

**City of Sacramento/Advance Peace Sacramento  
Youth Peacemaker Fellowship Program  
CalVIP, BSCC Final Local Evaluation Report**

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**Executive Summary:**

Advance Peace (AP) Sacramento works to reduce gun violence in Sacramento and three highly impacted communities, Del Paso Heights, Oak Park and South Sacramento (called ‘AP Zones’), using intensive street outreach by formerly incarcerated community members. These outreach workers, called Neighborhood Change Agents (NCAs) were to enroll twenty-five 12-17-year-old youth identified as the most likely perpetrators and/or victims of gun violence, in the Youth Peacemaker Fellowship program. The Fellowship offered them adult support, mentorship, conflict resolution skills, life coaching, educational and social services, and other opportunities to transform their lives. The program’s aims were to:

1. To provide intensive services to a hard to reach population of gang involved young men;
2. To disrupt retaliatory gang violence in target neighborhoods;
3. Support program participants to become agents of peace who are committed to living and promoting a healthy and positive lifestyle;
4. Increase the opportunities for personal, social, educational, and vocational development for each fellow;
5. 70% of fellows remain free of any new criminal charges and gun related injuries;
6. Increase participants abilities to problem solve and manage conflicts;
7. 90% of participants receive ongoing supportive services in areas such as: healing trauma, educational support and mental health.

We found that the project accomplished all of its above stated goals, including:

- 53 young people were enrolled in the Peacemaker Fellowship, more than double the target of 25.
- 100% of fellows received trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
- 87% developed a LifeMAP (46/53)
- 30% received individual mental health consultations (16/53)
- 87% received regular one-on-one or small group counseling
- AP’s NCAs mediated 220 general conflicts & interrupted 69 cyclical and retaliatory gun violence interruptions (where gun violence was imminent)
- 7 different excursions, or transformative travel, were organized by AP for fellows.

- 2 fellows received internships; 17 fellows worked with an elder mentor
- Gun homicides and assaults declined by **14.3% in the AP Zones** and 6.8% in the entire City of Sacramento during the project period, compared to the average number of gun homicides and assaults during the same time period between 2014-2018.

The unintended outcomes were that more fellows than originally anticipated were enrolled in the Fellowship. This ensured more young people received the benefits of the AP strategy, but this also placed a significant strain on the NCAs to give each fellow adequate time and mentorship.

**There were no juvenile homicides in the City of Sacramento during the two-year project period.**

The lessons learned were:

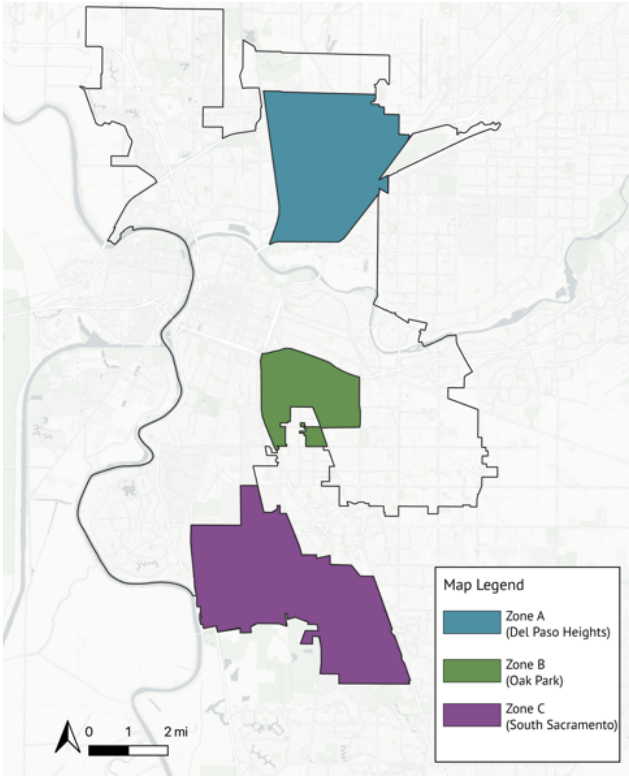
- Engaging fellows at public schools was important but challenging due to site access rules
- Staying abreast of social media is critical to identify potential and actual conflicts
- Remain consistent with mentorship everyday even when a fellow is pushing the adult mentor away or trying to avoid them.
- Additional resources, in terms of money and personnel, are needed to continue the level of engagement AP Sacramento dedicated to their Fellows.
- Outreach worker/NCA support is critical, as they can face burn out and their own mental health issues in this work.
- Turnover in staff with key community partners, including Another Choice, Another Chance, created continuity of care challenges for some AP fellows.
- The needs of the young people far outweigh the available resources and maintaining appropriate caseload ratios for NCAs is important to avoid burnout.

