio of programs addressing the varied needs of the public, residential, commercial and cross-cutting sectors across San Diego County. Administered by San Diego Community Power, in partnership with the County of San Diego (County), SDREN seeks to build confidence and trust in clean energy strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save on energy costs and grow the local workforce.

SDREN's approach is holistic: it draws on a deep understanding of local markets, leverages strong partnerships with community-based organizations, and engages in ongoing dialogue with other California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) stakeholders to ensure its portfolio remains dynamic and responsive to customer needs, emerging technologies and policy priorities.

## 2024: Approval and Preparing to Launch

In August 2024, the California Public Utilities Commission approved SDREN's 2024-2031 Business Plan and 2024-2027 Portfolio Application. SDREN is unique from existing RENs as it filed an off-cycle Motion in Rulemaking 13-11-005. Furthermore, SDREN's approved portfolio

application contained in the Motion set four-year targets, as opposed to annual targets that were established by other portfolio administrators. Further discussion on this distinction is contained in the first section of the Appendix and titled “Savings and Goals.”

Following approval, SDREN collaborated with SDG&E to finalize the *2024 Joint Cooperation Memo San Diego Regional Energy Network and San Diego Gas and Electric Company (JCM)* and *San Diego Regional Energy Network Energy Efficiency Programs and Budget Agreement for Years 2024-2027* (Program Agreement) to memorialize the terms of their programmatic and administrative relationship. SDREN also memorialized its relationship with the County of San Diego by developing the *Memorandum of Understanding for the San Diego Regional Energy Network* with the County in 2024, with the County Board of Supervisors approving said MOU in December 2024. In quarter four of 2024, SDREN completed its hiring of program managers, a marketing manager, and a finance manager, assembling a dedicated team to guide day-to-day administration. SDREN staff wrote implementation plans, which lay the groundwork for upcoming services. Additionally, staff drafted and issued Requests for Proposals in early 2025 for administrative, regulatory, compliance, cross-cutting, residential, and public sector program support. Staff also developed in-house budgeting, procurement, timekeeping and invoicing standard operating procedures (SOPs).

In addition to building its internal structure, SDREN planned for the expansion of its Advisory Committee beyond its inaugural membership. The Inaugural Advisory Committee consisted of government agencies, environmental non-government organizations and other community organizations with a county-wide footprint<sup>1</sup>. The Inaugural Advisory Committee advised on the structure, function and operation of the future, expanded SDREN Advisory Committee.

Other important stakeholder meetings also took place — monthly planning and coordination meetings with SDG&E, and monthly oversight and administration meetings with the County of San Diego. As a new portfolio administrator, SDREN engaged in other all-portfolio administrators and REN activities, including the Annual California Climate and Energy (CCEC) Forum planning meetings, CalREN meetings, California Energy Efficiency Coordinating Committee (CAEECC) meetings, monthly portfolio administrators calls, and joint portfolio administrators working groups charged with implementing CPUC decision directives and more. Additionally, SDREN laid the foundation for its branding, marketing and communications strategy. Ongoing coordination with all of these stakeholders has helped align program

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<sup>1</sup> The membership specifically included MAAC, Climate Action Campaign, San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego Green Building Council, Clean Energy Alliance, San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative, Port of San Diego, San Diego Building Trades, and San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce.

strategies with the region's and state's diverse needs, ensuring that forthcoming initiatives are both cohesive and impactful.

## 2024 Overview

Following its August approval, SDREN laid the groundwork for its comprehensive energy efficiency and clean energy initiatives, preparing to transition into the implementation phase in late 2025. This groundwork consisted of refinement of program strategies, hiring specialized staff and continued engagement with stakeholders to ensure SDREN offerings meet regional needs. The portfolio, which spans across four segments—resource acquisition (RA), market support, equity, and codes and standards (C&S)—includes a diverse range of programs designed to serve both residential and commercial sectors. Key residential programs, such as the Single-Family and Multifamily Programs, focus on reducing energy burdens and improving living environments, particularly for renters and hard-to-reach residents. In the commercial sector, programs like the Small & Medium Business Energy Coach, Efficient Refrigeration, and Market Access Program address the unique challenges faced by small and underserved businesses, aiming to increase energy efficiency and reduce operational costs.

SDREN also prepared for significant workforce development efforts by developing its Workforce Training and Capacity Building and Energy Pathways Programs, which target skill development in electrification, renewable integration and energy efficiency. Furthermore, the Climate Resilience Leadership and Tribal Engagement Programs were developed to support public agencies and Tribal communities in achieving energy sustainability and resilience. SDREN's Codes and Standards program will also provide support to the public sector, in addition to other building professionals.

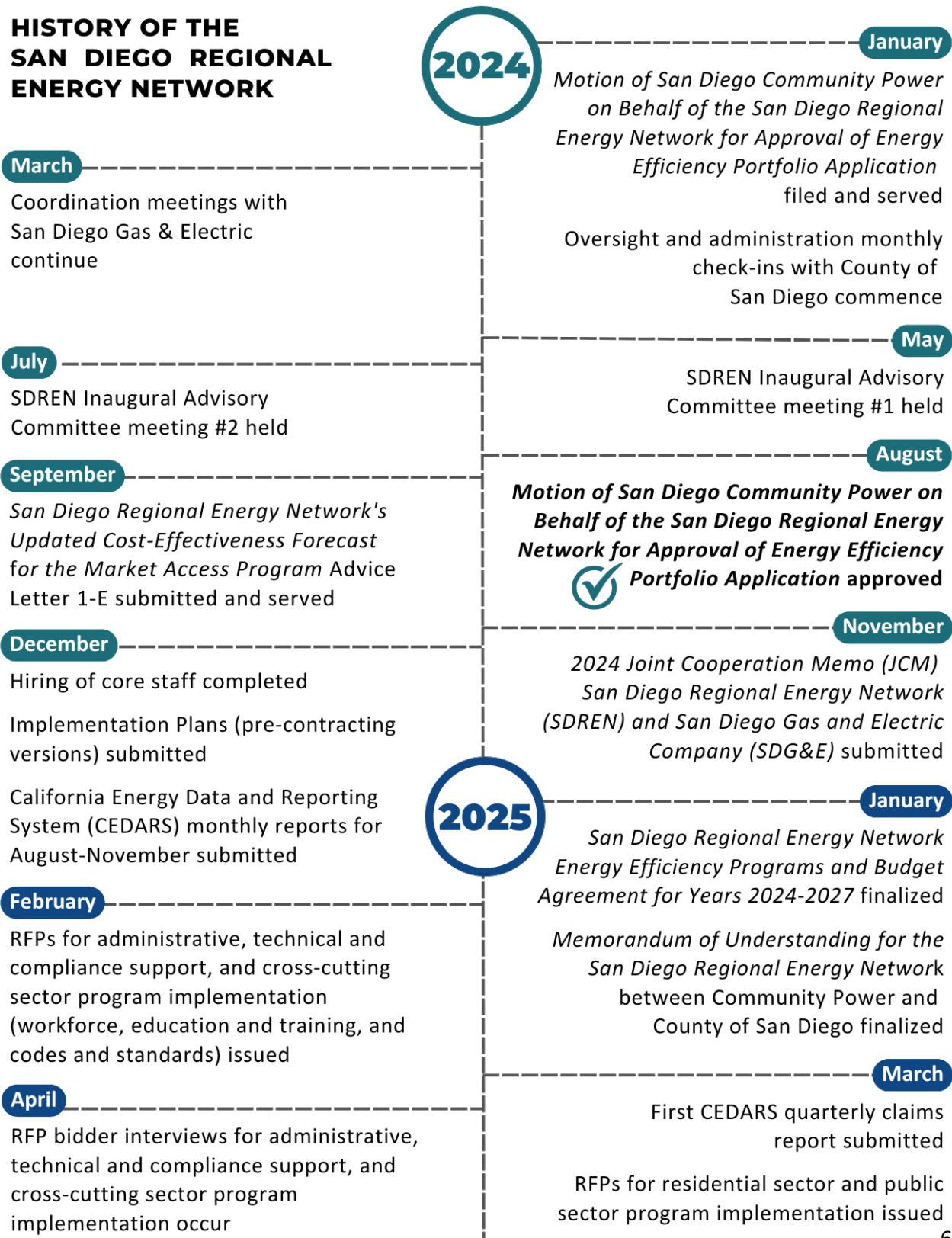
Throughout the year, SDREN monitored and contributed to efforts such as implementation of Ordering Paragraph 11 (OP 11) and OP 25 that will influence updates to its metrics and indicators and help ensure portfolio administrators' program effectiveness and compliance with state energy goals. Additional details on these efforts can be found in the Appendix.

