



2019 Women's March San Diego's Program Information



Who are the women of Women's March San Diego?

Board members Dr. Monica Boyle, Frances Carrillo, Dr. Poppy Fitch, Genoveva Aguilar, and Amy Epstein-Swazey are joined by many other women who represent at the Director level and contribute to the annual march planning. Our focus continues to be the meaningful inclusion of diverse women on our team, and invite community support as we continue to work toward this goal. While diverse, we acknowledge there are essential voices missing from our table.

(left to right: Amy Epstein-Swazey, Mapi Baez, Poppy Fitch, Frances Carrillo, Marcy Shugart, and Monica Boyle)

Who is the Program Planning Committee?

A small march program committee includes Sarah Bacerra, Alisandra Del Nero, Poppy Fitch, and Grace Sesma joined by Nora E. Vargas who will act as march emcee.

(left to right Poppy Fitch, Alisandra Del Nero, Sarah Bacerra)

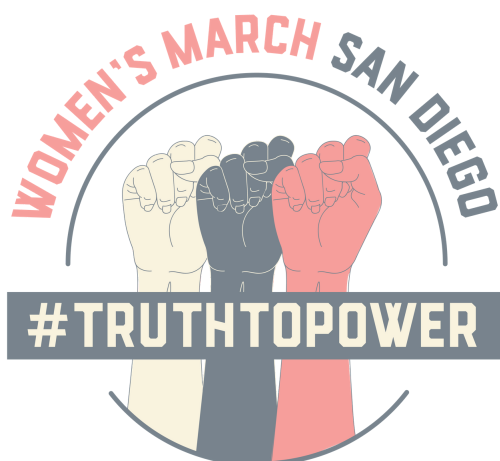


How was the program developed?

The program was developed with feedback from the broader WMSD team and input from community partners. This year, as last, our focus is to ensure a diverse program that represents the issues most pressing to the San Diego community and that align with the WMSD Unity Principles.

Is this the final program line up?

Women's March San Diego is excited to release the following confirmed faith leaders, performers and speakers for the 2019 march program. Additional speakers will be added as they are confirmed.



What is the program timeline?

The 2019 San Diego Women's March will run from approximately 10am – 1:45pm.

10am Blessing and Performances,
11am Speakers,
12pm WE March!

Post march, we invite you to return to Waterfront Park to enjoy music by the Resizers, food trucks, and connect with our community partners.



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Nora E. Vargas

Vice President of Community and Government Relations at Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest & Vice President Trustee for the Southwestern Community College Governing Board

Women's March San Diego is excited to share that Ms. Nora E. Vargas will be the emcee for the 2019 San Diego march. A product of South Bay public schools, Nora has spent her life working to remove barriers for underserved communities through civic engagement, public policy, and organizing. Nora's passion to serve is driven by her desire to improve people's lives in her community. She currently serves as the Vice President of Community and Government Relations at Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, who have been WMSD partners since the inaugural march in January 2017. At Planned Parenthood, Nora and her team work to increase access to safe, quality healthcare, and education for women and families across California.

Committed to community service, Nora has served on numerous boards and commissions, locally and across the state of California. She serves as a champion for Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE), a board member for the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO), and a board member for Run Women Run. Vargas was appointed and later elected to the Southwestern Community College District Governing Board, currently the only public institution of higher education within the South Bay where she was recently elected Board Vice President by her peers. In 2015, Governor Jerry Brown appointed her to serve on the 12-member California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) making her the first Latina to be appointed in the board's history. There she is charged with securing the financial future of California's educators, providing retirement, disability and survivor benefits for 862,000 educators and their families.

Nora is passionate about ensuring that marginalized voices are included in the public dialogue regarding important issues like health access, energy, technology, consumer protection, the environment, civic engagement, pensions and education. For over two decades Nora has worked to foster the next generation of young leaders by providing them the skills and resources they need to advocate for and build power in their communities. Nora's advocacy for women and for the community at large made her a clear choice for our selection as the voice of the 2019 San Diego Women's March.

