

## Press Release

### Fresno City Council Makes History for LGBTQ+ Community with Transgender Day of Visibility Proclamation

Fresno – The local transgender community received a historic acknowledgment from Fresno City Council on Thursday with a Transgender Day of Visibility proclamation to occur in Fresno every year on April 8th.

Spearheaded by Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC) LGBTQ+ Resource Center, Trans-e-Motion, and Councilmember Esmeralda Soria, the proclamation serves as a beacon of hope that Fresno is committed to making improvements to the lives of the LGBTQ+ community. Soria said the purpose of the proclamation is “..to elevate the issue to bring visibility to the transgender community because they are a part of Fresno– they are Fresno..” The transgender and gender non-conforming communities often suffer from disproportionate rates of violence, inequity, and a lack of health and mental health resources.

“We appreciate the City of Fresno standing against violence and oppression of the transgender community,” said Jennifer Cruz, LGBTQ+ Manager. “We worked hard this last year to shed light on some of the inequities that are happening still in our health care system for that particular population.”

The Fresno EOC LGBTQ+ Resource Center has provided supportive services to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community of Fresno since 2019. In addition to growing a steady staff of individuals focused on housing, substance use disorder prevention, and overall outreach, the Center has been working to improve the health and mental health conditions for those who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming in Fresno County.

Cruz emphasized a need to improve the local healthcare and mental health options for transgender and gender non-conforming populations. There are little to no facilities in the surrounding area for trans individuals to receive access to safe and affirming healthcare. Those fortunate enough can travel outside of the Central Valley to places such as the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento, or Los Angeles to receive treatment if they can afford it, but many cannot.

The LGBTQ+ Resource Center will be facilitating training with local businesses and organizations such as UCSF to be more inclusive in their interactions with the LGBTQ+ community. The end goal is to bridge the gap between visibility and safety for LGBTQ+ individuals in the Fresno area.

#### **About Fresno EOC**

Established in 1965, Fresno EOC is a non-profit Community Action Agency that provides opportunities, strengthens self-sufficiency, and offers support for all people. We listen to the needs of the communities we serve to create effective programs and services. Fresno EOC is at

the forefront, continuing the war on poverty with over 35 programs dedicated to getting people the help they need to achieve their goals. Since its official opening in October 2019, our LGBTQ+ Resource Center has provided supportive services to enhance the health and well-being of individuals of all ages in the LGBTQ+ community. Serving all individuals in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, queer, HIV, and questioning community members in the Fresno County area.

**Fresno EOC Sanctuary and Support Services** in partnership with National Safe Place Network, has operated the Safe Place program locally for over 25 years. Fresno EOC's Safe Place project includes 162 physical site locations and over 100 mobile sites including the Fresno Area Express, City of Clovis Transit, and the Food Express Bus – all of whom display black and yellow Safe Place signs. Safe Place is a youth outreach program that provides immediate help and safety to youth facing abuse, neglect, bullying, serious family struggles, homelessness and more.

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