These foundational activities set the stage for tangible results in the coming years. As SDREN's programs launch in 2025, and expand through 2027, they are poised to make significant contributions to energy savings, greenhouse gas reduction and economic growth, driving regional decarbonization through community-driven solutions.



# KEY MILESTONES

## HISTORY OF THE SAN DIEGO REGIONAL ENERGY NETWORK



# Programs

SDREN's portfolio includes ten programs across four segments and four sectors. The segments include resource acquisition, market support, equity, and codes and standards. The sectors include commercial, cross-cutting (workforce, education and training, and codes and standards), public and residential. Principles of environmental and social justice are incorporated across all programs, regardless of segmentation.

## Residential Programs

There are two equity segment residential sector programs, one serving single-family properties and a second serving multifamily properties. The Single-Family Program will assist owners and renters with energy education, energy efficiency starter kits, direct installations, and stacked rebates provided by a concierge-style service designed to cut single-family renter or owner energy costs. The Multifamily Program will equip building owners, managers and tenants with no-cost technical assistance, direct installation and measure incentives, energy education, and energy efficiency starter kits intended to reduce utility bills and improve living environments, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

### Single-Family Program

SDREN'S Single-Family Program will create a home energy advisor for renters and homeowners that will serve as a personal concierge-style service to connect them to energy efficiency program information, no-cost technical assistance and direct installations, and identify stackable incentive or financing opportunities that can reduce out-of-pocket project costs. Single-family and mobile homes will be eligible for program services.

The home energy advisor technical assistance includes recommending energy efficiency measures, identifying eligible funding resources, and acting as a direct contact for participating residents and program service providers. This includes coordination with direct installation contractors and other program implementers to ensure successful completion of scopes of work, stacking of eligible incentives to maximize savings, and customer satisfaction.

Complementary programs with stacking opportunities aimed at reducing income-qualified resident utility bills, include the Low-Income Weatherization Program (LIWP), Energy Savings Assistance (ESA), TECH Clean California, and SDG&E's upcoming Customer Home Electrification Readiness Program (CHERP) launching in 2025. When these program opportunities are combined through the expertise of home energy advisors, the program's collective benefits can include:

- Increasing project scope (e.g., more measures at the same time and/or homes can now meet eligibility requirements for other energy efficiency, Integrated Demand Side Management (IDSM), demand response (DR), or renewable energy programs.
- Reducing unplanned equipment failures, expensive emergency repair costs, and wait times for renters.
- Reducing out-of-pocket project costs for owners and contractors.
- Reducing energy bills for residents from improved heating and cooling systems, water heating, envelope and appliance efficiency.

A core objective of the program is to meaningfully engage with the renter community, a group historically left out of traditional energy programs. To effectively serve this diverse community, a component of SDREN's program delivery model will include owner and property manager education services that advocate on behalf of renters for access to available and comprehensive energy efficiency upgrades.

As part of these services, home energy advisors will provide educational opportunities and energy efficiency starter kits that showcase the benefits of energy conservation, energy efficiency, electrification, clean and renewable energy, DR program participation, and low-global warming potential (GWP) refrigerants. The program's home energy advisors will offer expertise and resources to meet the various needs of single-family and mobile home renters, homeowners and property managers.

Between Q4 2024 and Q1 2025, SDREN staff updated previous findings that SDREN gathered during business plan development. Staff studied the latest IOU and REN residential energy efficiency and equity programs by reviewing documents published on CAEECC, the California Energy Reporting and Data System (CEDARS), and the California Measurement Advisory Council (CALMAC) such as implementation plans, program manuals and evaluation studies, in addition to regional market research conducted by San Diego Community Power.<sup>2</sup>

Staff examined other programs to inform SDREN's Single-Family program implementation plan and solicitation included BayREN's Single-Family and 3C-REN's Single-Family program, SDG&E's Single-Family Residential Energy Solutions (RES) program, SDG&E's Single-Family Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) program, and Southern California Edison's (SCE) Residential Energy Advisor Resource and Non-Resource programs. Notable portfolio administrator and program evaluation reports and resources that supported the refinement of SDREN's Single-Family program approach to implementation is listed in Useful Resources section at the end of the report.

SDREN staff also attended relevant meetings, events and webinars to engage with other portfolio administrators, glean program design best practices, identify existing gaps in the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://sdcommunitypower.org/community-power-plan-cpp/>



market, and inform stakeholders about program launch. A few examples include quarterly Low-Income Oversight Board meetings, monthly Disadvantaged Communities Advisory Group meetings, California Efficiency + Demand Management Council's (CEDMC) Evaluation, Measurement and Verification (EM&V) Forum: The Role of EM&V in Ensuring Affordability (Feb. 5, 2025), as well as various portfolio administrator implementation plan webinars for residential programs launching in 2025.

During this time, and informed by the above data gathering, SDREN also established the initial program measure list by selecting electronic Technical Reference Manual (eTRM) measure packages that apply to single-family building types.

## **Multifamily Program**

SDREN's Multifamily Program will address facility upgrades that impact both common area measures (CAM) and renter-specific in-unit utility bill savings. The program's design and delivery services will be flexible and able to accommodate the following pathways: property owners and managers, owner-occupied units, and renter-occupied units.