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Virginia Christman

Kumeyaay elder

Kumeyaay elder Virginia Christman will offer the traditional native blessing and bird song at the commencing of the program.

Virginia Christman, born on the Viejas Reservation, is a life-long cultural practitioner of Kumeyaay traditions and fluent master speaker of the language. Instructed by her mom and aunt, she has served in many key roles within her community. Virginia is a prayer leader, Kumeyaay cultural educator, and served more than a decade on the Viejas Tribal Government, including a term as Vice Chairperson. At 75 years of age, Virginia Christman is a true Kumeyaay elder.

Women's March San Diego would like to express our gratitude to the Kumeyaay people, on whose land we march, for their support.



Mejgan Afshan

Advocacy & Policy Coordinator, Council on American-Islamic Relations, San Diego Chapter

Mejgan Afshan is the Advocacy & Policy Coordinator for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, San Diego Chapter (CAIR San Diego). As a refugee and the daughter of refugees from Afghanistan who settled in City Heights over 30 years ago, Mejgan knows the struggle to maintain ones faith and identity in the face of adversity. Mejgan has been involved in supporting progressive issues at the local, state and national level for over a decade and a half. Prior to CAIR San Diego, she served over 350 newly settled refugees and immigrants at the International Rescue Committee in City Heights and El Cajon, was a Field Director on the 2008 Presidential Campaign for the San Diego County Democratic Party, worked on a myriad of political campaigns for Democrats as well as in Washington, D.C., worked for Madame Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi in her San Francisco District office and aided Governor Gavin Newsom-then Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco. Elected in 2018, she currently serves as Vice-Chair of the San Diego Refugee Forum and is Community Representative on the Advisory Board of the San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium. As a proud unapologetic Muslim-American, Mejgan continues to speak truth to power and work towards uplifting women of color, Muslim-Americans, youth voices and our most vulnerable and underrepresented, marginalized groups.

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Toni G. Atkins

Senate President pro Tempore

Toni G. Atkins represents the 39th District in the state Senate. As Senate President pro Tempore, she is the first woman and the first openly LGBTQ person to lead the Legislature's upper house. A long history of service to the San Diego community, Atkins has served on the City Council, as interim Mayor of San Diego amid a challenging and tumultuous time at City Hall, and was elected to the state Assembly in 2010, where she served for six years. In 2014, she was selected as the Speaker of the Assembly – she became the first San Diegan and the first lesbian to hold the position. Throughout her career, Atkins has been a champion for affordable housing, the natural environment, healthcare, veterans, women, and the LGBTQ community. ([Full bio here](#))



Dr. Priya Bhat-Patel

City of Carlsbad Council Member, District 3

Dr. Priya Bhat-Patel is Carlsbad's newest City Council member representing District 3. She was recently chosen as the Mayor Pro Tem. Priya has pledged to work tenaciously and transparently on priorities that include smart growth, local business support, public health and safety, historical and cultural promotion, environmental protection, and more. After receiving her undergraduate degree at UC San Diego, Priya continued her education in Public Health, receiving her master's degree at USC and her doctorate degree from Loma Linda University. As a health professional and businesswoman, Priya executed on and managed multi-million-dollar contracts and created lasting health initiatives with healthcare agencies, biotech companies, San Diego County, the State of California, and the United Nations. As a 20+ year Carlsbad resident, she is now directing her education and expertise toward a career in public service.

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Barbara Bry

San Diego City Council Member, First Council District
Council President Pro Tem Barbara Bry represents San Diego's First City Council District. She is a high-tech entrepreneur and community leader who worked her way through college and graduate school, earning a Master's Degree in Business from Harvard. Barbara was on the founding team of several local high-tech companies, including ProFlowers.com, which has created hundreds of local jobs. She served as the first associate director of CONNECT, and is the founder of Athena San Diego, the leading organization for women in the San Diego tech and life sciences community. Barbara has deep roots in the community and has lived in San Diego for more than 35 years. She is married to Neil Senturia, raised her two daughters here, and is a proud grandmother.



