



San Bernardino County Employees'
Retirement Association

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Date: August 7, 2025

From: Debby Cherney
Chief Executive Officer

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To: SBCERA Trustees

Subject: CEO Report – August 7, 2025 Board Meeting

Administration (Debby Cherney)

Three seats are up for election this fall; the candidacy filing window opens on Monday, August 11th at www.SBCERA.org/Elections. As candidates file, the website will be updated with an unofficial candidate list including name and the seat for which they have filed to run. The last day and hour to file the required candidacy form and pay the filing fee of \$350 is 5:00 p.m. on September 5, 2025. Under the Board's policy, in-person filing will not be accepted at SBCERA offices.

Human Resources & Risk Management (Stacey Barnier)

The Human Resources team has been working on multiple recruitments this month. In-person interviews were held for the Office Specialist position in Member Services, and an offer has been extended to a candidate who is now undergoing a background check. Recruitment for the Survivor Benefits Specialist role officially closed on July 28, 2025, with 53 applications received, including five internal candidates. The Enterprise Systems Engineer position remains open until filled, with six applications submitted thus far. Meanwhile, we've received a robust 87 applications for the Associate Investment Officer role, and phone interviews are currently in progress. The Retirement Benefits Manager recruitment is also ongoing, with eight additional candidates invited for phone interviews. The Staff Counsel position has been posted and will remain open until filled, with the first application review scheduled for August 28, 2025. Outreach efforts are underway via LinkedIn, legal publications, local law schools, other public pension funds, and job boards to attract a diverse and qualified candidate pool.

Additionally, a Senior Accountant position—closing August 12, 2025—has been posted to backfill the upcoming vacancy created by Basil LaRoche's departure. Basil began his career with SBCERA as an Accountant during the COVID era of 2020 and was promoted to Senior Accountant in the summer of 2022. While we are sad to see him go, we sincerely thank him for his impactful contributions, including his work on the new retirement benefit payment process, participation on the inaugural PEACE Team, and of course, everybody will miss his freshly baked cookies. We wish him all the best as he returns to Northern California for a new opportunity.

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Final preparations are underway for our first-ever "Bring Your Kids to Work Day," scheduled for the morning of August 5. We're excited to welcome 37 children, ages 8 to 18, for a fun and engaging half-day event.

In other updates, Stacey represented SBCERA at the recent PACE Executive Committee meeting. SBCERA was proudly recognized for having the third-highest overall participation in the PACE Wellness Program, with notable rankings in both the Quarter 1 "Rest and Recharge Challenge" (3rd place) and Quarter 2 "Walk Your Walk Challenge" (2nd place). Currently, nine participants have achieved Level 4 (\$50 Rewards Cash), and seven have reached Level 3 (\$25 Rewards Cash). With this momentum, we are aiming to claim first place in the upcoming Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 challenges. Planning is also progressing for this year's health fair and open enrollment events.

Lastly, steady progress continues on the Job Description Modernization Project—an important initiative focused on updating and standardizing SBCERA's job classifications. So far, 12% of job descriptions have been finalized, with another 8% in progress. The HR team is committed to updating at least one job description per week, ensuring that all descriptions accurately reflect current responsibilities, align with SBCERA's core values, and support future recruitment, employee development, and strategic planning goals.

Investments (Don Pierce)

NEPC will deliver this fiscal-year-end investment performance report and will provide a detailed review of the program. Overall, we are pleased with the absolute results given the existing market environment. Markets rallied strongly post the April 2025 swoon over trade policy, and while we lagged our policy, our balanced portfolio participated in the overall up market generating an 8.7% net performance result for the year. Our five-year results at 10.7% still rank very well and include additional volatile market experiences. As we reflect on the portfolio over the long-run, our 10-year results at 7.5% meet all three criteria we consider: meeting our funding goals, outperforming the market for a given risk, and performing well versus peers.

Member Services (Christina Cintron)

Throughout the month of July, the Member Services team remained focused on delivering dependable and high-quality service across all channels, while continuing efforts to strengthen internal operations and build team engagement.

We are pleased to report that we have selected a candidate for the Office Specialist position following an intensive interview process in which we met with 17 applicants. The selected candidate is currently starting the background process with Human Resources. We are very excited to have her join our team and appreciate the effort and input from all who participated in the hiring process.