For property owners and managers, the program will provide customizable engagement strategies tailored to the decision-maker for property upgrades. The program will promote benefits such as energy bill savings, operating cost savings, return on investment and increased property value, as well as non-energy benefits such as improved indoor air quality from the removal of gas-fired equipment and comfort from more reliable building systems or in-unit appliances. The program will also offer technical assistance to property owners and managers in the form of energy advisors who provide support throughout the project lifecycle. This personal concierge-style service will engage property owners and managers in energy upgrade decisions and ensure that projects achieve their intended energy cost savings and benefits.

A core objective of the program is to meaningfully engage with the renter community, a group historically left out of traditional energy programs. Similar to SDREN's Single-Family Program, this program will provide tenants and property owners/managers with energy efficiency starter kits and educational opportunities to create awareness of the benefits of energy conservation, energy efficiency, electrification, clean and renewable energy, DR program participation, and low-global warming potential (GWP) refrigerants. Educational topics may include energy efficiency technologies, technologies eligible for incentives, case studies of similar project size, and financing and policy-related items.

The program aims to improve multifamily facilities while providing educational resources to the building's decision makers to advocate for property investments that will benefit residents' health, comfort, safety and energy bills. As such, the program will partner or collaborate with

community-based organizations and trusted community partners with renter advocacy subject matter expertise to create awareness of existing anti-displacement policies that help inform property owners of applicable requirements.

SDREN's focus is to deliver effective education, technical assistance and upgrades designed to reduce residents' energy consumption and lower their energy bills in the near- and long-term. Technical assistance includes stacking complementary programs aimed at reducing resident utility bills, such as the ones listed under the *Single-Family Program* section above (LIWP, ESA, TECH), and SDG&E's upcoming Customer Home Electrification Readiness Program (CHERP) launching in 2025. When these program opportunities are combined through the expertise of implementation teams, the program's collective benefits are the same as those listed in the *Single-Family Program* section above.

Between Q4 2024 and Q1 2025, SDREN staff reviewed the latest IOU and REN energy efficiency programs to update previous portfolio application findings by indagating documents published on CAEECC, CEDARS and CALMAC such as implementation plans, program manuals and evaluation studies, in addition to regional market research conducted by San Diego Community Power.

Other programs examined to inform SDREN's Multifamily Program implementation plan and solicitation included SDG&E's Multifamily Residential Zero Net Energy Transformation (RZNET), SDG&E's Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) Multifamily Energy Savings program, as well as SoCalREN's, BayREN's and 3C-REN's multifamily programs. Notable portfolio administrator and program evaluation reports and resources that supported the refinement of SDREN's Multifamily Program approach to implementation are listed in the *Useful Resources* section at the end of this report.

SDREN staff attended events and webinars to engage with other portfolio administrators, glean program design best practices, identify existing gaps in the market, and inform stakeholders that programs would be launching in 2025. Events relevant to the Multifamily Program include the Multifamily Energy Efficiency and Electrification Program Opportunities (Nov. 14, 2024), CEDMC's EM&V Forum: the Role of EM&V in Ensuring Affordability (Feb. 5, 2025), as well as various portfolio administrator implementation plan webinars for residential programs launching in 2025.

During this time, and informed by the above data gathering, SDREN also established the initial program measure list by selecting eTRM measure packages that apply to multifamily building types.

## Commercial Programs

Two equity segment programs fall under the commercial sector, targeting small and medium businesses, along with one resource acquisition program serving hard-to-reach and underserved commercial customers. Small & Medium Business Energy Coach will offer personalized guidance to businesses on efficiency solutions, helping them navigate available incentives. Efficient Refrigeration will deliver no-cost refrigeration upgrades to small grocers and food service businesses, boosting both energy savings and fresh food accessibility. Finally, the Market Access Program — the sole resource acquisition offering in the SDREN portfolio — will employ a performance-based incentive model, encouraging energy aggregators to achieve peak-demand reductions.

### **Small & Medium Business Energy Coach**

Small & Medium Business Energy Coach will raise awareness and increase the adoption of energy efficiency practices and measures among businesses. The program will connect a dedicated energy coach to each participating business to educate them on the value of energy efficiency and IDSM, provide no-cost technical assistance including facility assessments and benchmarking, offer low- to no-cost measures and contractor support through direct installation, and support access to other energy efficiency funding and financing.

Through coordination with the Green Business Network, program participants may receive public recognition via Green Business Certification for their energy efficiency upgrades, encouraging continued investment in energy efficiency and an opportunity for business owners to share the actions taken with customers and clients. The program may leverage partnerships with community-based organizations to provide resources for program participants and provide education and training for staff.

The diversity of business owners in San Diego County is part of what makes San Diego America's Finest City, and also necessitates a customized approach to program design and implementation that accounts for:

- Language barriers
- Culturally specific business practices
- Complexity of program eligibility or participation requirements
- Funding limitations for expensive capital upgrades
- Trust of the organizations providing funding in exchange for customer information

Upon SDREN's approval in August 2024, staff studied the latest IOU and other REN energy efficiency programs to update previous findings by reviewing documents published on CAEECC, CEDARS and CALMAC such as implementation plans, program manuals and evaluation studies.

Other programs examined to inform SDREN's Small & Medium Business Energy Coach implementation plan and solicitation included the Simplified Savings Program for Small Businesses administered by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), SCE and SDG&E, and the BayREN Small Business Program. Notable portfolio administrator and program evaluation reports and resources that supported the refinement of SDREN's Small & Medium Business Energy Coach program approach to implementation are listed in the *Useful Resources* section at the end of the report.

SDREN staff also attended relevant meetings, events and webinars to engage with other portfolio administrators, glean program design best practices, identify existing gaps in the market, and inform stakeholders that programs would be launching in 2025. A few examples include the Annual IOU Income-Qualified & Clean Energy Webinar (Nov. 14, 2024) and various portfolio administrator implementation plan webinars for commercial programs launching in 2025. Staff also met with the California Restaurants Association to discuss energy bill reduction needs of their member businesses and how energy efficiency programs can help them with improvements to address these cost increases, particularly due to their often-narrow profit margins.

During this time, and informed by the above data gathering, SDREN also established the initial program measure list by selecting eTRM measure packages that apply to commercial building types. All eligible eTRM food service measures were selected as well.

## Efficient Refrigeration

Efficient Refrigeration is designed to meet the diverse energy efficiency needs of various business types, with a focus on hard-to-reach and underserved commercial customers. The program is equity focused and its target audience consists of micro, small and medium sized businesses. Efficient Refrigeration will have a particular focus on local small grocery stores, corner stores and small businesses that sell food products. The program alleviates the cost barrier to participate and realizes bill savings for participants by using a direct installation approach and installing high-efficiency refrigeration equipment with low-Global Warming Potential (GWP) refrigerants.

