

# San Antonio's Promise Zone funding surpasses \$30 million mark

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San Antonio's Promise Zone partners have collectively secured nearly \$32 million in funding from federal agencies, which will be used to help spur more economic development opportunities on the long-underserved East Side.

The announcement comes just a little more than a year after the Obama administration designated San Antonio as only one of a handful of Promise Zone cities.

SAGE — short for San Antonio for Growth on the Eastside — is one of more than a dozen local "implementation partners" involved in the Promise Zone initiative, and it has received \$1.2 million in grant funding so far.

"This is critical for us," SAGE Executive Director Jackie Gorman said about the Promise Zone money. "It will help fund a master economic development strategy for the area."

SAGE will work to identify potential economic development sites and focus on business and job recruitment for the East Side.

"We will work to identify the industries that we want to recruit," Gorman said.

The goal is to get all stakeholders to work in unison to help create a comprehensive economic transformation strategy for the historically challenged area, said Mike Etienne, who is directing the Promise Zone initiative for the city of San Antonio.

"We need to move in the same direction," he said. "It's been a great partnership because of the level of collaboration. This funding is a testament to that."

Gorman said the Promise Zone designation opened a wide door to new economic opportunities. The funding will help partners implement critical strategies needed to bring recognizable and sustainable change to the East Side.

"It's given us resources and focus," Gorman said. "It's forced us to formalize relationships."

Etienne said San Antonio has embraced the opportunities afforded by the Promise Zone initiative and has become a model for several other cities now hoping to secure similar federal support.

"By 2025, we hope to have an East Side that is a community in demand — vibrant, diverse and full of opportunity," Etienne said.

