
California Underground Safety Board

August 24-25, 2026

Agenda Item No. 15 Information Item – Staff Report

Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Awareness Campaign Update

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SUMMARY

As part of the Underground Safety Board's (Board) coordinated statewide education and outreach objective, the Board's Education and Outreach Committee (E&O committee) is executing Phase 2 – Public Engagement¹ of the No-811 public safety awareness campaign (No-811 PSA campaign) implementation plan. The E&O Committee engaged stakeholders in July by conducting two public workshops to collect input on how they develop, prioritize, measure, and distribute excavation public safety information throughout California.

This report summarizes outreach activities, stakeholder participation, workshop discussions, and next steps, including how information collected at the workshops will be analyzed to inform coordinated public safety messaging during Phase 3 – Campaign Launch and Phase 4 – Education and Outreach of the implementation plan.

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 Strategic Plan Objective: Improve Compliance by Reaching Parties in Effective Ways

Strategic Activity: Establish a Framework for Coordinated State Education and Outreach

BACKGROUND

Government Code section 4216.12(b)(1) requires the Board to coordinate education and outreach activities that encourage safe excavation practices. The Board works with stakeholders throughout California to improve public awareness of safe excavation practices and encourage behavior changes that reduce the risk of damage to underground infrastructure.

Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach is an ongoing Board initiative². During a

¹ See Appendix [Figure A1](#) - Public Safety Awareness Campaign Implementation Plan

² See Appendix [Figure A2](#) - Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Background – Timeline

workshop at the 2023 Annual Education and Outreach Meeting stakeholders identified opportunities to improve coordination of excavation safety education efforts³, and the Board built on those discussions through additional stakeholder engagement and research throughout 2024⁴ and 2025.⁵ This helped the Board to better understand existing education programs, public safety messaging, audience needs, and opportunities for statewide collaboration. Findings from the Board's work identified that stakeholders in California would like to see failure to notify the 811 center - the largest individual root cause of damages nationally⁶ - addressed on a statewide level.

In response to the request from stakeholders, development of the No-811 PSA campaign was included in the Board's 2026-2027 Workplan.⁷ The campaign's 4-phase implementation plan was presented at the February 2026 Board meeting⁸, and possible approaches for how to reach the right people at the right time with the right damage prevention message were identified through analytical research presented at the April 2026 Board meeting.⁹

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE: PHASE 2 - PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The E&O committee held two public workshops and invited stakeholders throughout the state to attend and share their experiences to inform the No-811 PSA campaign development. The workshops had the same agenda¹⁰ but took place on different days and in different geographic locations. Virtual participation was also available for both workshops. By offering multiple ways to participate, the E&O committee provided opportunities for a broad range of stakeholder perspectives to be heard.

The E&O committee previously heard from stakeholders that they would distribute public safety education material if provided by the Board, so the objective of these workshops was to collect feedback on what materials are most useful, what formats are needed, when and how public safety messages are distributed, and what barriers may prevent content from being shared.

The workshops focused on three public safety education topics that support implementation of the No-811 PSA campaign:

- How stakeholders use data and performance measures to guide public safety education

³ [Notice and Agenda](#) for the September 11, 2023, Annual Education and Outreach Meeting

⁴ September 4, 2024, Annual Education and Outreach Meeting, [Item 8: Framework for Coordinated State Education and Outreach](#)

⁵ November 17-18, 2025 Underground Safety Board Meeting; [Item 42 – Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Workshops Update](#)

⁶ Common Ground Alliance [DIRT Report & Analysis](#)

⁷ Underground Safety Board [2026-2027 Workplan](#), January 2026

⁸ February 9-10, 2026 Underground Safety Board Meeting; [Item 19 - Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Awareness Campaign](#)

⁹ April 13, 2026 Underground Safety Board Meeting; [Item No. 14 - Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Awareness Campaign Update](#)

¹⁰ [Notice and Agenda](#) for the July 23, 2026 and July 30, 2026 Underground Safety Board Education and Outreach Workshops

decisions and evaluate outreach effectiveness.

- How seasonal trends influence the planning, timing, and delivery of public safety education activities.
- How educational resources can be more effectively shared through existing stakeholder communication networks to improve statewide coordination.