Efficient Refrigeration will encourage stores to sell fresh, healthy and affordable food products by providing high efficiency refrigerators and freezers. This program will also develop in-language outreach materials to improve the education and communication to staff at participating businesses and the local community. The program will deploy in-person outreach staff to reach businesses and share about program opportunities and objectives. This program will leverage local contractors to stimulate the local economy and support local workforce development.

Past programs offering support with refrigeration equipment have focused on larger customers, leaving smaller customers without any refrigeration offerings. Based on the recent EM&V study conducted by SoCalREN, energy burden is a concern for this sub-market. Corner stores in particular feel burdened by high electricity bills associated with refrigeration.<sup>3</sup> Recent inflation and supply chain issues have also impacted small business owners, with 85% of small business owners indicating they are concerned about inflation.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, when considering this sub-market, it is beneficial to consider the health-energy nexus related to food access. Several communities within San Diego County face poverty and food insecurity.<sup>5</sup> In 2019, 77 census tracts had a poverty rate of 50% or more. Across San Diego County, the percentage of the population experiencing food insecurity by region is 26.9% (central), 46.6% (east), 38.5% (north central), 39.8% (north coastal), 30.9% (north inland) and 27.7% (south). These communities lack regular access to fresh, healthy foods. The program seeks to meet customer needs by offering personalized in-person, in-language and culturally sensitive outreach and gap filling program services.

Upon SDREN's approval in August 2024, SDREN staff gathered additional information to glean best practices to prepare for program launch by assessing similar programs offered by other RENs and portfolio administrators, including SoCalREN's previous Healthy Stores Refrigeration Program, SoCalREN's forthcoming Food Desert Energy Efficiency Equity Program and BayREN's Refrigerant Replacement Program. Additionally, San Diego Community Power was awarded funding through the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program to develop and launch an Efficient Refrigeration pilot. Launched in February 2025, the Pilot provides energy-efficient refrigerators and freezers, along with additional technical assistance, to corner stores and small businesses at no cost.

Lessons learned and best practices from these initiatives will be leveraged in the design and implementation of the SDREN Efficient Refrigeration program. SDREN staff also attended relevant meetings, events and webinars to engage with other portfolio administrators, glean program design best practices, identify existing gaps in the market, and inform stakeholders that programs will be launching in 2025.

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<sup>3</sup> SoCalREN Food Desert Energy Efficiency Equity Program Market Study, pg. 14.

<sup>4</sup> "Special Report on Inflation and Supply Chain Shocks on Small Business," U.S. Chamber of Commerce, March 3, 2022, <https://www.uschamber.com/small-business/special-report-on-inflation-and-supply-chain-shocks-on-small-business>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/CHS/Poverty%201%20Areas%20of%20Concentrated%20Poverty%20and%20Food%20Insecurity%20Brief.pdf>

## Market Access Program

SDREN's Market Access Program will provide performance-based incentives to project developers (aggregators) who deliver projects that realize peak demand reductions and verified energy savings through post-completion measurement and verification. The program will utilize a population Net Metered Energy Consumption (NMEC) methodology to verify savings from each project and pay incentives based on the total system benefit (TSB) achieved. The methodology is intended to allow for measure flexibility and encourage installations that deliver maximum grid and customer benefits.

The program will develop a suite of tools for aggregators to use to identify high opportunity projects at small & medium commercial facilities with summer and year-round peak demand reduction potential, estimate energy savings, and secure incentives. Locally trusted implementers will lead customer engagement to high opportunity businesses, with a focus on hard-to-reach and underserved businesses.

Aggregators will develop project opportunities (i.e., scopes of work) with a network of businesses and high-priority building owners, offering customizable services necessary to facilitate projects from enrollment-to-completion. The program will identify funding or financing opportunities available to offset the cost of the project, including program incentives in addition to other stackable incentives, cash or tax rebates, or grant opportunities. This customized support will provide small & medium businesses with the resources and capacity to complete energy efficiency and fuel substitution upgrades. Since incentives will be delivered to aggregators based on NMEC-verified benefits to the grid, aggregators are encouraged to ensure projects realize or exceed anticipated energy savings.

Upon SDREN's approval in August 2024, SDREN staff updated previous findings SDREN gathered during business plan development. SDREN staff studied the latest IOU and REN energy efficiency programs by indagating documents published on CAEECC, CEDARS and CALMAC such as implementation plans, program manuals and evaluation studies. Other programs examined to inform SDREN's Market Access Program implementation plan and solicitation included the SDG&E's Summer Reliability Market Access Program and Commercial Direct Install Business Energy Solutions (BES) Program, in addition to the CPUC's NMEC Rulebook and programs that use a population NMEC methodology. Notable portfolio administrator and program evaluation reports and resources that supported the refinement of SDREN's Market Access Program approach to implementation is listed in the *Useful Resources* section at the end of the report.

During this time, and informed by the above data gathering, SDREN also established the initial program measure list by selecting eTRM measure packages that apply to commercial building types. The Market Access Program is a measure flexible program and SDREN expects the to-be-



selected implementer and aggregators to recommend additional eTRM measures that are eligible for the target building and customer type.

## Public Programs

There is one market support program within the public sector, which will support public agencies, and one equity segment public sector program, which will support Tribal communities. The Climate Resilience Leadership program will help public agencies obtain technical assistance, financing and guidance to implement energy efficiency measures. The Tribal Engagement program will provide culturally responsive outreach and technical support for 18 Tribal governments seeking improved energy infrastructure and sovereignty.

### Climate Resilience Leadership

Climate Resilience Leadership is designed to overcome barriers hindering public agencies from implementing energy efficiency projects. It will promote IDSM technologies and programs, facilitating deeper decarbonization to help agencies meet their climate goals. Dedicated project managers will act as an extension of agency staff to provide customized and unbiased start-to-finish guidance and to coordinate delivery of technical services to identify and implement energy efficiency projects. This personalized approach will ensure successful project execution.

The program provides direct installation of energy efficiency measures to fill programmatic gaps and address common challenges related to funding and procurement. The program will include providing targeted and specialized direct install services to K-12 schools, addressing the gap in services available to this market sub-sector. Project managers will also coordinate and facilitate access to third-party incentive programs. Climate Resilience Leadership will also monitor emerging funding opportunities for public agencies and provide support for all relevant incentive and financing applications, relieving public agencies of major administrative burdens.

In addition to the suite of project delivery services, the program tackles knowledge and capacity barriers by offering educational resources on Distributed Energy Resources (DER) and DR programs through webinars, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and case studies. Small grants will also be available to fund public agency staff attendance at decarbonization or DER-related conferences and events. These resources empower agency staff to become champions for decarbonization internally while showcasing climate leadership to the broader community.

In late 2024, following its approval, SDREN continued strengthening its network and relationship building with public agencies within San Diego County. Building on initial stakeholder engagement conducted during the drafting of the Business Plan, SDREN participated in the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative's (SDRCC) monthly Regional Energy and Resilience

working group. At this venue, SDREN provided public agencies and energy efficiency stakeholders with updates on SDREN and were able to capture questions and feedback as well as hear important updates and initiatives of participating members to inform program design.

