



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

May 1, 2019

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CORPORATE INVESTMENT OF \$750,000 SIGNALS TIME FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOODS IN SACRAMENTO PROMISE ZONE

Sacramento, Calif. | A cross-section of Sacramento corporate and business leaders announced a formal partnership on April 29th to put words into action by making a \$750,000 investment into a long-term effort to revitalize Sacramento’s Promise Zone. SMUD, along with UC Davis Health, Blue Shield of California, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency and the Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce have partnered with five other Sacramento organizations to uplift an area that encompasses 22 square miles of the economically hardest-hit neighborhoods in Sacramento -- from Del Paso Heights in the North Area to The Avenues in the South Area.



SMUD CEO and General Manager Arlen Orchard said without intervention, the disparities in the Promise Zone will continue to grow. “Collectively, we as business leaders can and should play a role in enhancing the lives of all residents in our region.” Orchard said the funding commitment represents an investment into specific projects that will provide clean transportation, energy efficiency programs, workforce development, health and wellness education, job training and emerging technologies and access to educational opportunities within the Promise Zone.

Sacramento Promise Zone Director Tyrone Roderick Williams, who is also Director of Development for Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, said the collaboration is unique because in addition to its funding commitment, the partnership also represents a commitment to action that has been long overdue. “We’ve studied enough to know the challenges that are happening in our neighborhood. What’s been lacking is implementation. This is a cross-sector collaboration committed to implementation and I’m so excited about that.”

UC Davis CEO David Lubarsky said his organization will utilize its capabilities, resources, and future buildings, like the Aggie Square Project, to help the communities in many different ways. “It’s about our commitment jointly to reach down into the pipeline, into the neighborhoods to help make a technology driven career actually a reality for some of the kids who all too often hear that that’s not in their future.”



Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce and Blue Shield of California are collaborating on a Community Economic Wellness Training and Entrepreneur Academy and Health Training Programs to develop community health workers through STEM education at locations throughout the community. “For years the Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce has understood the importance and need for collaboration,” said Azizza Davis Goines, CEO of the organization. “We welcome the opportunity to work through SHRA and the Promise Zone with SMUD, Blue Shield, UC Davis and our other community partners. It has been our mission to work in Sacramento’s underrepresented communities. Having the partnerships of these businesses and community partners is humbling and so very much appreciated.”

“We are proud to be a part of this effort,” said Blue Shield National Director William Jahmal Miller. “We have significant economic disparities in Sacramento that we must address directly to ensure that our communities have ample access to education, jobs and health care.”

The Promise Zone Partnership will be anchored by the following key initiatives and projects:

SMUD’s Sustainable Communities Initiative will focus on improving economic, social, and environmental condition through multiple energy savings and electric vehicle installation projects in the Promise Zone. These projects will educate and train future workforce in Del Paso Heights and South Sacramento. The Initiative will provide energy efficiency savings to customers while also improving local air quality through increased access to EV infrastructure. SMUD has been working closely with Roberts Family Development Center and the City of Refuge on projects that further serve the local community.

The UC Davis’ Aggie Square Project is in the center of the Promise Zone and will work to embed education, workforce training and inclusive community spaces including shared workspace, and active recruitment of community members for job opportunities. Additionally, the National Society of Black Engineers Junior Programs will provide students from underrepresented groups with access to high-level STEM curriculum to enhance diversity and inclusion in engineering and medicine.

Photo: (left-right) President and CEO United Way Stephanie McLemore Bray, CEO UC Davis Health David Lubarsky, SMUD CEO and General Manager Arlen Orchard, CEO of the Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce Azizza Davis Goines, President and CEO Greater Sacramento Urban League Cassandra H.B. Jennings, Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) Executive Director, La Shelle Dozier, Board of Directors SMUD Rosanna Herber, Manager SAFE Credit Union Carrie Johnson, SHRA Director of Development and Director of the Promise Zone Tyrone Roderick Williams, Manager Government and Community Relations Blue Shield Chantel Johnson-Crockrom, Director of Innovation & Partnerships SACOG Monica Hernandez.

About the Promise Zone Collaborative

The Promise Zone Collaborative includes SMUD, UC Davis Health, Blue Shield of California, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce, SAFE Credit Union, Roberts Family Development Center, Greater Sacramento Urban League, United Way and Sacramento Area Council of Governments. Its mission is to coordinate resources, build capacity and creates public-private partnerships through shared goals to drive revitalization in Sacramento’s most underserved communities. This collaborative partnership builds on the work established in 2015 when Sacramento received the Promise Zone federal designation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Promise Zone cross sector initiative has grown from 30 partners to partnerships with over 150 corporate, non-profit, governmental and local organizations. Focus areas include education, job training and placement, health care and nutrition, economic development and sustainable community development. To date Promise Zone partners have been awarded or leveraged \$140 million in local, state and federal funds. For more information on the Sacramento Promise Zone, visit www.sacramentopromisezone.org.

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