**Project Description**

Advance Peace (AP) is a not-for-profit organization that uses street outreach workers to implement a trauma-informed, healing-focused approach to prevent gun violence and support healthy community development. Advance Peace operates in a number of cities across the US. The City of Sacramento was the recipient of a CalVIP grant from the period May 2018-April 2020 and executed subcontracts with Advance Peace Sacramento and Another Choice Another Chance (ACAC) to provide direct service provision. This report summarizes key evaluation findings for the program for this time period.

The focus of the CalVIP program is Advance Peace Sacramento’s 18-month, intensive outreach strategy called the Peacemaker Fellowship®. The Peacemaker Fellowship® recruits a small number of young people suspected of being influential in gun violence in the city, and likely themselves to be victims of gun violence. Over the 18-month intensive program, the Peacemaker Fellowship delivers everyday adult mentorship, group life-skills classes, social services and other healing-centered supports to the enrolled young people. Advance Peace outreach workers, called Neighborhood Change Agent (NCAs) also engage with others on the streets that have influence over the Fellows, interrupt conflicts, respond to shootings and search social media to flag and mitigate potential conflicts. In Sacramento, the Advance Peace program is focused in three ‘zones’ or neighborhoods: Oak Park, Del Paso Heights and South Sacramento (See map). On average, there were two NCAs working with Fellows in each of these neighborhoods over the project period.

**Map 1: Advance Peace Zones, City of Sacramento, California**



## **Data Collection Methods**

This report describes outcomes of the Youth Peacemaker Fellowship program from May 2018-April 2020. During this time, 53 fellows were enrolled and mentored by 6 NCAs.

Professor Jason Corburn and the Institute of Urban and Regional Development (IURD) at UC Berkeley (UCB) acted as the independent evaluator. In this capacity, UCB gathered and analyzed weekly data from all NCAs using an App developed by the research team. The researchers also observed weekly project manager strategy meetings to understand how the program was working and addressing any challenges that arose in the streets and within the organization. Researchers also interviewed all outreach workers and held six focus group discussions with groups of NCAs to learn about their Fellows and reviewed the LifeMAPs, or Life Management Action Plans, developed by each NCA for their Fellows that informed the Peacemaker Fellowship mentorship and life-skills activities. The UCB research team also received monthly reports during the project period from the Sacramento Police Department on gun homicides and assaults, as well as these data from 2014-2018.

## **Process Evaluation**

The Youth Peacemaker Fellowship program consists of a Program Manager and six Neighborhood Change Agent (NCA) outreach workers. Advance Peace operates as a 501c3 non-profit with fiscal sponsor Safe Passages. Advance Peace has an office located at 1220 H Street, Sacramento, California.

On a typical day, the Sacramento Program Manager has an all staff meeting or check-in by the early afternoon. This check-in will discuss opportunities and challenges across Sacramento neighborhoods for engaging high-risk individuals that are the focus of the Youth Peacemaker Fellowship Program. For example, if there was a shooting or an upcoming community social event, these will be discussed among staff and individual and team strategies developed to prepare for street outreach work.

The Advance Peace NCAs are deployed in three high-risk neighborhoods already identified in consultation with the City of Sacramento's Gang Prevention and Intervention Taskforce: Oak Park, Del Paso Heights and South Sacramento (see Map). While these neighborhoods are the focus of daily street outreach, NCAs will seek out their fellows across the entire city and region. The fundamental daily objective of Advance Peace Sacramento is for NCAs to build and maintain meaningful relationships with hard-to-reach, potentially violent young people in Sacramento.

AP street outreach typically includes one-on-one and group engagement, helping mediate conflicts, active listening, managing anger to avoid escalation into violence, support for day-to-

day coping, such as offering food, safe transportation and family mediation. Interrupting gun violence is also a central feature of NCA outreach, and this could include intervening when potential adversaries are ‘clutching’ or threatening to shoot someone or preventing a group of young people from shooting up a car playing the music of an "enemy" local rapper.