In addition to regular attendance at the Regional Energy and Resilience Working group, SDREN was present at several regional events that convened the public agency community. This includes the California Climate and Energy Collaborative (CCEC) forum and San Diego Climate Nexus in 2024, and SANDAG's Regional Climate Table Workshop and US Green Building Council's Local Government Leadership Summit in Q1 2025. All events contained interactive formats that provided opportunities to network and elevated the discussion of public agencies' energy needs, providing valuable insight to the design and offerings of SDREN's portfolio. In these encounters, local governments repeatedly expressed enthusiasm for SDREN's programs.

Regular meetings with the County have further provided SDREN with insight to public agency initiatives, resources and priorities. In addition to this, SDREN staff updated previous findings that SDREN gathered during business plan development; this involved investigating case studies of other successful public agency programs, which in turn informed SDREN's solicitations and implementation plans. The SDREN team is actively monitoring the status of funding opportunities available to public agencies, both awarded and potential, amidst the changes in federal programs.

### **Tribal Engagement Program**

The Tribal Engagement program will create a pathway for Tribal communities in the San Diego region to develop, propose and implement energy-related initiatives to address their unique needs and contribute to sustainability, resilience and economic development within Tribal communities.

San Diego County has 18 Tribal reservations, represented by 17 Tribal governments — more than any other County in the country. Tribal communities are a historically underserved, and there are currently no Tribal-specific energy efficiency programs offered in San Diego County.

SDREN's program is designed to provide custom outreach and services to bolster access to resources that support Tribal communities' commitment to environmental stewardship. Program resources will include tailored no-cost technical assistance, including a dedicated technical advisor to support initiative applications and champion their success from idea inception to successful execution. This collaborative approach will build capacity in Tribal communities to take ownership of initiatives and exercise self-determination in pursuing decarbonization and sustainable energy practices.

Through the Tribal Engagement program, Tribal communities (with technical assistance provided) can submit applications that promote sustainable energy practices within Tribal lands and enhance community resilience by increasing capacity to withstand energy-related emergencies and challenges. The third-party program implementer will develop high-level blueprints of program design options for Tribal communities to follow and assist in identifying funding to implement. The program is designed to balance guidance and support with inherent flexibility to welcome and encourage innovative ideas, giving Tribal communities the ability to propose unique solutions that align with their goals.

Initiative applications will be evaluated based on their alignment with Tribal community needs, sustainability, resilience and economic development goals. Approved initiatives will receive customized services and resources to support implementation. These services may include technical expertise, project funding and partnerships. The Tribal Engagement program will coordinate closely with SDREN's whole portfolio, maximizing the opportunity to leverage technical services from other programs such as Climate Resilience Leadership to ensure that there are complimentary and not duplicative efforts.

In 2024, SDREN continued building its networks of local Tribal communities, Tribal liaisons and others who work on Tribal energy issues in San Diego and the Southern California region at-large. Building off initial conversations with the County of San Diego's Tribal Liaison, SDREN staff conducted additional information gathering germane to San Diego's 18 Tribal reservations. Additionally, SDREN staff traveled to San Pasqual reservation for an in-person meeting with staff from the La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians and the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians. Tribal staff shared their energy and environmental goals, challenges and priorities, and SDREN presented an overview of upcoming programs. At this meeting, SDREN was invited to attend the Intertribal Earth Day in April 2025.

Shortly after, SDREN presented a brief overview of programs to the Tribal Energy and Climate Collaborative (TECC) to gather high level feedback from additional Tribal Staff. Fourteen out of 17 of San Diego's Tribal governments are TECC partners. In March 2025, SDREN staff traveled to attend the California Energy Commission (CEC) Tribal Clean Energy Summit. Multiple San Diego Tribes represented their perspectives on panels, and the CEC discussed their Tribal initiatives that could complement SDREN's program. Also in March, staff attended the Catalyst Convening presented by the CA Strategic Growth Council and CA Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation held on the Viejas Reservation.

Additionally, SDREN plans to include Tribal representation on the SDREN Advisory Committee and/or otherwise determining what type of feedback approach would best work for Tribal

communities to maintain an ongoing conversation about portfolio performance. Beyond relationship-building, SDREN staff conducted additional indagation to update previous findings that SDREN gathered during business plan development to become familiar with case studies of other successful tribal technical assistance programs which in turn informed SDREN's solicitations and implementation plans. The team is actively monitoring the status of available Tribal funds, both awarded and potential, amidst the changes in federal programs.

## **Workforce Education & Training Programs**

There are two market support workforce education & training programs, which will target high school students and adults supporting high road clean energy career pathways and skill development. The Workforce Training & Capacity Building program will focus on strengthening workforce skills in electrification, renewable integration and energy efficiency, benefiting both new entrants and incumbent workers. Energy Pathways will introduce high school students to energy careers, offering no-cost career technical education, mentorship and direct ties to local employers.

### **Workforce Training and Capacity Building Program**

SDREN recognizes that the building sector is undergoing a fundamental transformation towards electrification and decarbonization. These changes will have a profound impact on the job market, influencing both workforce requirements and workforce development. The transition toward decarbonized buildings, coupled with substantial investments in a clean energy economy (e.g. the Equitable Building Decarbonization Program), will require a skilled workforce. Studies have forecasted a significant shortage of workers with essential skills needed to support the transition to a clean energy future. In response to these needs, SDREN is committed to investing in workforce development through its programs, ensuring that San Diegans can participate in the industry or acquire the new skills needed to support the transition to a clean energy economy.

The Workforce Training & Capacity Building program will enhance the clean energy workforce in the San Diego region, focusing on skill development for individuals interested in entering the green workforce and incumbent workers. The program will increase skills within the existing workforce, improve employee retention rates, foster participant career advancement and provide opportunities for networking through industry events, professional organizations and shadowing with seasoned professionals in the field.

Participants will receive career coaching and mentorship focused on resume development, interviewing skills, transferable skills, financial literacy and networking. Additionally, the program will collaborate with stakeholders within clean energy, electrification and

decarbonization workforce sectors, including CBOs, public agencies, program implementers, contractors and labor unions. Partnerships will boost growth opportunities for incumbent workers, increase retention rates for employers and enhance employer workforce training. By working with participating employers, SDREN will be a resource to support employees' ongoing training and professional development.

In 2024, SDREN continued its indagation and coordination with regional workforce initiatives to prepare for the launch of the Workforce Training and Capacity Building program. SDREN leveraged expertise with San Diego Community Power's programs and public affairs teams who have engaged workforce education & training stakeholders in the region. This includes early coordination with the Equitable Building Decarbonization program, which will be implemented in San Diego County and involves a significant workforce component.

