
California Underground Facilities Safe Excavation Board

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Agenda Item No. 19 (Information Item) – Staff Report

Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Awareness Campaign

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SUMMARY

This report details the project plan for the Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Awareness Campaign that will be developed in 2026 and launched in 2027. Building on stakeholder feedback provided to the Board's Education and Outreach Committee (E&O Committee), the campaign is divided into two stages and will use a research-informed approach in the development of the audiences and key messaging, and the selection of communication channels.

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. As part of that activity, the Board must convene an annual meeting that meets the requirements of 4216.17(a).

At the Board's 2023 Education and Outreach meeting,¹ the Board facilitated a workshop to discuss opportunities to coordinate statewide education and outreach efforts among stakeholders. As part of the 2024 Workplan², staff conducted interviews with industry stakeholders to gain insight into their education and outreach programs and to analyze evaluation techniques and effectiveness. At the Board's 2024 Education and Outreach meeting, staff presented the research findings and recommended that the E&O Committee conduct a series of workshops with stakeholders to better

¹ [Notice and agenda for the September 11, 2023, Annual Education and Outreach Meeting](#)

² [Underground Safety Board 2024 Workplan](#)

understand training issues from different perspectives in the call-before-you-dig process³.

In 2025, the E&O Committee held four workshops to facilitate collaborative discussions regarding excavation safety training, which resulted in these key findings:

- Workshop attendees selected the underground infrastructure damage root cause “Failure to Notify 811” as the focus for the workshop discussions.
- Participants asked the Board to develop safety training materials related to “Failure to Notify 811”.
- Participants stated that they would use and distribute those materials in their own outreach and safety training efforts to improve awareness of the 811 process.
- Participants stated that across many different excavation industry audiences there is a lack of awareness of responsibilities related to the Dig Safe Act (Government Code section 4216 et seq.) and calling 811.

At the November 2025 Board meeting, the Board approved the 2026-2027 Workplan, which includes implementation of a Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Awareness Campaign (Awareness Campaign). In 2026 and 2027, the E&O Committee and staff will conduct these activities:

- Draft a project plan to develop content and implement the Awareness Campaign
- Conduct workshop(s) to facilitate focus groups with stakeholders to get feedback on content for the Awareness Campaign
- Launch the Awareness Campaign

COORDINATED STATEWIDE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Awareness Campaign is a multi-year initiative that is designed to strengthen understanding of safe digging practices, share information about access to training materials and other resources, and promote opportunities for public engagement. The campaign will be completed in two stages: Stage 1 will include development of messaging, content, and strategy, as well as hosting public engagement workshop(s); Stage 2 will include launching the campaign, stakeholder engagement opportunities, and measuring success.

This campaign builds on the public engagement workshops that were held throughout 2025 and incorporates feedback received from operators, excavators, locators, regional notification centers, local governments, and professional associations. It will increase exposure to the Dig Safe Act⁴ by reaching audiences with targeted content for stakeholders at different awareness levels, in different fields, and across geographic regions.

Draft messaging and content will be developed, and public workshops will be held in 2026 to collect feedback from stakeholders. Staff is targeting workshop dates in the second quarter of the year, and locations in both the northern and southern regions of California. Both workshops will include

³[September 4, 2024, Annual Education and Outreach Meeting, Item 8: Framework for Coordinated State Education and Outreach](#)