This month also marked an important step in streamlining our service model: the Survivor Benefits team created a new call center for death reporting. As a result, Member Services has retired the "Member Death – Retired" call center and will now focus on the "Member – General" and "mySBCERA" queues. While this change improves internal alignment, our team will continue

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to provide the same high level of one-touch service to any callers reporting a death, offering assistance without transferring them.

In support of this transition, Jose Beltran, Member Experience Manager, partnered with Sandy Meier, Survivor Benefits Manager, to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for handling Member and Beneficiary death reports. Jose led a team meeting to walk staff through the new SOP, ensuring that everyone was trained on the updated process. This collaboration reflects SBCERA's values of teamwork, professionalism, and continuous improvement, while reinforcing our commitment to a consistent and compassionate service experience.

Earlier in the month, the team also took time to celebrate the 4th of July with a festive Nacho Bar on July 2nd. While most grabbed food on the go, it was a small but meaningful opportunity to show appreciation and support a positive team culture.

Despite the holiday and other key activities, the team ensured full coverage throughout the month, including lobby services, inbound calls, and virtual and in-person retirement counseling appointments. Staff continued reviewing and refining internal procedures and were encouraged to share feedback to help ensure that documentation is clear, consistent, and actionable. This ongoing work supports our strategic pillar of Operational Excellence and Efficiency.

Communications & Stakeholder Relations (Olivia Applegate)

Smart Website Enhancements

Refining our communication efforts is something we are always prioritizing as a team. That's why we've recently started using Hotjar, a leading solution for website user experience analysis. It helps us connect the dots between what's happening and why it happens, so we can improve the user experience and create better outcomes in a smart way. It gives us the visibility on where visitors are navigating to the most, what they're searching for, and where they're clicking. Already, we've been able to make some improvements to our homepage that reflect this data, and we look forward to making more improvements this year.

Latest Newsletter Campaigns

At the end of July, we sent our latest periodic electronic newsletter campaigns. They include bite-sized information on our latest news, highlights, and educational resources to help support our active members in retirement planning, and our retirees in retirement. You can find links to both campaigns below.

[Journey to Retirement](#) – Designed for Active and Deferred Members

[Life After Retirement](#) – Designed for Retirees and Beneficiaries

They've been posted on our [Latest News](#) page of the website and shared on our social media platforms (follow us @SBCERA). Reach out with any questions and we hope you enjoy them too!

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Retiree Volunteer Expo

SBCERA is proud to partner with the [San Bernardino County Museum](#) and the [Retired Employees of San Bernardino County \(RESBC\)](#) to host a Retiree Volunteer Expo on **Monday, September 15 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at the San Bernardino County Museum**. This special event brings together a variety of local nonprofits and community-based organizations, offering retirees a unique opportunity to explore meaningful and flexible ways to give back. This event concept was approved by the Board last year as part of our retiree support initiatives and is aimed at encouraging volunteerism and connecting our retirees back to our community along the way.

Fiscal Services (Amy McInerny)

The focus for the Fiscal Services team this month has been on year-end activities. We are making the final expense accruals and will close the books in about two weeks. Aside from the usual reconciliations and accounting entries, we reconcile all the investment accounts through June 30. This reconciliation includes estimates to capture the fourth quarter activity even when manager statements are not available. Work has begun on the financial statement disclosures, and we continue to communicate with the actuary and auditors in preparation for final reports.

GASB 68 reports have been sent to our Employers for use in their financial statement preparation. We have also sent out the annual employer confirmation statements to our participating employers. This request is part of Brown Armstrong's requests of SBCERA and allow the employers to confirm and comment on SBCERA's accounting of their contributions over the fiscal year. Employers are required to respond to the confirmation request before the end of August – confirmations are made directly to Brown Armstrong. Our employer reporting team worked diligently on the contribution reconciliations and confirmation support. The employer confirmations went out even earlier this year than they did last year. We have already received a response from 25% of our employers.

We are saying goodbye to Bazil LaRoche, our Senior Accountant on the benefit payment team and a 5-year employee of SBCERA. We are grateful to Bazil for his contributions to SBCERA and wish him the best in his new home in Northern California. We have opened a recruitment for Senior Accountant to replace Bazil and look forward to interviewing qualified candidates soon. We will make some temporary adjustments to our team structure to ensure that our members' needs continue to be met during this transition period.

Information Services (Joe Michael)

HVAC Project Update

The Information Services Department continues to make steady progress on the HVAC system upgrade project. As part of the next major phase, installation of the new rooftop units is scheduled to take place over the weekend beginning August 8th.