Additionally, SDREN held meetings with implementers of regional workforce programs like the SD LEARN, which provides no cost energy efficiency and electrification courses, and the California Market Transformation Administrator (CalMTA) program. SDREN continues to monitor employment needs and trends to help facilitate both curriculum and internship opportunities through the program.

## Energy Pathways

The primary goal of SDREN's Energy Pathways program is to increase awareness and build accessible pathways for youth to enter the green workforce, build long-lasting careers and form a robust professional network. Energy Pathways will provide high school students in the San Diego region with a standards-aligned curriculum focused on career technical education. Successful program implementation will build a bridge connecting participants to local employers within the energy, electrification and decarbonization sectors. Participants will have access to a diverse network of mentors and coaches to provide one-on-one guidance and educate them on the value of energy/STEAM career pathways.

This personalized mentorship will focus on navigating the job market, building a network, resume development, interviewing skills, financial education and industry-specific knowledge based on their desired field of employment. Partnerships with local higher education institutions will enable eligible students to enroll in college-level courses that boost their industry knowledge and technical skills to prepare them for the workforce at no cost. Students facing monetary barriers will be connected to additional resources, such as financial aid, through college partners, private scholarships, stipends for opportunity youth and paid internships.

This program will contribute to the significant opportunity to meet demand for energy jobs that support statewide goals as the younger population (28% under 18) grows.<sup>6</sup> The County of San Diego’s Regional Decarbonization Framework projects overall net job creation due to decarbonization initiatives.<sup>7</sup> However, creating jobs is not enough to prevent negative impacts on workers – ensuring the creation of high-road jobs is key.

High road jobs are defined by both job quality (e.g., family-supporting wages and benefits, long-term career pathways and worker protections) and job access (e.g., access and entry-points to good jobs for local workers and training to support advancement). High road jobs are a win-win approach for employers and communities as employers gain access to skilled and committed workers, and community members gain access to high road career paths. Investments in growing, diversifying and upskilling the workforce can positively affect returns on climate mitigation efforts. This program will support the development of well-trained workers who will be key to delivering emissions reductions and achieving climate targets.

SDREN 2024 efforts related to indagation and coordination for the Energy Pathways program mirror those completed for the Workforce Training and Capacity Building program.

## Codes & Standards Program

SDREN’s Codes and Standards (C&S) program aims to enhance compliance with existing codes and standards, assist local governments in developing ordinances that surpass statewide minimum requirements and maximize participant benefits through close coordination with other programs. By complementing existing statewide and regional investor-owned utility programs and addressing service gaps for local governments, the program accelerates local governments’ ability to demonstrate regional leadership in energy efficiency. It engages and supports local government permitting agencies to improve energy code compliance and adopt advanced energy codes, standards and policies. Consequently, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions are significantly reduced.

Energy codes and technologies in new and existing buildings are growing more complex as the grid modernizes and trends towards electrification. SDREN’s program will provide tailored support to help agencies navigate the intricate energy code compliance landscape effectively.

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<sup>6</sup> Carol Zabin, Maggie Jones, and Betony Jones, June 13, 2022, “Putting San Diego County on the High Road: Climate Workforce Recommendations for 2030 and 2050,” Inclusive Economics, Oakland, CA

<sup>7</sup> McCord, Gordon C., Elise Hanson, Murtaza H. Baxamusa, Emily Leslie, Joseph Bettles, Ryan A. Jones, Katy Cole, Chelsea Richer, Eleanor Hunts, Philip Eash-Gates, Jason Frost, Shelley Kwok, Jackie Litynski, Kenji Takahashi, Asa Hopkins, Robert Pollin, Jeannette Wicks-Lim, Shouvik Chakraborty, Gregor Semieniuk, David G. Victor, Emily Carlton, Scott Anders, Nilmini Silva Send, Joe Kaatz, Yichao Gu, Marc Steele, Elena Crete, and Julie Topf. San Diego Regional Decarbonization Framework: Technical Report. County of San Diego, California. 2022.



During the program development that preceded submittal of the Business Plan, C&S stakeholders in the San Diego region expressed their desire for additional support with C&S.<sup>8</sup>

Permit agency staff and the broader C&S community need up-to-date knowledge, training and experience to keep up with topics such as selection, installation and operation of heat pump water and space heating equipment, distributed renewable generation, battery storage, and other emerging technologies. SDREN's C&S program is intended to complement existing efforts at the state and regional levels by improving compliance at the local level. The C&S landscape requires the localized approach of SDREN due to the current gaps, barriers and challenges permitting agencies face and the urgency needed to rapidly scale up compliance to meet ambitious decarbonization goals.

Participating local agencies and stakeholders will be provided with data-driven and actionable resources that bolster understanding of energy codes, increase compliance, decrease energy consumption within buildings, and support the state's goals. The C&S program will help public agencies collect and use data on the age and condition of building stock, comparative energy usage within building sectors, and permit issuance and enforcement processes. This data will inform energy code compliance efforts and help identify and prioritize opportunities for reach codes and policies.

In 2024 and 2025, SDREN met regularly with local governments in spaces where their building performance needs were discussed. This includes the San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative's Regional Energy and Resilience working group, the USGBC Local Government summit, and Climate Action Campaign's Climate Summit, Nexus. Additionally, the SDREN team further indagated both REN and IOU C&S programs, developing an up-to-date matrix to reference. In addition to events attended by the C&S community, SDREN held a preliminary coordination meeting with staff from CalMTA to discuss their early findings in market barriers and identify future opportunities for alignment to avoid customer confusion. SDREN staff also reviewed REN resources specific to reach codes and best practices.

In 2024, SDREN staff also began to monitor and engage with the CEC's Building Standards Technical Advisory Committee to both contribute input on their strategy and ensure the SDREN team is aware of the latest policy and technical developments given building standards are a sub-focus of SDREN's C&S program.

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<sup>8</sup> SDREN Business Plan Exhibit 3: Appendices

## The Road Ahead

As 2025 progresses, SDREN will start to transition from the planning to implementation phases of programming. RFPs for all programs will be issued and undergo San Diego Community Power's public procurement process and program kickoff meetings will be held with the awardees. Following the completion of post-contract implementation plans, SDREN will host a webinar (or webinars) for the public to become familiar with the details of its program offerings.

The SDREN Advisory Committee will be open to new members; the committee's charter will be finalized, with regular meetings slated to start in quarter three of 2025. SDREN's brand identity and marketing strategy will continue to mature as staff collaborate with an external agency to develop a portfolio-wide marketing plan, build brand assets, deliver messages to key audiences, and refine the customer experience.

In *Decision Authorizing Energy Efficiency Portfolios for 2024-2027 and Business Plans for 2024-2031* (Decision 23-06-055), the CPUC established an optional pathway for portfolio administrators to use up to \$15 million of their existing energy efficiency budgets to integrate multi-distributed energy resources (multi-DER) IDSM projects with their energy efficiency offerings. In December 2023, Energy Division staff released guidance to portfolio administrators to submit Tier 3 Advice Letters (ALs) with their multi-DER IDSM framework and project proposals.