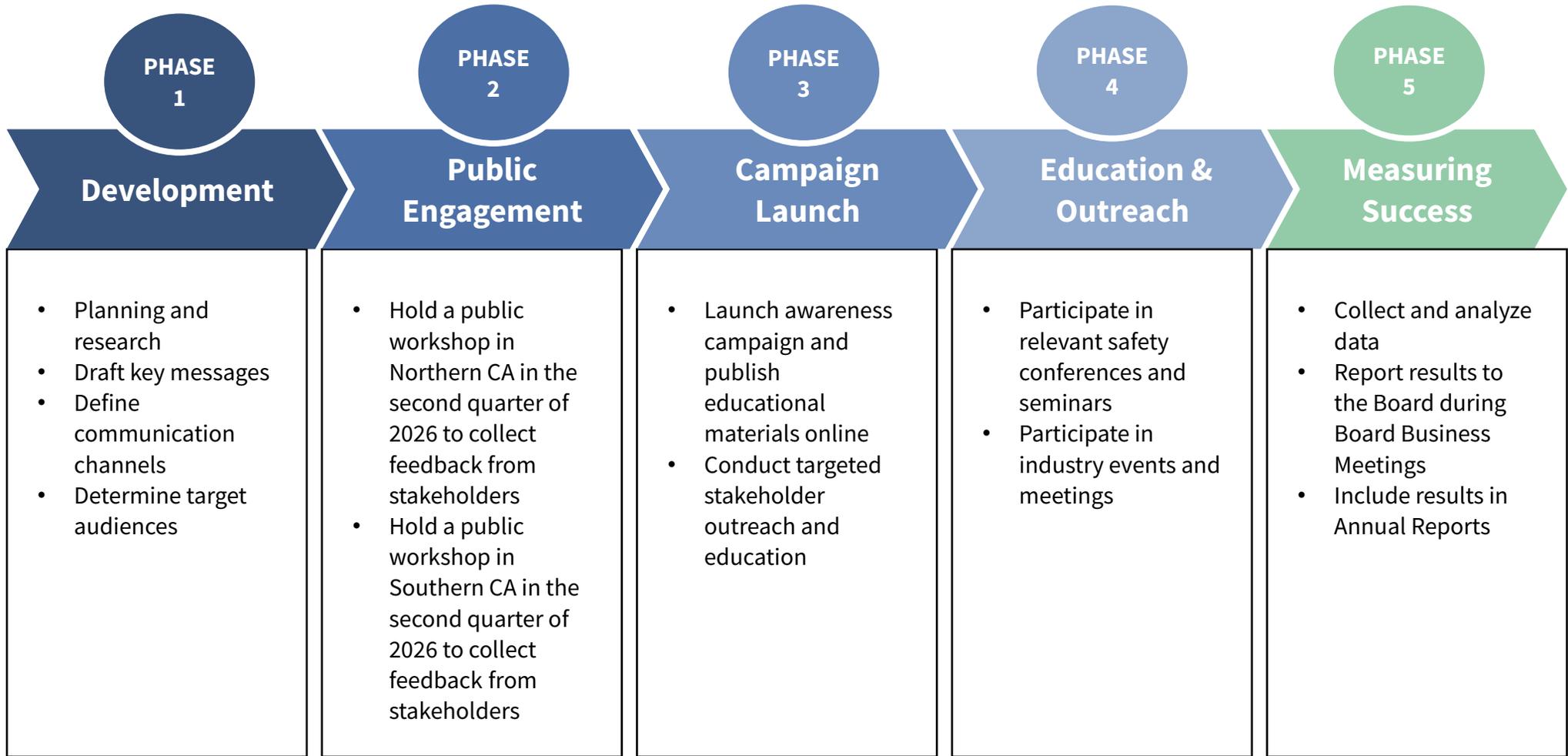
⁴ Gov. Code section 1416 et seq., hereinafter known as the “Dig Safe Act.”

the same content, so stakeholders will only need to attend one of the workshops to provide their feedback; holding the same workshop in different regions will provide multiple opportunities for statewide participation.

Awareness Campaign Implementation Plan

The following table displays a five-phase implementation approach and outlines the activities that will be utilized for public awareness, education, and engagement.