Workshop Discussions: Summary of Feedback

Key findings from stakeholder feedback during the discussions at the workshop include:

- Stakeholders discussed the value of communicating that 811 is free.
- It was suggested that financial-impact messaging may be more effective than safety messaging.
- Examples were provided that showed regional and Spanish language messaging drove measurable engagement.
- Stakeholders provided data that supported their efforts to target contractors, instead of homeowners.
- Attendees shared the opinion that their outreach peaks in the months of March – September.
- Stakeholders identified the Board’s website or emails from staff as a preferred channel for accessing and downloading education resources.

The following sections summarize in more detail the information shared by stakeholders during both workshops.

Discussion 1: Using Data to Plan and Measure Public Safety Awareness Activities

The first discussion focused on how organizations use information and performance data to guide public safety education activities and evaluate outreach effectiveness. Participants were asked to describe the metrics used to support decision-making, examples of education efforts that have demonstrated measurable impact, and the excavation safety topics most frequently encountered through outreach activities.

Summary of feedback provided by stakeholders:

- An operator in Southern California shared that the public is often surprised to learn that 811 is free, so they continued outreach efforts with a focus on this benefit.
- Stakeholders discussed that it can be difficult to measure the impact of their campaigns, but that they believe that messaging focused on safety is not as impactful as messaging focused on the financial impact of damages. It was also mentioned that excavators are reactive, not proactive. Data was not provided to support these beliefs.
- Attendees from both workshops mentioned that tracking the success of damage prevention messaging remains difficult. A representative from a regional notification center discussed that their messaging may be reaching audiences well before they intend to dig; therefore, many messages are focused on awareness of 811 only. An operator noted that their messaging strategies are maturing; however, the programs are relatively new so finding direct correlations or trends will take more time.
- Multiple stakeholders mentioned a focus on Spanish messaging with regional targeting efforts. These efforts included television commercials and targeting high-risk counties.

A correlation between the television commercials and a direct increase in Spanish calls was noted.

- A stakeholder from Southern California noted that the damages they track showed approximately 70% of damages involve contractors and 30% of damages are from homeowners. This data is a shift in focus from previous feedback from stakeholders who noted that homeowners were their primary audience target for safety messaging.
- A real estate agent in attendance provided feedback that they are not directly involved in the for-sale sign installation process; they use an app and the service gets it done quickly. The real estate agent in attendance agreed that there is an opportunity to educate agents about the need to call 811 before digging, and to encourage them to tell their clients to only hire contractors who call 811.

Discussion 2: Seasonal Impact on Public Safety Awareness Content

The second discussion explored how seasonal trends influence excavation safety education and outreach. Stakeholders were asked to describe how outreach priorities change throughout the year, periods of increased public engagement, and how education activities are planned during both busy and slower seasons.

Summary of feedback provided by stakeholders:

- Stakeholder data provided insight that the months of March through September see the highest excavation activity, and this is when they do the most outreach. This timeframe includes National 811 Day, which provides an opportunity for coordinated messaging about safe digging practices.
- January through March
 - In the period covering January through March, stakeholders noted that they are focused on planning and budget development for marketing and education teams and that actual education and outreach activities are low.
 - There was also discussion about how weather can impact excavation work during this time. Operators noted that a forecast for a storm can trigger messaging about the 811 process and safe digging practices, in anticipation of post-storm construction needs that involve excavation work.
- April through September
 - April is considered by stakeholders to be kickoff season for education messaging and outreach campaigns, including National Safe Digging Month.
 - Stakeholders said that events, trainings, and sponsorships remain at their peak levels through September.
- October - December
 - Stakeholders noted that opportunities for education and outreach begin to slow during this timeframe as the busy time for construction ends, and by Thanksgiving they are done with their education and outreach for the year.
 - Stakeholders identified competition for attention with holiday messaging and mindsets as a reason that public engagement is low during this time.
 - A real estate agent suggested that this period is a good time for the Board to reach out to partners and professionals; they will have more time to digest and consider information that can be included in the year ahead planning.

Discussion 3: Accessing and Sharing Public Safety Content

The third discussion focused on how stakeholders access, manage, and distribute public safety education materials. The discussion touched on preferred resource formats, challenges associated with obtaining or sharing educational content, and opportunities to improve coordination among organizations that communicate excavation safety information.

Summary of feedback provided by stakeholders:

- Stakeholders identified the Board's website or emails from staff as a preferred channel for accessing and downloading education resources.
- Stakeholders shared a common perspective that they have not experienced barriers when providing QR codes for public use to access resources. They also identified that QR codes provide an opportunity to track engagement, though data for past or current QR code usage was not available.