Advance Peace supports NCAs in making referrals to service providers. NCAs have a list of organizations that offer various services in Sacramento, but decisions for a referral includes a determination about whether or not the fellow is ready to attend on their own or accompanied by an NCA. Whether it is a soft (i.e., giving a phone number or helping make an appointment) or hard (accompanying the fellow to the service) referral, NCAs are engaging daily with the fellow to support them to best utilize social and other services.

In Sacramento, NCAs are not just engaging fellows in the streets, but also in high schools, at athletic events and other social functions. NCAs will also respond to fellow needs ‘after hours,’ meaning at any time of day or night, if a need arises. NCAs are also receiving on-going training to support their personal effectiveness as an outreach worker and to build a strong team and supportive network. For example, training for Sacramento Advance Peace NCAs have included emotional intelligence, addressing organizational trauma and PTSD, effective communication and active listening skills.

Once a Fellow begins engagement with an NCA for at least one-month, they are invited to draft a LifeMAP (Life management action plan). The LifeMAP process is a facilitated dialogue between a young person and Advance Peace staff to support them to articulate short, medium, and long-term goals and specific steps for achieving these objectives. The LifeMAP provides an individual comprehensive assessment of a Fellow’s circumstances in key areas, including housing, education, employment, transportation, finances, safety, family/relationships, physical health, mental health, and spiritual, recreational, and social connections. These goals are drafted into a work plan and milestones are established with the fellow to begin to accomplish their agreed upon goals. The NCAs use this process and LifeMAP document to tailor outreach and engagement for each individual fellow over the 18-month Youth Peacemaker Fellowship program.

A key community-based partner for AP Sacramento was Another Choice, Another Chance (ACAC). After establishing the partnership, ACAC was instrumental in delivering the Youth Peacemaker Fellowship, since they engaged fellows in a number of ways, including acting as Life Skills Instructors for numerous classes, joined AP fellows as adult chaperones for some excursions, and delivered Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in group and one on one sessions.

At the end of a typical day, the Sacramento NCAs check back in with the Program Manager through a phone call or group face-to-face meeting. The day's activities are shared and again strategies are developed collectively to support individual outreach workers and build overall team effectiveness.

### **Participant Outcome Data**

The Program enrolled 53 participants. Of those 53 Fellows, they had following characteristics:

- 19% were 11-12 years old;
- 28% were 13-14;
- 49% were 15-16; 4% were 17 years old.
- 96% were African American, 1 Latino; 1 white;
- 83% male;
- 17% female.
- 100% of fellows received trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
- 87% developed a LifeMAP (46/53)
- 30% received individual mental health consultations (16/53)
- 87% received regular one-on-one or small group counseling
- 100% of fellows attended at least one Guidance Workshop
- 7 excursions for fellows which had 72 total participants (some fellows went on more than one excursion).
- 100% were alive at the conclusion of the program.
- 29% were arrested during or by the end of the program (only 1 suspected on a new gun charge)
- 5% (3) had new gun injuries during the program.
- 75% complete the Peacemaker Fellowship.
- 12 Fellows Graduated High School during the program.
- 12 Fellows have successfully attended court dates.
- 2 fellows received internships.
- 17 fellows continue to work with an elder mentor.

### **Impact on Fellows & Behaviors**

Each of the fellows were assigned a mentor/life coach, or Neighborhood Change Agent (NCA). In the first 6 months of the program, NCAs engaged with potential fellows every day to develop trusting relationships, better understand if the person was a good fit for the Fellowship, the supports they and their families might need in order to participate. The daily encounters also delivered healthy information, and role modeled behaviors for how to address conflicts peacefully and without guns.