Lucero Camarena

Transgender Advocate & Speaker

Lucero Camarena is a fierce trans Latina who advocates her message in hopes of creating a world where it is safe to "Live Your Truth." A recent UC San Diego graduate who has been recognized for her contributions in health research, she represented her alma mater as the All Campus Commencement Student Speaker and Latinx/Chicanx Graduation Speaker. She is currently serving as the Trans Youth Services navigator for the San Diego LGBT Community Center and affirms that trans folx of color and non-binary folx must be centered in their efforts toward trans liberation. She plans to later return to school for her medical doctorate and is passionate about dismantling [the patriarchy] oppressive structures within the healthcare system in the future.

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Cedrice

Singer/Songwriter & Spoken Word Artist

Cedrice is a soulful and inspiring vocalist that is finding her way in a world that is often dictated by labels and boundaries that she often never fits into. She is an artist redefining what it means to find your way in world that doesn't give you directions. Cedrice is a focused creative who has a range of talents that not only include singer/songwriter, but she is also a model, an actress, production manager, visionary and becoming a highly sought out speaker. She continues to sing across Southern California and America. Inspired by her community and family, she captivates audiences with honest conviction, sophistication and soulfulness. It's what keeps her work thriving and in demand. She is currently working on her debut EP that will be available next Spring. She recently released her first single, "Woman", which includes a music video and is available on all major platforms.



Norma Chavez-Peterson

Executive Director, ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties

Norma Chávez-Peterson is an integral member of San Diego's civil rights community, with nearly two decades of visionary leadership, organizing and advocacy experience in California's second-most populous county and southern borderlands. She joined the ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties as organizing director in 2012, and became the affiliate's executive director in 2013. She was instrumental in creating it's integrated advocacy campaign to advance priority issues such as criminal justice reform, police accountability and immigrant rights. Prior to joining the ACLU, Chávez-Peterson was executive director of Justice Overcoming Boundaries, a collaborative network of faith, community, education, business and labor partners she co-founded to advance social justice. She currently serves on the boards of Partners For Progress and Engage San Diego; and most recently, helped to launch the San Diego Rapid Response Network. (photo courtesy of the San Diego Union Tribune)

([Full bio here](#))

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Rabbi Laurie Coskey, Ed.D.

Faith Leader

Rabbi Laurie Coskey has spent more than 30 years in professional positions of leadership addressing the needs of San Diego families and children—including more than 15 years at the Interfaith Center for Worker Justice, the United Way of San Diego County, and most recently at San Diego Continuing Education Foundation as the Executive Director of the San Diego Gateway to College & Career program. An accomplished community leader, she has served San Diegans through a commitment to social justice, activism and advocacy. As a Rabbi, she has served the life cycle needs of the LGBT community throughout her career and has actively advocated for LGBT rights. Rabbi Laurie was among the trailblazers of women in the clergy and ordained as a rabbi at Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion.

(photo courtesy of Becca Batista)



JoAnn Fields

Co-Director, Public Relations, Women's March San Diego

JoAnn Fields is an active and engaged community leader and professional providing a voice for Filipinos and other Asian Pacific Islanders in our region. She serves on the board of the Asian American Journalist Association - San Diego Chapter, is the Public Relations Director for the Asian Pacific Islander Initiative, and works with the Ground-Up Youth Foundation and Pacific Islander Festival Association. JoAnn is the founder of the Lumpia Club - a Filipino American professional's advocacy network, and writes for the Filipino Press in National City. JoAnn has worked in all levels of government including for the office of Congresswoman Susan Davis, Assembly member Shirley Weber, San Diego Council President Anthony Young and Chula Vista Councilmember Patricia Chavez. For her community work, JoAnn has received awards including CA Senator Ben Hueso's Citizen of the Month, Filipina Women's Network Top 100 Most Influential Filipina Women in the U.S., Urban League of San Diego County's Top 40 Under 40, among others. JoAnn is mother to four wonderful young adults: Johnathen, Darius, Jevon and Kamry - and credits family as her motivation to be involved in the community.