Stakeholder Outreach Activities

Outreach activities for the workshops highlighted the Board's collaborative approach to addressing this public safety issue. There was a strategic focus on the industry roles that would have the most impact on the discussions, including education and training, marketing and communications, public safety, damage prevention, utility operations, and other functions that influence excavation safety awareness¹¹.

Outreach was conducted through direct stakeholder outreach, digital stakeholder outreach, and partner engagement.

Direct Stakeholder Outreach

Education and Outreach staff conducted direct outreach to individuals, professional associations, utility operators, and local governments through phone calls and emails. A total of 14 phone calls were made, and a total of 61 emails were sent.

Digital Stakeholder Outreach

Education and Outreach staff conducted digital outreach using the Board's email list and social media profiles. A total of 578 emails were sent and one social media post was published for each workshop.

Partner Engagement

Education and Outreach staff promoted the workshops at industry meetings, including the USA North 811 Board Meeting.

Stakeholder Outreach Outcomes

Stakeholder outreach efforts resulted in participation from stakeholders representing diverse groups across the excavation industry, which provided valuable perspectives from those who

¹¹ See Appendix [Figure A3](#) - Education and Outreach Public Workshops - Stakeholder Outreach and Workshop Execution Timeline

routinely communicate excavation safety information to excavators, operators, contractors, businesses, and the public.

Workshop Participation Summary

A total of 58 people attended the workshops, virtually and in person.

WORKSHOP	REGISTERED	ATTENDED – IN PERSON	ATTENDED – VIRTUALLY	AVERAGE TIME IN WORKSHOP <i>(percent of total workshop duration – virtual attendees only)</i>
Sacramento, July 23	39	3	29	86%
San Diego, July 30	33	6	20	73%

Source: Microsoft Teams Attendance and Engagement Reports

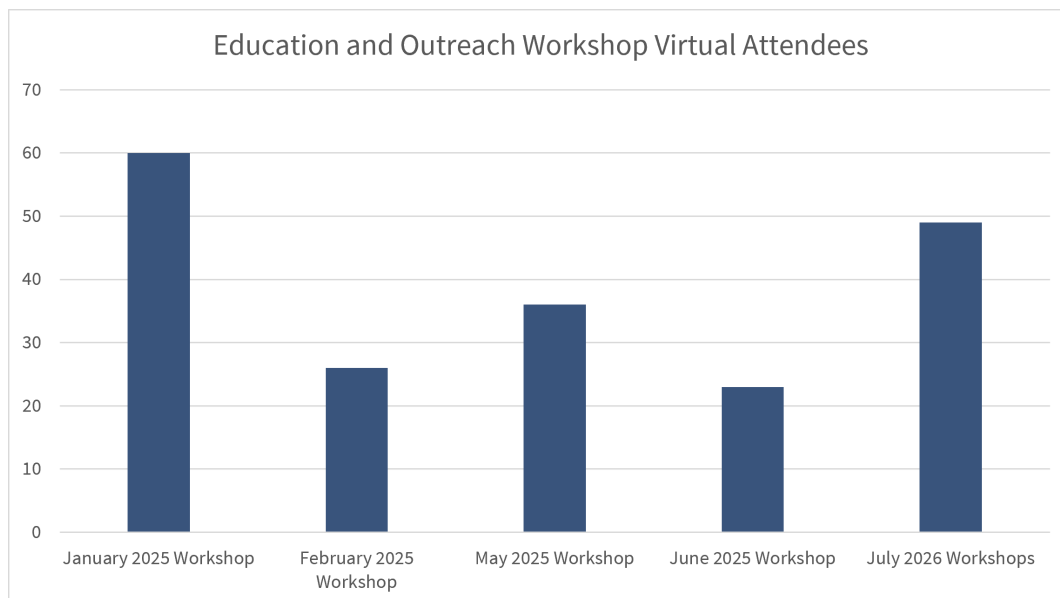
Outreach Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the stakeholder outreach outcomes was evaluated using the following framework:

- **Strategy:** If and/or how holding two workshops with the same agenda in different geographic locations impacted registration and attendance.
- **Understanding:** Whether stakeholders understood the workshop's purpose and objective, and how the topic applied to their work.
- **Engagement:** The level and quality of stakeholder participation and feedback.