Prior to enrollment, parental/guardian consent was acquired by the NCA for each Fellow to participate. A LifeMAP – Life Management Action Plan - was drafted with each fellow to identify goals, strategies to reach those goals and to organize many of the activities of the NCA and the Advance Peace Fellowship. The LifeMAP sets short, medium and long-term goals for

personal safety, safe housing, education, employment, anger management, conflict resolution, creating positive social networks, financial literacy, behavioral/medical healthcare, substance use disorder support, parenting, recreation and spirituality. Yet, each plan is different since the objective is to co-create the plan with the fellow based on “where they are and where they can go.” Some typical short-term goals might be working on substance abuse or anger management issues, medium term might be improving a relationship with a family member, and longer-term might be obtaining a GED, social security card, a driver’s license or a job. Since the LifeMAP is tailored to the individual needs of each fellow, the NCA works closely with that person to really understand their life story and challenges, and the fellows are treated as assets, empowered to be active agents in their own success, and described as the key ingredient to stopping gun violence in their own communities. Through the LifeMAP process, the AP program also ensures that their fellows, and often their families, get to identify the immediate needs they might have, such as food and shelter, and stick to longer term changes. As one fellow reflected on his LifeMAP:

*“Now I got a plan for writing and releasing music and getting a driver's license. As soon as I'm up in the morning, my whole day is set up. It's basically put me on a program where I don't have time to be in the streets. They want to see us living and being people, not being a statistic.”*

The LifeMAP acts as both a mechanism for ensuring the fellow defines their own healing needs (i.e., ‘for them, by them’) and is the ‘social contract’ that a strong, caring, and consistent adult is willing to take a risk and believe in them. The LifeMAP also structures much of the work for NCAs and their fellows during the remainder of the 18-month Fellowship. For example, if a fellow’s goal is to repair a relationship, the NCA may help broker the contact and facilitate the conversation. The key is that the LifeMAP becomes a ‘living document’ that guides mentorship but is also updated and adjusted to reflect new goals and the changing relationship between mentor and mentee.

We found that all Fellows gained insights into positive emotional intelligence competencies and behaviors. All Fellows received social services as defined by their LifeMAPs on a consistent basis.

As Fellows progressed through the program, they qualified for excursions or what the program calls transformative travel. For example, Fellows from the Oak Park and Del Paso Heights (DPH) areas participated an excursion to Six Flags Discovery Park. Advance Peace also hosted a “We All We Got” Basketball Tournament and BBQ event in DPH.

In March 2020 the program held two workshops that included fellows from Oak Park, Del Paso Heights, and South Sacramento without incident. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Flojaune Cofer, and focused on trauma-informed emotional intelligence, conflict resolution and developing professional on the job work etiquette.

AP Sacramento NCAs completed the following during this project period:

- 11,971 street engagements, totaling 12,781 hours
- 885 social service referrals, totaling 1,732.5 hours