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Mara W. Elliott

City Attorney of San Diego

The first woman to serve as San Diego City Attorney, Mara W. Elliott has prioritized protecting victims of violence and ensuring justice on their behalf. She leads the San Diego Family Justice Center, which provides domestic violence victims and their children with comprehensive services in a safe and private setting, and earlier this month she expanded the Family Justice Center's mission to include victims of sex trafficking. Under her leadership, the City Attorney's Domestic Violence and Sex Crimes Unit has grown; it prosecuted about 1,000 cases in 2017 with a 95% conviction rate. Elliott is the statewide leader in using Gun Violence Restraining Orders to remove firearms from individuals who present a serious risk of harm to themselves or others. GVROs are a powerful tool in preventing homicide in domestic violence situations, and her office has also used them to prevent violence in workplaces and on school campuses. Hundreds of firearms have been removed from owners who presented threats of gun violence, including more than a dozen assault rifles.



Todd Gloria

State Assembly 78th District

Todd Gloria is the second person of Filipino heritage elected to the California State Assembly and the Legislature's only enrolled tribal member. Starting out at the County of San Diego's Health and Human Services Agency, Todd went on to work as community representative and district director for U.S. Congresswoman Susan Davis and as a San Diego Housing Commissioner. In 2018, he was elected to the San Diego City Council, where he spent two terms focusing on affordable housing and funding for results-oriented homeless services. As Budget and Government Efficiency Committee chair, he helped stabilize and restore city finances, services, and infrastructure investment. Serving as City Council President for two terms and as interim mayor in 2013-2014, Todd strengthened the city's organizational structure and developed a groundbreaking Climate Action Plan. He continues this advocacy in the Assembly. To date, he has received the governor's signature on 13 pieces of legislation dealing with issues like election reform, housing solutions, and cutting government red tape for small businesses. ([Full bio here](#))

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Lorena Gonzalez

State Assembly 80th District

Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez was elected in May of 2013, promising to fight for our state's working and middle classes, and she hasn't stopped yet. In 2015, The Atlantic Magazine labeled her "The California Democrat setting the National Agenda" for her practical, progressive legislation aimed at alleviating real issues in people's lives. Lorena has authored legislation on paid sick leave, automatic voter registration, diaper subsidy and worker rights. She is the first Latina in California history to Chair the Assembly Appropriations Committee, and is Chairwoman of the Select Committee on Women in the Workplace and Vice Chair of the Latino Caucus. Prior to being elected to the Assembly, Lorena served the community as a labor leader and organizer as the first woman and first person of color to be elected CEO and Secretary-Treasurer for the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

([Full bio here](#))



Melissa Hill

Viejas Band of the Kumeyaay Indians, Navajo Nation,
Tonawanda Band of Seneca Indians

Melissa Hill is a descendent of the Viejas band of Kumeyaay Indians, located in Alpine, East County San Diego and a resident of the Viejas reservation. Melissa is a Kumeyaay language teacher, an elementary after-school tutor, a part-time student at Kumeyaay Community College, and advisor to the Viejas U.N.I.T.Y youth group. As a person of Kumeyaay, Dine, and Seneca descent, Melissa's passion for her culture, social justice, and humanitarianism have led her to many places locally and internationally. An advocate for Indigenous people's rights, Melissa joined the front lines at Standing Rock as a water protector and photographer. She also works with the Palestinian Youth movement, an international youth collaborative effort to build bridges between the decolonization process of the mind, body, and soul. Melissa speaks at women's rights events, climate change marches, and indigenous panels across the county. She is also part of a collaborative that sends contributions to Kumeyaay communities in Baja California. "Passion is in connection with the language; my advocacy has always been for all original peoples before borders. Knowing my culture and how to speak decolonizes your thoughts and opens your heart to who you truly are. As Kumeyaay, it is our right be here."

