



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

Advance Peace Fresno will continue to save lives in the African American community, thanks to \$300,000 in federal funding

(Fresno, CA) Advance Peace Fresno will receive \$300,000 in federal funding to expand and continue the work of healing in our community. It is the first Advance Peace program in the nation to receive funding from the federal government, thanks to Representative Jim Costa (CA-16). The goal of Advance Peace Fresno is to reduce gun violence, specifically in the African American community, by building relationships and transforming lives.

Efforts by Advance Peace Fresno and other community advocates are making a difference in southwest Fresno. Advance Peace Fresno Neighborhood Change Agents have spent hundreds of hours in the community building relationships to help prevent cyclical and retaliatory violence and encourage individuals to build their life goals. They put themselves in the middle of dangerous situations, sometimes just after a shooting occurs or while violence is escalating. Neighborhood Change Agents speak to family members of victims and shooters to cool tempers, restore calm in the neighborhood, and repair relationships.

Advance Peace Fresno Program Manager Aaron Foster said, “The people who commit these crimes, know us. That’s why we’re so effective. Because as soon as it’s a personal connection, it’s not a job. We do it out of passion, and the problems out there become our problem, and we try to be the best remedy to those problems.”

The new funding is part of the [Fiscal Year 2022 government funding package](#) signed Tuesday (March 15) by President Joe Biden. Advance Peace Fresno is one of 10 local projects receiving funding thanks to efforts by Representative Jim Costa. [Congressman Costa announced](#) that he secured a total of \$11,004,664 in Community Project Funding for projects in Fresno, Madera, and Merced Counties.

Advance Peace Fresno is operated by Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission. CEO Emilia Reyes said, “*We are making a difference in our communities and saving lives. We are thankful to Congressman Jim Costa for understanding the importance of reducing gun violence and pushing for funding. We are honored to receive this significant federal acknowledgment and investment from Congress. This additional funding will help us to expand the program and focus on youth.*”

[The UC Berkeley Center for Global Healthy Cities gathered data](#) on gun homicides in Fresno last year. The data shows a 35% reduction in African American gun homicide victims from



2020 to 2021 and southwest Fresno had a decrease of 11%. Citywide, there was a 7% decrease in total gun homicides.

About Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (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 more than 35 programs dedicated to getting people the help they need to achieve their goals.

About Advance Peace Fresno

Advance Peace Fresno is operated by Fresno EOC and launched its first cohort in June 2021 with 15 young men, and those Fellows will complete their 18-month program in December 2022. The program goals are to transform lives, and build healthier, safer communities by putting an end to cyclical and retaliatory gun violence in our neighborhoods. One of the main goals is to help reduce firearm violence in the city of Fresno by 10% by 2023.

###