In March 2024, all portfolio administrators aside from SDG&E submitted ALs. This was prior to the approval of SDREN; as such, SDREN did not submit a proposal. However, SDREN included a multi-DER IDSM framework in its Portfolio Application. SDREN will expand upon that framework once a final resolution is issued approving the existing ALs, ensuring compliance with any modified requirements that may appear in the final resolution. In the meantime, SDREN staff have been building the infrastructure for a regional IDSM working group to ensure SDREN IDSM offerings are set up for local success. SDREN intends to leverage lessons learned from the flex load pilot that San Diego Community Power's Customer Programs Department is currently deploying.

SDREN is excited to continue collaborating with community stakeholders, SDG&E, other portfolio administrators and the CPUC as it prepares to bring its programs to market.

## Conclusion

2024 has been a year of essential preparation for SDREN, laying a solid foundation for the successful launch and implementation of programs in 2025 and beyond. SDREN’s strategic development of programs, staff and stakeholder relationships position SDREN to make a significant impact on the region’s energy efficiency, decarbonization and climate resilience goals. With a focus on equity, community engagement and workforce development, SDREN is well-equipped to address the diverse needs of San Diegans throughout the county.

As 2025 progresses, SDREN is poised to deliver measurable outcomes, from reducing energy burdens to creating career pathways in clean energy. The coming years will showcase the results of SDREN’s efforts in driving local solutions that contribute to state and regional decarbonization targets. By continuing to collaborate with community stakeholders, SDG&E, other portfolio administrators and the CPUC, SDREN is ready to deliver on its vision of transforming the energy landscape through inclusive and innovative programs. As these initiatives take shape, SDREN will play a pivotal role in advancing California's clean energy future while fostering economic growth and sustainability for all communities.

## Appendix

### Savings and Goals

As mentioned in the *2024: Approval and Preparing to Launch* section above, SDREN is distinct from other portfolio administrators in that its approved portfolio application did not contain annual goals for the current portfolio period; however, it did contain goals for the portfolio period 2024-2027. Additionally, Tab 1 of the annual report spreadsheet template specifically refers to “Adopted 2024 Targets (D. 23-08-005).” D. 28-08-005 is the *Decision Authorizing Energy Efficiency Portfolios for 2024-2027 and Business Plans for 2024-2031* and was issued before SDREN had filed its motion for approval. For the “Adopted 2024-2027 Goals,” SDREN struck out the previous authorization decision and replaced it with the SDREN authorization decision number.

	Total System Benefit (TSB)	GWh	MW	MMTherms
	Portfolio - Non C&S	Codes & Standards (C&S)		
2024 TSB and Total Installed Portfolio Savings	\$0	0	0	0
Adopted 2024 Targets (D.23-08-005)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of goal attainment	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!
2024-2027 Cumulative TSB and Total Installed Portfolio Savings	\$0	0	0	0

Adopted 2024-2027 Goals (D.23-08-005) (D.24-08-003)	\$18,194,415	14.2	6.84	711,169
Percentage of Progress Towards 4-year Goal	0	0	0	0

Decision 24-08-003 approved SDREN’s portfolio and targets, stating on page 14 and 15 under Section 3 “Approved Savings Goals and Budget for 2024-2027”, “SDCP provides forecasted Total System Benefit savings of \$18,194,415 and net first year savings of 14,246,780 kilowatt-hours, 684 kilowatts, and 711,169 therms; and 8,561 tons of avoided carbon dioxide emissions. This decision adopts SDCP’s proposed energy savings goals.” Provided no annual targets were adopted for SDREN, Tab 1 of SDREN's Annual Report spreadsheet contains “N/A” values for the row labeled “Adopted 2024 Targets (D. 23-08-005)”.

Finally, considering SDREN’s programs were not operational in 2024, the remaining rows do not have values.

## Energy Savings

None – programs have not yet launched; therefore, there are no 2024 energy savings to report.

## Savings by End Use

None – programs have not yet launched; therefore, there are no 2024 energy savings to report.

## Environmental Impacts

None – programs have not yet launched; therefore, there are no 2024 environmental impacts to report.

## Expenditures

See the third tab of the annual report spreadsheet, “T-3 Program Data” for the full table. An abbreviated version of the table with total 2024 expenditures is provided below.

Program ID	Program Name	2024 Total Expenditures
SDRN-01-WET-EPP	Energy Pathways Program	\$ 1,896
SDRN-02-WET-BRC	Workforce Training & Capacity Building	\$ 3,082
SDRN-01-RES-MFM	Multifamily	\$ 3,145
SDRN-02-RES-SFM	Single-Family	\$ 5,895
SDRN-01-PUB-CRL	Climate Resilience Leadership	\$ 5,546
SDRN-02-PUB-TRE	Tribal Engagement	\$ 475
SDRN-01-COM-SMB	Small & Medium Business Energy Coach	\$ 2,846
SDRN-02-COM-ERF	Efficient Refrigeration	\$ 1,896

SDRN-03-COM-MAP	Market Access Program	\$ 4,267
SDRN-01-CS-CSS	Codes & Standards	\$ 1,896
SDRN_CS_PortfolioSupport	Portfolio Admin-Codes & Standards	\$ 17,330
SDRN_EQ_PortfolioSupport	Portfolio Admin-Equity	\$ 130,313
SDRN_MS_PortfolioSupport	Portfolio Admin-Market Support	\$ 96,190
SDRN_RA_PortfolioSupport	Portfolio Admin-Resource Acquisition	\$ 39,003
SDRN-01-EMV	Evaluation Measurement & Verification	\$ -

## Cost-Effectiveness

None – programs have not yet launched; therefore, there are no cost-effectiveness scores to report. Additionally, RENs are not subject to cost-effectiveness requirements; however, SDREN will manage its portfolio to maximize cost-effectiveness to the extent possible. SDREN will also report cost-effectiveness scores in next year’s annual report once programs are operational.

## Metrics

### Unique Value Metrics

SDREN’s vision is to drive the adoption of clean, reliable energy in communities through community-driven solutions that support both local and state energy efficiency and climate goals. SDREN is guided by three core principles: environmental equity, collaboration and community engagement, and SDREN’s primary goals focus on decarbonization, providing comprehensive energy efficiency services and accelerating the clean energy economy. SDREN aims to achieve five key outcomes: reducing energy burdens and improving affordability, enhancing health and reducing energy consumption region-wide, increasing access and participation in programs, maximizing customer benefits through additional funding and creating career pathways in clean energy.

At the heart of the SDREN portfolio are three guiding values: strategically investing in San Diego’s underserved and hard-to-reach communities, fostering a regional clean energy economy that provides opportunities for the local workforce, and serving as a trusted resource to coordinate regional policy, partnerships and programs.

