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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
2-29-24

## Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission to Launch First-of-its-Kind Guaranteed Income Program in Fresno County

(FRESNO) – Beginning March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, eligible families will have an opportunity to apply to receive \$500 per month for 12 months as part of Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission’s Advancing Fresno County Guaranteed Income. This is a monthly, supplemental cash payment to households living in vulnerable communities to uplift families and provide financial stability.

In the last four years, guaranteed income programs have grown nationwide. In 2022, the state of California funded seven agencies with more than \$25 million to expand these efforts and the Central Valley was denied. Given the high poverty rate, Fresno EOC advocated alongside community partners and sought funding to launch the efforts locally.

“Our local community did not take no for an answer when the state decided to leave the Central Valley out of its Guaranteed Income Pilot Program funding in 2022. As an anti-poverty agency, we continued to fight and advocate for funding for the community. We are grateful for the foundations who have stepped in to help make this vision a reality,” said Emilia Reyes, Fresno Economic Opportunities CEO.

With the financial support of philanthropy and private donations more than \$1 million was raised. [California Wellness Foundation](#) is providing half of this project’s funding, along with support from [The California Endowment](#), [Central Valley Community Foundation](#), [Delta Dental Community Care Foundation](#), [James Irvine Foundation](#), [The Kresge Foundation](#), [the Sierra Health Foundation](#) and [Mayors for a Guaranteed Income](#). Fresno EOC will provide financial and administrative support.

“Economic security and dignity are essential to wellness, and guaranteed income programs protect people and families from financial distress by ensuring they have funds to put toward what they know they need,” California Wellness Foundation CEO Richard Tate said. “We look forward to learning from Fresno and other communities how these programs link to improved health and wellness.”

Due to initial limited funding, two zip codes were selected based on the highest concentrations of poverty in Fresno County, to serve 150 families. Residents in the 93706 (Southwest Fresno) or 93234 (Huron) zip codes, who are adults over 18, pregnant or have a child under five, are eligible if they have an income that is 80-percent or less of the Area Median Income. For Huron residents that would be \$35,103 or less, and \$30,615 or less for those residing in Southwest Fresno.

Unfortunately, poverty is a reality for far too many Fresno County families. Fresno has one of the [highest poverty rates in America](#). The city experienced one of the most significant rent

increases since the start of the pandemic, an almost [30% increase](#). In 2022, a report revealed that Fresno County also has the nation's [fifth-highest share of child care costs](#) per median family income, with 26% of median income household budgets going to child care. Child poverty more than doubled in 2022, according to U.S. Census data since the Child Tax Credit expired.

Guaranteed Income applications are scheduled to open on March 15<sup>th</sup> and close on May 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 PM. Eligible participants can apply online or in person at locations in the two priority zip codes including Fresno EOC's Local Conservation Corps (Neighborhood Youth Center) located at 1805 E California Ave, Fresno, CA 93706 and in Huron at the previous Senior Center 16900 5th Street Huron, CA 93234. Informational sessions will be held March 16<sup>th</sup> at Fresno EOC Franklin Head Start from 10 AM – 12 PM in the 93706-zip code and on March 26 from 5 PM – 7 PM at the John Palacios Community Center in the 93234-zip code. Applications are also available through Fresno EOC's Guaranteed Income Web page.

The Center for Community Voices at Fresno State will evaluate the program through paid surveys and focus groups. A total of 150 households will be selected to receive a monthly, guaranteed income. Through a lottery system, researchers will randomly select 75 individuals living in Southwest Fresno and 75 living in Huron, both with over 30% poverty and home to some of the highest levels of concentrated poverty in the city of Fresno and the westside of Fresno County, respectively.

To ensure recipients do not lose eligibility for existing benefits because of their participation, an income exemption waiver will be provided to participants from the California Department of Social Services for CalWORKs and CalFresh. Prospective recipients will also be provided with education on additional benefits considerations before enrolling.

Like programs in Stockton and increasingly across the country, this initiative does not have any requirements on how households spend these dollars. Researchers expect that recipients will experience increased levels of health, happiness, financial stability, and full-time employment.

Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission is one of the country's largest community action agencies with more than 30 programs to help fight poverty. Through its programs, the agency provides opportunities, strengthens self-sufficiency, and offers support for all people. Our mission is "We fight to end poverty." Our vision is a strong Fresno County where people have resources to shape their future free from poverty.

Fresno EOC has been in the community for 59 years and serves more than 100,000 Fresno County residents each year through programs that make a real, measurable difference.

For more information go to <https://fresnoeoc.org/guaranteed-income/>  
Interested participants can email [guaranteedincome@fresnoeoc.org](mailto:guaranteedincome@fresnoeoc.org)

Contact PIO Amanda Venegas at 559-908-9647 for media interviews.