



SAFE PASSAGES *bringing pathways to community success for our kids*

1017 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94607

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AmeriCorps Press Office

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AmeriCorps CEO and Oakland School Superintendent Announce Public Health AmeriCorps Grant

*Safe Passages receives nearly \$300,000 in federal funding to support an additional 15
AmeriCorps members and COVID-19 response*

OAKLAND, CALIF.— AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, announced a nearly \$300,000 Public Health AmeriCorps grant to [Safe Passages](#) at an event on Tuesday, June 28 in Oakland, Calif. [Public Health AmeriCorps](#), a partnership between AmeriCorps and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), will support the recruitment, training and development of a new generation of public health leaders.

Michael D. Smith, AmeriCorps CEO, joined Oakland Unified School District Elementary Network superintendent Leroy Gaines, Safe Passages CEO Josefina Alvarado Mena, Safe Passages board chair Colin Lacon and Congresswoman Barbara Lee’s district director to recognize AmeriCorps members serving at Safe Passages and announce the grant awards at Laurel Elementary School.

“Public Health AmeriCorps and Safe Passages will add capacity to strained public health systems and build a career pipeline for public health careers in Oakland,” **said AmeriCorps CEO Michael D. Smith.** “Over the next year, 15 new AmeriCorps members at Safe Passages and nearly 300 AmeriCorps members in California will provide health education, conduct outreach to increase community health knowledge and address the COVID-19 pandemic across the state. I look forward to championing these programs in partnership with our grantees, the Oakland Unified School District and California health leaders.”

“After the past two and a half years of pandemic, we all know how important it is to have a robust and active public health system in place,” **said OUSD Network Superintendent Leroy Gaines.** “We are pleased that Safe Passages has received this much-needed grant, and we look forward to incorporating the work of additional AmeriCorps members in spreading the important health education, and COVID-19 information to students and families at Laurel Elementary and schools across our district.”



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“Safe Passages is proud to serve our community in partnership with AmeriCorps and Oakland Unified School District in the implementation of the critical Public Health AmeriCorps volunteer program,” **said Safe Passages CEO Josefina Alvarado Mena, CEO Safe Passages.** “The Covid-19 pandemic continues to disproportionately impact low-income communities of color in Oakland and Alameda County. We are dedicated to recruiting from the communities we serve to develop and implement solutions that are community driven and culturally relevant.”

“Across California, Public Health AmeriCorps will support the state’s public health programs and COVID-19 recovery efforts,” **said California Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday.** “With these new partnerships, we will work together to develop a new generation of public health leaders.”

Safe Passages is a nonprofit organization committed to disrupting the cycle of poverty by engaging youth and families to build and drive a continuum of services that supports student success and community development. More than 50 AmeriCorps members in the [VISTA](#) program currently serve with Safe Passages to support the organization’s Extended Day, Elev8 Youth and Family Resource Center programs. With this new grant, Safe Passages will recruit an additional 15 AmeriCorps members to serve as community health advocates in Alameda County, Calif. AmeriCorps members will provide health education and conduct outreach to increase community health knowledge.

These grant awards are part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s larger [\\$7 billion investment](#) in the public health workforce. The next Public Health AmeriCorps federal funding opportunity is expected to be released in Fall 2022.

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.

This spring, [AmeriCorps awarded](#) nearly \$4.5 million in Public Health AmeriCorps grants to five California organizations. [Learn more](#) about Public Health AmeriCorps efforts in California.

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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.

AmeriCorps offers opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds to be a part of the national service community, grow personally and professionally, and receive benefits for their service. Learn how to get involved at [AmeriCorps.gov/serve](https://www.americorps.gov/serve)

Safe Passages, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Oakland, disrupts the cycle of poverty by engaging youth and families to build and drive a continuum of services that supports student success and community development. Safe Passages researches, evaluates, develops and advocates for culturally appropriate, cross-agency strategies designed to improve the lives of vulnerable populations. For 25 years, we have worked with public and private partners to leverage resources that strengthen the safety net for poor people, reduce youth violence and level the playing field for marginalized students, families and communities in Alameda County and California. www.SafePassages.org

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