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Starla Lewis

Professor Emeritus, Transformational Speaker
and Life Coach

Starla Lewis is a Professor Emeritus, transformational speaker and life coach who lectures and facilitates trainings on Diversity, Life Mastery and Women's Empowerment. She is the founder of C.E.L.L. (Celebration of Everlasting Life & Love) consulting. Her 40+ years of research and experience in African American Studies, Oral Communication and Women's Studies, have enhanced her ability to engage diverse communities. She is the author and illustrator of *Sunkisses*, a multicultural/ multilingual coloring book for children and adults. She is the Co-Creator and Facilitator of "Woman's Worth: Reclaiming Our Divinity & Our Destiny", and Co-Author of "I Am: My Own Self-Validation". Starla Lewis is a seven-time recipient of the Mesa College Teacher of the Year Award, a 2015 Women's Hall of Fame honoree, and was recognized by KPBS as a local hero. She has dedicated her life to teaching people love and life skills. Through her work she affirms that all people are: "Brilliant, Powerful, Limitless, Love!"



Monica Montgomery


San Diego City Councilmember District Four &
2018 Voice of San Diego Voice the Year

Monica Montgomery was recently elected to serve as the City of San Diego's Council representative for the Fourth Council District. A native San Diegan, Monica's legal career has been dedicated to improving and uplifting the City of San Diego as a whole and the City's Fourth Council District. Most recently, she served at the ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties as a Criminal Justice Advocate, leading the local campaign to reform the money bail system. Before joining the ACLU in 2016, Monica worked at the City of San Diego for three elected officials, including Councilmember Cole, Mayor Faulconer, and Councilmember Gloria during his term as Interim Mayor. Monica has strongly advocated for equitable practices in government, including better employment opportunities for people of color and reform on the then Citizens Review Board for Police Practices. Beyond her legal advocacy, Monica is highly involved in community work. She serves on a number of boards, commissions, and committees in the city, including serving as the Chair of the Committee on Public Safety & Livable Neighborhoods. She is also a RISE fellow and the 2018 Voice of San Diego Voice of the Year.

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The Resizters


Protest Cover Song Band



After emceeding the Women's March in San Diego in January 2017, Melanie Peters co-founded The Resizters with long-time friends and former band mates. Responding to the need for quality, inspiring entertainment at the continuing protests, marches and community events seen everywhere, the Resizters are united in anguish over not only the 2016 election, but the decline in acceptance, humanity, and love felt everywhere on the planet. Unfortunately, this feeling is part of the history of the U.S., and many artists have written about it over time. The Resizters play these songs with passion and reflection, reminding us of where we have been, and of where we are going. Their goal is to use their musical talents to support our community, and humankind, by representing artists from Woody Guthrie to Nina Simone, Creedence Clearwater Revival to Green Day, and motivating people to be engaged and to #Resizt hate, intolerance, ignorance, and greed.

Lisa Sanders

Singer/Songwriter



Lisa Sanders is an electrifying harmonizer. Her heartfelt songs are genuine with deep meaning and conviction. A musical style that can only be described as a soulful country blues, her genres include folk pop, gospel, rock and jazz. Writing, singing and producing from her heart in nearly every genre for over three decades, Sanders continues to make an impact in the musical world. Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, she began singing with her older brother Ty at an early age. The family relocated to Argonia Newfoundland, Canada where her parents encouraged music daily. Artists from Motown Records, Johnny Cash and others with a mixture of rock and classical music were key influencers in Sanders' upbringing. Upon moving to Southern California, she signed to Cargo Earth Records and released her first album *Isn't Life Fine*. After her second album *Life Takes You Flying* was released in 1999, Sanders went on to establish her own label Maya Jade Records in 2004, and has since released five albums from her own label.

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San Diego Women's Chorus

The San Diego Women's Chorus is a lesbian-identified feminist sisterhood of musicians that welcomes singing members and volunteers from the vastly diverse LGBTQIA+ and straight-ally communities. Founded in 1987, SDWC has grown from a group of 14 women gathered around a piano in a private home to a thriving community with over 150 members. For over 31 years, SDWC has provided a safe space that encourages women's creativity, celebrates diversity, and inspires social action.