Overall key findings include:

- Holding two workshops that had the same agenda did not have an adverse impact on participation. When comparing virtual attendance for these workshops to virtual attendance for workshops held in 2025, these workshops show higher total attendance than all workshops except the January 2025 instance.



Source: Microsoft Teams Attendance and Engagement Reports

Chart showing virtual attendance for Education and Outreach Workshops between January 2025 - July 2026

- Stakeholders participated in every workshop discussion and brought data into the discussion, demonstrating that they understood the purpose and objective of the workshops. They also discussed how the topics applied to their work by sharing specific examples and feedback on how they could use the materials the Board creates and distributes.
- Engagement from stakeholders included perspectives from damage prevention education and marketing roles.¹²

These findings indicate that targeted outreach efforts successfully reached intended audiences and communicated the purpose and objective of the workshop.

The evaluation also identified opportunities to strengthen future public outreach to increase stakeholder engagement, including:

- Continuing to build relationships with stakeholders throughout the state to expand the Board's network and reach a greater variety of stakeholders; specifically, excavators and damage prevention and education roles.
- Conducting outreach with a longer timeframe to encourage participation from as many interested stakeholders as possible.
- Reaching out to participants of past workshops to develop or continue the relationship and encourage continued participation in the Board's work.
- Focus on communicating to stakeholders the value of hearing all perspectives, including excavators who expressed that they weren't sure if their feedback applied to the discussions.

NEXT STEPS

The feedback collected at the workshops will be analyzed to identify opportunities to apply findings to the No-811 PSA campaign messaging, educational resources, performance measures, and statewide coordination efforts. The results of that analysis will be presented at a future Board meeting.

CONCLUSION

The public engagement described in this report provided an opportunity to gather stakeholder perspectives that can be evaluated alongside previously conducted research to strengthen implementation of the No-811 PSA campaign.

Continued engagement also helps the Board establish and grow relationships with stakeholders that educate and communicate with the state's excavation community. These existing communication networks represent an important component of coordinated statewide education and outreach and provide opportunities to extend the reach of the Board's public safety messaging.

¹² See [Figure A4](#): Notable Workshop Participation for additional participant details.