Coordinated Statewide Education and Outreach Awareness Campaign Implementation Plan



Awareness Campaign Priorities

The priorities for the Awareness Campaign support the Board's mission,⁵ vision,⁶ and values⁷ by promoting worker safety, spreading awareness about preventing damage to underground installations, and furthering the Board's culture of continuous learning. The priorities have a shared goal of reaching audiences at various levels of understanding to increase compliance with the Dig Safe Act:

- Awareness: Create broad visibility of the Dig Safe Act so that the public recognizes the safety issues, understands the requirements under the law, and becomes familiar with the Board.
- Education: Deepen the understanding of the obligations under the law for target audiences and share knowledge regarding access to training and educational resources.
- Engagement: Reinforce awareness and education through interactions with stakeholders that offer opportunities for participation and feedback.

Awareness Campaign Strategic Approach

To meet the above priorities, the campaign strategy will focus on:

- Audiences
- Key Messages
- Communication Channels

Audiences

Audiences for the campaign will include different demographic and geographic groups.

- Excavation industry stakeholders whose day-to-day work or decision-making is tied to the Dig Safe Act will be segmented into target audiences based on information such as role and industry. This may include construction workers, contractors, landscapers, engineers, operators, real estate agents and brokers, and local municipalities.
- While the campaign will be a statewide initiative, the E&O Committee will also use data to determine counties that have the highest damage rates, and regional targeting will be done to engage these areas that are high-risk and/or have high excavation activity.

Key Messages

The key message for the campaign will be: *Every safe dig begins with 811, because we're all connected underground.* This message follows the guiding theme presented in the 2026-2027 Workplan⁸, which was presented at the November 2025 Board Business meeting. This unified messaging strategy will provide consistency and recognition throughout the state.

Building on this theme, targeted messaging will be used that is tailored to specific audience and regional groups and that reflects the real-world conditions for these different groups. As an example, according to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), between 2016-2023, the number of additional dwelling units (ADUs) permitted annually in the state

⁵ [Board Policy B-02](#)

⁶ [Board Policy B-03](#)

⁷ [Board Policy B-04](#)

⁸ [November 17-18, 2025, Underground Safety Board Meeting, Item 04: 2026-2027 Workplan](#)

grew from 1,336 to 26,924, a 20-fold increase.⁹ A key message could be included in campaign content that educates the public about excavation safety related to the construction of ADUs.

The tone of the messaging will shift to be appropriate for the audience, but will generally be approachable and informative, emphasizing the importance of calling 811 before digging. Content will use storytelling techniques, such as data, real-world examples, and first-person perspectives, to make messages engaging and relatable.

Communication Channels

The Awareness Campaign messaging will be shared using a mix of online and offline communication channels to coordinate public outreach that will spread awareness, educate people, and create engagement with safety.

The Board currently has access to these owned communication channels¹⁰:

- Energy Safety Website
 - www.energysafety.ca.gov
 - www.energysafety.ca.gov
- Energy Safety Social Media Accounts
 - [Facebook](#) (Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety - Energy Safety)
 - [Instagram](#) (@caenergysafety)
 - [LinkedIn](#) (Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety)
 - [X](#) (@CaEnergySafety)
- [Energy Safety YouTube Channel](#) (@caenergysafety)
- [Board email subscriber list](#)

Using communication channels the Board owns, as listed above, as well as public and partner communication channels, will play a key role in distributing the campaign content and messaging.

Measuring Success

The success of this Awareness Campaign will be measured using qualitative and quantitative data that align with the priorities, and will focus on the following outcomes:

- Public Engagement
 - Registrant report for workshops
 - Attendee report for workshops
 - Participation levels at workshops
- Campaign Content
 - Data that details how many times the public interacted with the content, such as webpage visits, social media likes, and email list growth
- Partner Distribution
 - Number of partners that distribute campaign content

⁹ California Department of Housing and Community Development [Accessory Dwelling Unit Handbook](#), January 2025, page 4.

¹⁰ An owned communication channel includes digital content created and controlled by a company

CONCLUSION

A combination of public feedback, research-backed data, and education and outreach best practices will deliver a coordinated and measurable campaign that can improve awareness, understanding, and application of safe and lawful excavation practices across diverse audiences and regions throughout California.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board provide initial feedback on the overall direction of the Awareness Campaign Implementation Plan.