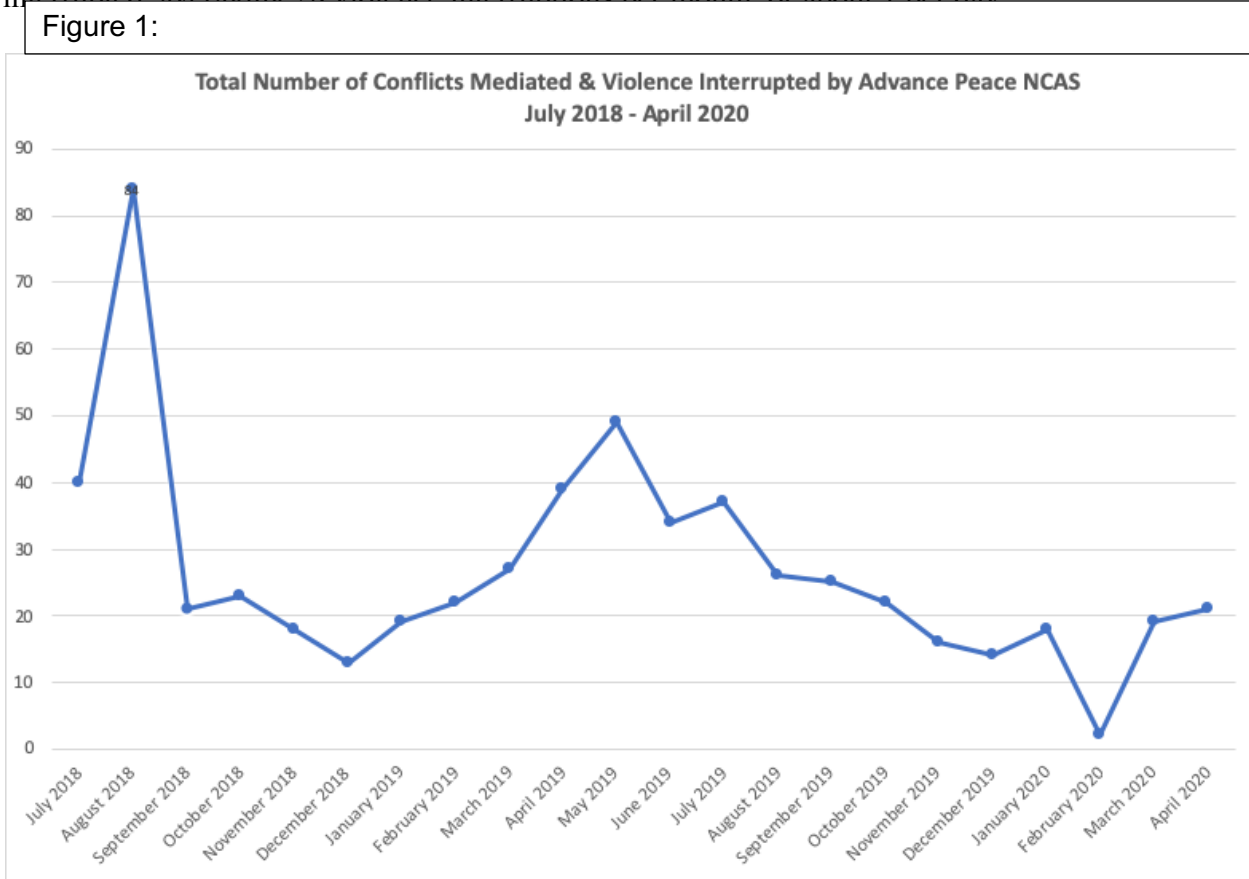
**Conflict Resolutions**

NCA's also facilitated conflict resolution measures (prevented fights and other violence) with and between rival fellowship groups during high school football games (Sacramento High School, Valley High School, Monterey Trails High School, Burbank High School and Inderkum High School), at local community centers and during other community/athletic events. Advance Peace staff facilitated the school transfer of a high school student that was attending school in a rival neighborhood.

The Advance Peace Sacramento NCA's completed the following conflict interruptions/mediations during the project period:

- 139 after hours (between 9pm-5am) conflicts mediated.
- 220 general conflicts mediated.
- 69 cyclical and retaliatory gun violence interruptions (where gun violence was imminent)
- 211 hours spent responding to shootings and de-escalating potential retaliation
- 99 hours of social media conflict resolutions

Figure 1 shows the number of conflicts that NCA's reported mediating during the study period. Over the project period, there were a total of 589 conflicts mediated and violence episodes interrupted, averaging 28 violence interruptions per month, or about 1 per day.





The numbers do not begin to tell the entire story of the NCA work. Below is a summary of select quotes from NCAs describing some of the issues and conflicts they encountered in Sacramento this past year.

*Big argument broke out. One was highly offended and felt disrespected and went for his gun. I calmed him down and talked him into putting it back where he retrieved it from.*

*One male dating two girls at same school. One is pregnant & started with back and forth on social media. Escalated to a physical altercation. I intervened to mediate peace.*

*Got a phone call saying that one of my Fellows was walking down a busy known street with a gun in his backpack and he was on a mission to do some damage. I was able to leave my Crisis Intervention Response Training class and go locate him ASAP. I caught up with him and talked him into my vehicle and detoured him off of his mission. I got all the 411 I needed to look into this whole situation. I contacted the resources I needed to contact and fixed the whole problem that was at hand.*

*Mother and daughter actually started throwing blows with each other in broad daylight in their front yard. I was parked across the street waiting for one of my fellows to come out and I got out of my car jumped right in and exercised my peace keeping skills. I was able to calm the whole situation after a few hours.*

*Youngster from one hood dissed dead youngsta from rival gang on social media. Made contact with both parties and brokered peace.*

*Dice game shenanigans. Gun was pulled out but no action was taken. My presence itself calmed all of that down. Everyone made it home safe that night.*

### **Partnerships**

**AP Sacramento cultivated new partnerships with existing community-based organizations in Sacramento working on reducing gun violence and improving the lives of Black and Brown youth. These organizations included Mack Road Partnership and Black Child Legacy Campaign. Mack Road Partnership's 'Summer Nights' Program, Meadowview 'Summer Nights' and sports tournaments sponsored by Black Child Legacy Campaign have contributed to keeping our young Fellows safe by providing services and activities to help keep them focused**