APPENDIX

Figure A1: Public Safety Awareness Campaign Implementation Plan

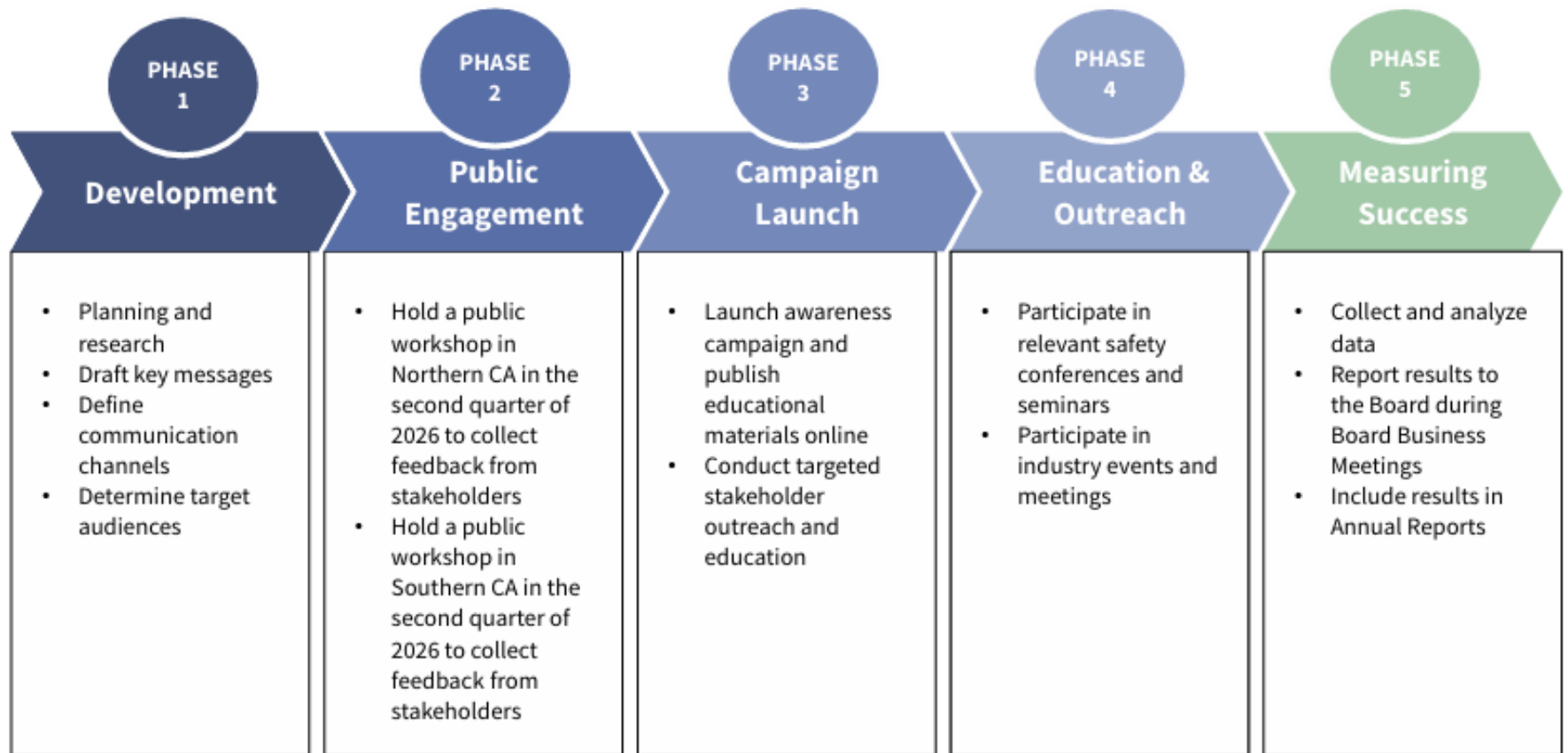


Figure A2: Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Background – Timeline