Carla Warnock

American Sign Language Interpreter

Carla Warnock was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland and was raised in an activist family. She first saw American Sign Language interpreters at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival where she fell in love at first sight. Carla's long career as a volunteer interpreter for various community organizations led to interpreting as a career where she works primarily as a Pro-Tactile ASL interpreter (with folks who are Deaf-Blind,) a mental health and musical performance interpreter. Carla continues to volunteer in the community in several roles including interpreting and as a mentor to new interpreters entering the field. Women's March San Diego is especially proud to have Carla working with us to ensure an accessible march once again this year!

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Wendy Wheatcroft

Mom's Demand Action Chapter Leader & Founder
of San Diegans for Gun Violence Prevention

Wendy Wheatcroft is a mom of 3 young children, an educator, and a community advocate working to end gun violence in all its forms through her work as CA Chapter leader for Moms Demand Action and a founder of San Diegans for Gun Violence Prevention. From the streets of our cities to our classrooms in our schools to our homes and public spaces, there is nothing more important than preventing gun violence and saving lives. Every life is worth saving.



Lindsay White

Singer/Songwriter

With influences ranging from Bob Dylan to Ani DiFranco, Lindsay White's songwriting has earned recognition from Telluride Bluegrass Festival, Kerrville Folk Festival, and American Songwriter. In 2017 Lindsay released *Lights Out*, an album chronicling the experience of losing her estranged mother to brain cancer. The record was also selected as #1 Album of the Year by Global Texan Chronicles and earned her the 2018 San Diego Music Award for Best Singer-Songwriter. Lindsay has led songwriting workshops for Rock n' Roll Camp for Girls San Diego and recently organized the Lady Brain Collective, a supportive and collaborative group of local female artists. She was recently named one of "15 Lesbian/Bi/Queer Musical Artists You Need to Know" by AfterEllen.com.

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Dr. Shirley Weber

State Assembly 79th District

Assembly Member Shirley Nash Weber was elected in November of 2012 to represent California's 79th Assembly District, which includes the cities of Bonita, Chula Vista, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City and San Diego. Dr. Weber chairs the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Public Safety and the California Legislative Black Caucus. She also serves as a member of the Assembly Standing Committees on Education, Higher Education, Elections, Budget, and Banking and Finance. She has focused her legislative efforts on public safety, educational equity, voting rights and food insecurity. Prior to being elected to the Assembly, she served as the mayor's appointee and Chair on the Citizens' Equal Opportunity Commission. Dr. Weber has also served as Board President for the San Diego Unified School District, on the Board of the NAACP, YWCA, YMCA Scholarship Committee, Battered Women Services, United Way, San Diego Consortium and Private Industry Council, founder of the Black Women's Institute for Leadership Development (B.W.I.L.D) in San Diego County, and many more. Assembly Member Weber has lived in the 79th Assembly District for over 30 years. Her children attended public school in the district and she was elected to the school board. As a board member, and subsequent board president, she became known for her advocacy for closing the achievement gap and a higher standard of excellence for all children.



Tasha Williamson

Founder of The Compassion Project &
Building Justice

Tasha Williamson is the co-founder of The Compassion Project whose mission is to support families when they lose a loved one to violence. In this capacity, Tasha is often first to meet family members at a crime scene or hospital where she offers grief support and connects families with resources. Tasha notes that "If it wasn't for someone believing in me, lifting me up, standing with me in my weakest times, I would never have the strength I have. So, I pass it forward [to] create a better space for response to trauma, surviving loss and learning how to live with all that comes from loss. It is not just me but a committed group of people that stand in the midst as human angels to support the least among us." In addition to her work on the Compassion Project, Williamson is launching Building Justice to support people navigating criminal, education and social service systems. (photo: San Diego CityBeat Magazine)