### **Challenges:**

- Interrupt conflicts on social media

- Limited number of staff to client ratio ( $\approx$  9 fellows : 1 NCA)
- Access to public schools where our fellows attend
- Attending to multiple shootings at one time in different parts of the city
- Few summer opportunities for under-18 young people available to this population
- Turnover with identified community partner service providers and trainers/instructors of life-skills classes

### **COVID-19 Challenges**

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on AP activities in the final few months of this project period. The regularly scheduled life-skills classes mentioned above had to be postponed and then transferred to Zoom. This was only made possible after computers and other equipment was purchased to provide fellows on-line access. However, getting fellows to participate in on-line Zoom calls/classes was a challenge and participation levels dropped significantly.

Planned excursions with the fellows to Universal Studios in Los Angeles and to see the musical Hamilton were cancelled. A High-school graduation breakfast for fellows was also cancelled. The NCAs re-directed their time and were trained in new skills for educating fellows and their families on social distancing, how to use personal protective equipment, and complying with the stay at home rules. NCAs launched a new program that regularly checked-in on all fellows and their families as well as delivered free food, water, hygiene products, and other essential needs. The COVID-19 pandemic altered much of the progress NCAs had made with fellows by the end of this project period.

### **Gun Crime Outcomes**

We used Sacramento Police data to describe the number of gun homicides and assaults in the AP Zones, compared to the non-AP Zones and the City as a whole. We calculated the annual mean number of gun homicides and assaults for the May through April period every year between 2014 and 2018. We then calculated the mean number of gun homicides and assaults for the same months during the 2018-2020 project period. We found that there was a 14.3% decrease in gun homicides and assaults during the project period in the AP Zones, a 5.6% increase on the non-AP Zones, and a 6.8% decrease city wide (Table 1).

**Table 1:**  
**City of Sacramento, Mean Gun Homicides & Assaults during CalVIP project period, 2018-2020**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Annual Mean, May 2014 - April 2018</b>	<b>Annual Mean, CalVIP</b>	<b>Percent Change, CalVIP</b>

		project period	project period
<b>All AP Zones</b>	162.75	139.5	<b>-14.3%</b>
<b>Non-AP Zones</b>	98	103.5	5.6%
<b>Citywide</b>	260.75	243	<b>-6.8%</b>

In Figure 2 below, we plotted the monthly firearm homicides and assaults from May 2014 through April 2020. We found that after the CalVIP program started through April 2020, there was an **8% decrease** in monthly firearm homicides and assaults citywide and an **11% decrease** in monthly firearm homicides and assaults in the AP Zones of Del Paso Heights, Oak Park and South Sacramento.