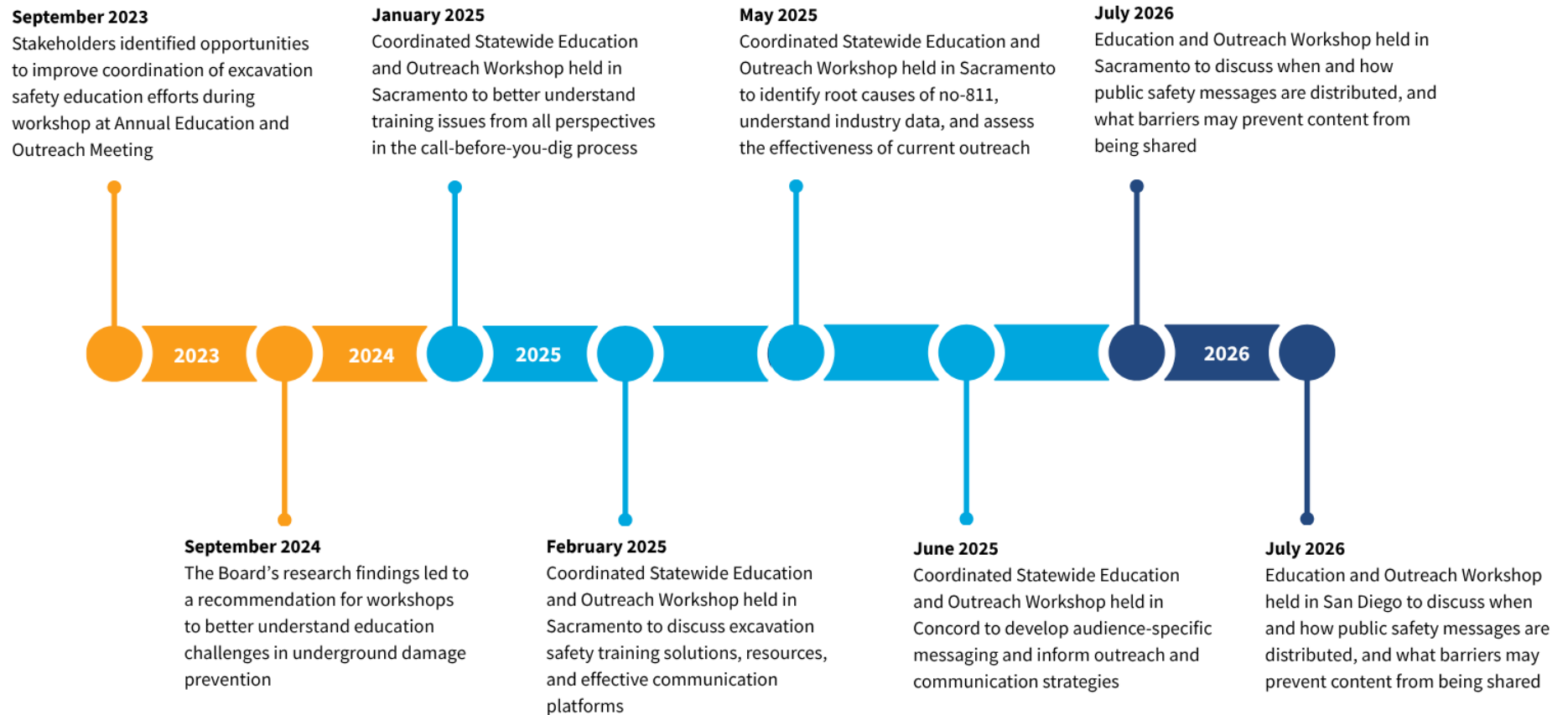


Figure A3: Education and Outreach Public Workshops - Stakeholder Outreach and Workshop Execution Timeline