Following the successful installation of these units, the project will transition into its next phase, which is integration and system controls. This critical step will ensure that the new HVAC units are fully integrated with the facility's existing infrastructure and operated through updated control systems, providing enhanced efficiency and reliability.

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As part of this integration work, construction activity will occur within the reception area. To accommodate this, SBCERA will temporarily relocate reception and consultation services. The temporary relocation is expected to take place from August 18 to September 5. Additional details regarding the alternate arrangements for member services during this period will be communicated in advance.

SBCERA remains committed to completing this project and will continue to provide updates as milestones are achieved.

Legal, Disabilities & Survivor Benefits (Barbara Hannah)

Public Records Act Requests

On July 14, 2025, SBCERA received a Public Records Act request from Maximiliano L. seeking the organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) for purposes of academic research on public pension systems, specifically to identify SBCERA's fund in administrative records. The requested record was withheld in accordance with Government Code section 7922.000, which provides, in relevant part, that "on the facts of the particular case the public interest served by not disclosing the record clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure."

In an effort to assist the requester, SBCERA provided links to SBCERA's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and actuarial valuations reports, both of which contain transparent and detailed financial and actuarial information about SBCERA.

On July 24, 2025, SBCERA received a Public Records Act request from Jack Crawford requesting records related to the incentive compensation policy used within the investment function. Specifically, the request included investment return data, internal rate of return measures and their associated benchmark for each asset class, as well as information regarding human resources information system, performance management system, and custodial services, including total fees.

In response, SBCERA provided links to its investment reports, asset allocation, and the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget. Records related to the human resources information system were withheld in accordance with Government Code section 7922.000, consistent with the exemption criteria noted above.

Important Upcoming Dates – Training Opportunities

Date	Description	Location	Comments
Aug 14, 2025	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Aug 14, 2025	SBCERA Audit Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Aug 17–19, 2025	NCPERS Public Pension Funding Forum	Chicago, IL	Pre-Authorized
Aug 18-19, 2025	CalPERS Pathways for Women	Anaheim, CA	Requires advanced Board approval
Aug 21, 2025	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A

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Date	Description	Location	Comments
Aug 21-22, 2025	Nossaman Fiduciary Forum	Sacramento, CA	Requires advanced Board approval
Sep 4, 2025	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Sep 8 – 10, 2025	CII 2025 Fall Conference	San Francisco, Ca	Additional training opportunity (up to 2)
Sep 10 – 12, 2025	SBCERA Investment Forum	Lake Arrowhead, CA	N/A
Sep 16, 2025	Russell Due Diligence	Seattle, WA	Pre-Authorized up to 4 Trustees
Sep 17, 2025	SB State of the County	Ontario, CA	N/A
Sep 18, 2025	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Sep 23, 2025	Adams Street & William Blair Due Diligence	Chicago, IL	Pre-Authorized up to 4 Trustees
Sep 23 – 25, 2025	IDAC 2025 Global Summit	San Antonio, TX	Requires advanced Board approval
Oct 2, 2025	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Oct 3, 2025	CALAPRS Trustees Round Table	Virtual	Pre-Authorized
Oct 7, 2025	Wasatch Due Diligence	Salt Lake City, UT	Pre-Authorized up to 4 Trustees
Oct 9, 2025	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Oct 16, 2025	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Oct 25 – 26, 2025	NCPERS Accredited Fiduciary Program (NAF)	Tampa, FL	Pre-Authorized
Oct 25 – 26, 2025	NCPERS Program for Advanced Trustee Training (PATs)	Tampa, FL	Pre-Authorized
Oct 26 – 29, 2025	NCPERS Financial, Actuarial, Legislative & Legal Fall Conference	Tampa, FL	Pre-Authorized
Nov 6, 2025	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Nov 11-14, 2025	SACRS Fall Conference	Huntington Beach, CA	Pre-Authorized
Nov 20, 2025	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Nov 20, 2025	SBCERA Audit Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Nov 20, 2025	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A
Dec 4, 2025	SBCERA Board Meeting	SBCERA	N/A
Dec 11, 2025	SBCERA Investment Committee	SBCERA	N/A

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Date	Description	Location	Comments
Dec 18, 2025	SBCERA Administrative Committee	SBCERA	N/A

Trustees wishing to attend any of the upcoming trainings should contact Christa James for travel and registration, or to make arrangements for meetings that need approval to be included with the upcoming Board agenda.