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Safe Passages Awarded \$273,363 to Build Public Health AmeriCorps

Funding will support 15 AmeriCorps members to meet public health needs of local community and help rebuild the nation's public health sector

OAKLAND, CA – Safe Passages announced today that it has received a Public Health AmeriCorps grant of \$272,363 from AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism. The grant will expand Safe Passages' presence in Alameda County, CA, where Safe Passages has been providing culturally affirming outreach and service navigation, inclusive community development, and swift barrier removal over the last two decades.

Public Health AmeriCorps, a partnership between AmeriCorps and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, supports the recruitment, training, and development of a new generation of public health leaders. Supported by a five-year, \$400 million investment from the American Rescue Plan Act, Public Health AmeriCorps will help meet public health needs of local communities by providing surge capacity and support while also creating pathways to public health-related careers.

"Safe Passages' holistic approach to community health includes ensuring that over 5,000 low-income families secure basic needs and removing barriers to participation and learning. We have been hard at work delivering housing and food security programs; academic tutoring and mentoring for children, including re-integrating children to in-person learning; reducing barriers to accessing vaccines and information about the COVID-19 virus; and providing workshops about immigration outreach and education. We are very excited to expand our Public Health Outreach footprint across Alameda County," said Josefina Alvarado Mena, Esq., Chief Executive Officer of Safe Passages. "The AmeriCorps Public Health efforts will greatly enhance the services we provide and will allow us to expand our workforce pipeline. We still have a lot of work to do as a community, but I am confident that this opportunity will be an encouraging preview to our future public health workforce and leaders."

With this new funding, Safe Passages will leverage the skills and experience of AmeriCorps members Alameda County, CA to increase equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, self-determination and self-sufficiency for families of color, career exploration opportunities for communities of color, while sustaining community-based public health pipelines. These AmeriCorps members will: 1) Collaborate and learn with a diverse team made up of community members of various ages, backgrounds, and capabilities; 2) Conduct in-person and telephonic outreach to educate and support targeted communities in reducing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, increasing vaccine confidence, and increasing the number of vaccinated individuals and families within Alameda County; 3) Support individuals and families with navigating community resources; 4) Identify and explore new community locations to conduct outreach activities often



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overlooked by agencies and systems; 5) Support data collection and evaluation needs for determining intervention effectiveness and to implement data-driven strategies; and 6) Participate in regular project and stakeholder meetings to drive cross-sector strategic planning and coordination.

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified inequities that pre-existed largely in communities of color and has continue to ravage families across the life span given the lack of culturally affirming resources available to support their basic needs. This Public Health AmeriCorps role is an exciting expansion into the outreach, education, and holistic approach to healthcare and the intersections between social determinants of health that Safe Passages is known for. At the onset of the pandemic, Safe Passages quickly pivoted to meet the unforeseen demands by increasing food distributions and food drop offs in addition to providing remote academic case management, early childhood learning playgroups, and young adult life coaching.

Prospective Public Health AmeriCorps members can apply to serve with Safe Passages at: <https://safepassages.org/jobs-internships-2/>.

AmeriCorps continues to invest in the nation's COVID-19 recovery. With existing programs in more than 40,000 locations across the country, AmeriCorps is uniquely positioned to bolster community response efforts. For the past two years, thousands of AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers across all 50 states and U.S. territories have continued their service, quickly adapting to meet the changing needs caused by the pandemic and have provided vital support, community response, and recovery efforts, providing support to more than 12 million Americans, including 2.5 million people at vaccination sites.

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Over the past 24 years, Safe Passages has developed initiatives for vulnerable children that span the age continuum from birth to adulthood including Early Childhood, School-Linked Services, Juvenile Justice and College to Career programs and services, Community-Based Workforce Services, including operating AmeriCorps programming for 10 years. Through these initiatives, thousands of vulnerable youth receive direct services every year. Community engagement is at the core of our work and is aligned with our mission to disrupt the cycle of poverty by engaging youth and families to build and drive a continuum of services that supports student success and community development.

AmeriCorps, the federal agency for volunteerism and national service, provides opportunities for Americans to serve their country domestically, address the nation's most pressing challenges, improve lives and communities, and strengthen civic engagement. Each year, the agency places more than 250,000 AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in intensive service roles; and empowers millions more to serve as long-term, short-term, or one-time volunteers. Learn more at AmeriCorps.gov.

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