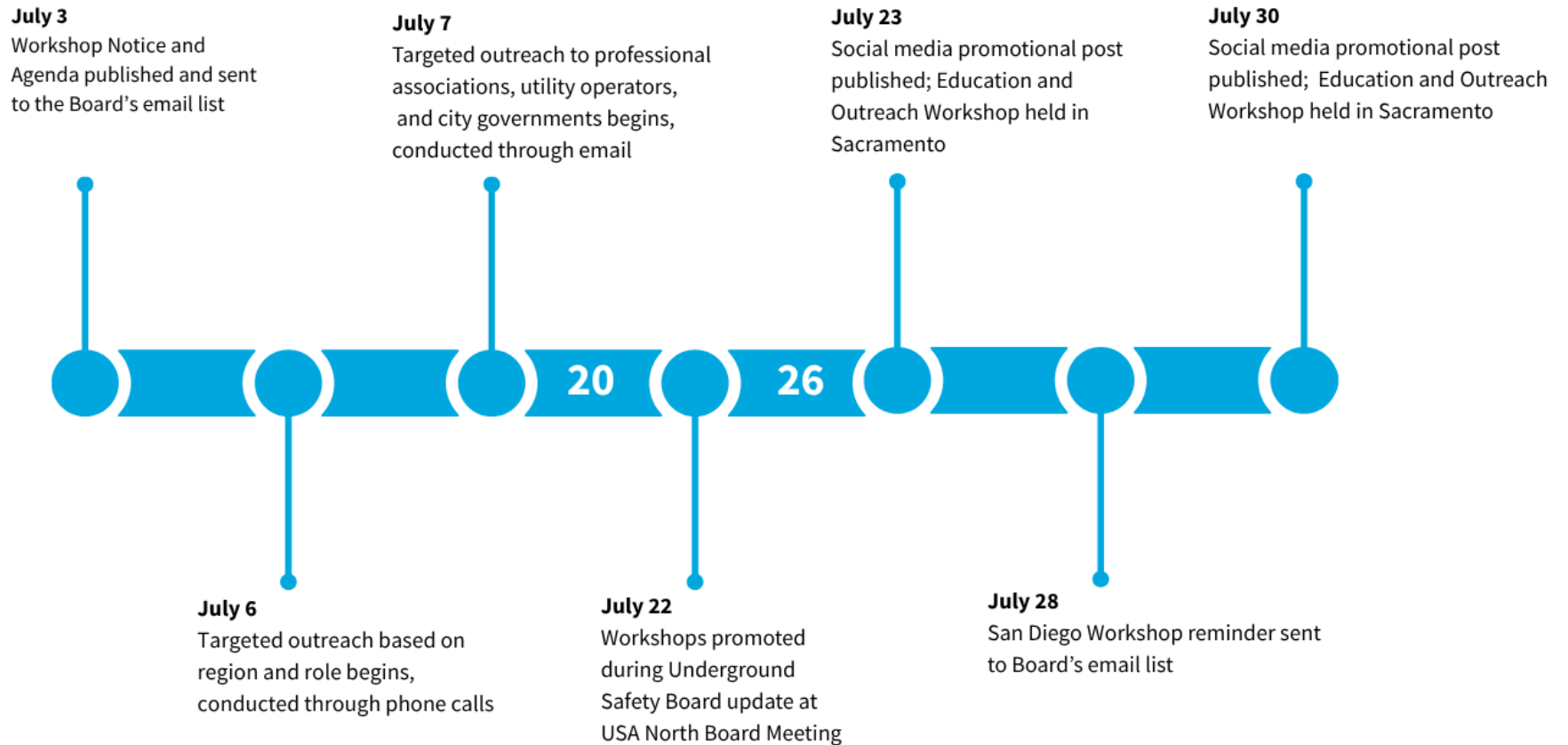
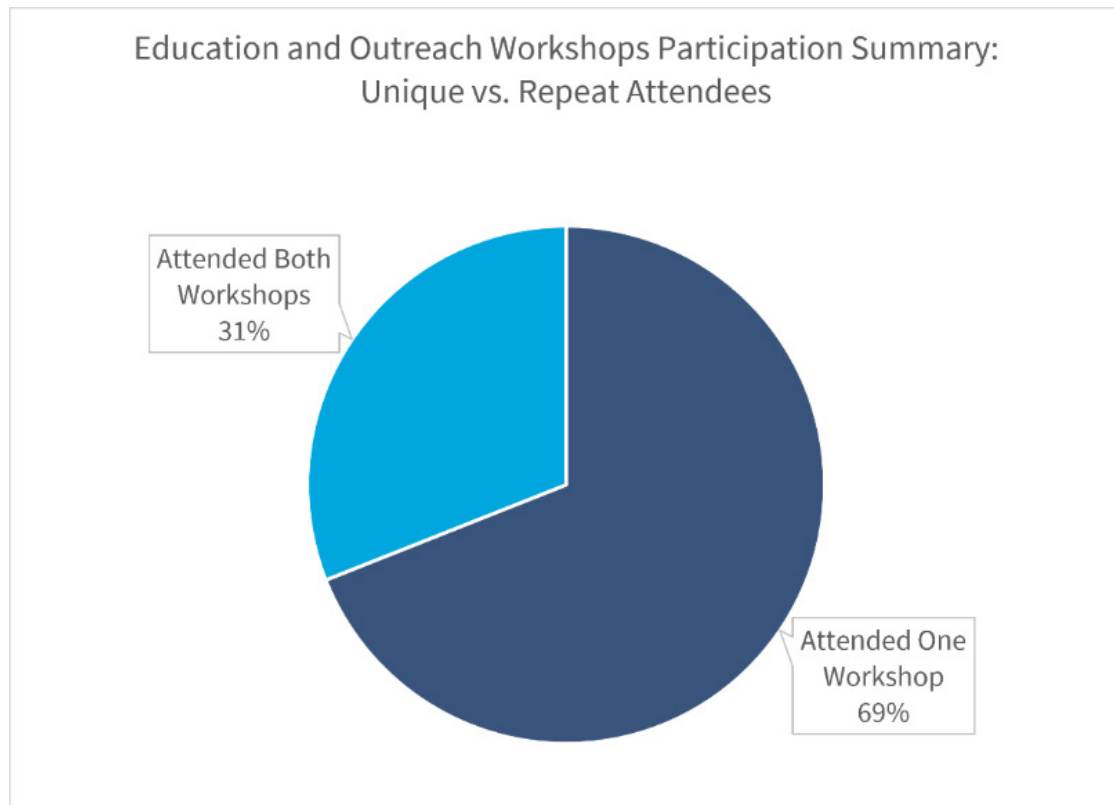


Figure A4: Notable Workshop Participation

- Across the two workshops, there were 40 unique attendees, representing 69% of all attendees.



Source: Microsoft Teams Attendance and Engagement Reports

Figure Workshop attendance showing unique attendees

- Approximately 16 attendees (28% of all attendees) represented damage prevention, safety leadership, and education roles.
- New voices joined the coordinated education and outreach conversation, including an engineer inspector who works in public works at a major city in the Bay Area, an insurance representative who works with construction companies, and a real estate agent who works in the Southern region.
- Representatives from two leading oil pipeline companies also attended, marking a new connection with underground organizations that had not previously been engaged.
- A notable attendee was a representative from the Morongo Water Department, which manages a public water system on the Morongo Indian Reservation in Southern California.