SDREN’s unique value metrics are as follows and align with SDREN’s vision, principles, goals and desired outcomes:

- The percentage of customers expected to experience lower energy costs through program participation, by sector (Goal: Improving energy affordability; Outcome: Reducing energy burden).
- The amount of energy efficiency savings redirected to non-SDREN programs (Goal: Maximizing benefits to customers through leveraging additional funding; Outcome: Improving energy efficiency services).
- The percentage of customers referred to non-SDREN programs (Goal: Expanding access and increasing program participation; Outcome: Improving access).
- The percentage of external funding leveraged to support SDREN programs and communities (Goal: Maximizing benefits to customers through leveraging additional funding; Outcome: Maximizing benefits to customers).
- The number of newly educated or credentialed individuals (Goal: Creating career pathways in clean energy; Outcome: Supporting workforce development).
- The percentage of equity customers served compared to total customers served (Principle: Environmental equity; Outcome: Ensuring equitable access to programs).

### Equity and Market Support Segment Metrics

Decision 23-06-055 (D.23-06-055) adopted indicators for the equity and market support segments. Ordering Paragraph 11 (“OP 11”) of that decision ordered portfolio administrators to submit a joint advice letter on May 1, 2025, to: clarify the equity and market support indicators, include further details about valuation methodology and propose modifications to the common metrics adopted in 2018 as many are no longer used or relevant.

Portfolio administrators submitted the Joint AL in May 2024 and await a Commission resolution to rule on the recommendations therein. The OP 11 AL was completed prior to SDREN receiving CPUC approval; however, SDREN is currently participating in the joint portfolio administrator working group tasked by D.23-06-055 Ordering Paragraph 25 (“OP 25”) with identifying goal constructs for the equity and market support segments. OP 25 set a March 1, 2025, deadline for the submission of an AL describing the working group’s finding. The CPUC’s Energy Division recently granted an extension for the OP 25 AL as developing goal constructs is dependent on the CPUC’s ruling of the OP 11 advice letter containing indicator clarifications.

SDREN is also participating in the OP24 effort, which requires the refinement of Community Engagement Indicators, which are situated within the equity segment. As of the writing of this report, these meetings have yet to launch.

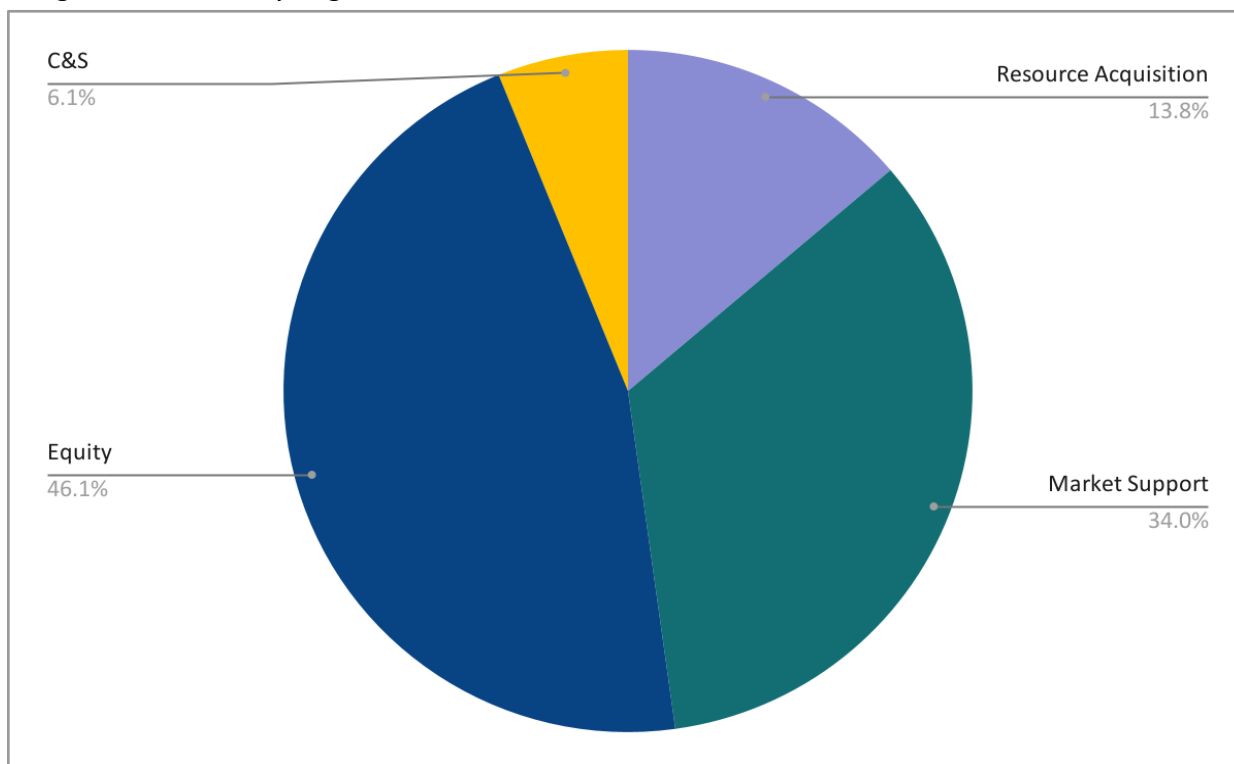
Prior to the official authorization of SDREN, staff attended the CPUC’s working group dedicated to non-energy benefits. The next phase of the working group’s efforts is anticipated to begin in



2025. SDREN is excited to for the working group to reassemble and additional conversations on how to indicate progress in the equity segment.

SDREN programs span the codes and standards (C&S), resource acquisition, equity and market support segments. The portfolio consists of one resource acquisition program, one C&S program, three market support programs and five equity programs. Details regarding the justification of SDREN’s segmentation, as well as which metrics/indicators are associated with each program, can be found in tab 20 of the [SDREN 2024-2031 EE Application Excel Sheets](#).

#### *Budget Breakdown by Segment*



SDREN populated tab 17 of its Application Excel spreadsheet with the 300+ common metrics and indicators. Tab 18 is populated with market support and equity indicators. Both tabs note that SDREN will follow guidance contained in the resolution of OP 11. SDREN will also follow whatever guidance comes out of the OP24, OP25, and other efforts regarding indicators, metrics, goals, and targets.

## **Commitments**

None – programs have not yet launched and therefore SDREN does not have customer commitments to report at this time.

## **Useful Resources**

- REN Group A Impact Evaluation, Program Year 2022 Report
- CAEECC Equity and Market Support Working Group Final Report (Mar. 2024)
- SDG&E Energy Efficiency Program Annual Report, 2023
- County of San Diego Regional Equity Report, Fiscal Year 2022-2023
- CPUC Third-Party (3P) Equity Programs Process and Effectiveness Evaluation Final Report (Sept. 12, 2024)
- Statewide Energy Savings Assistance Statewide Policies & Procedures Manual 2021-2026
- Comfortably California Statewide Third-Party Program Impact and Evaluation Report, Program Year 2021