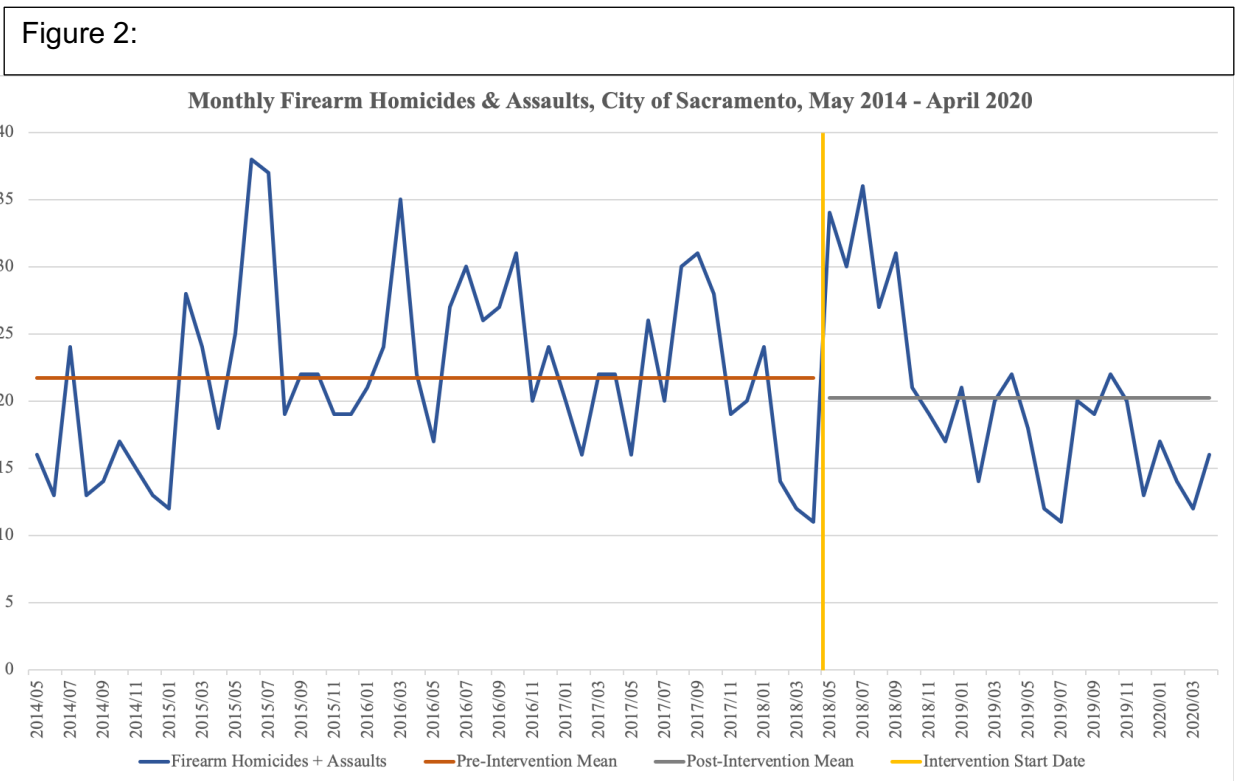
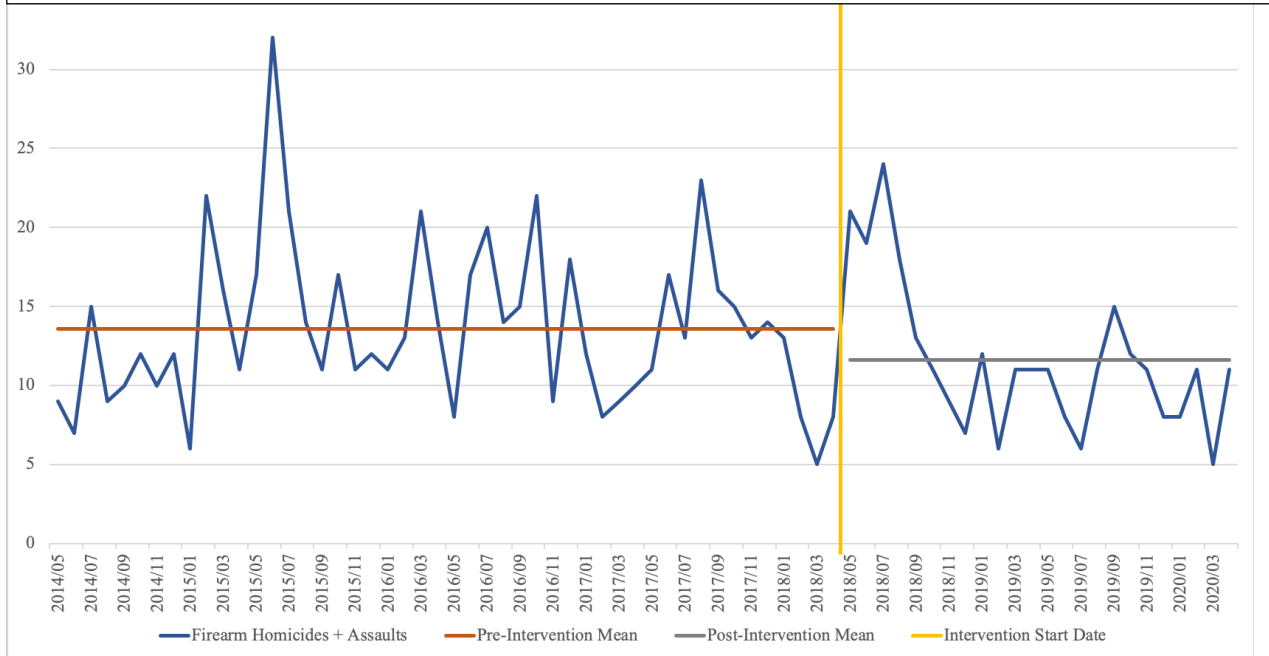


Figure 3: Monthly Firearm Homicides & Assaults, Sacramento, All AP Zones, 05/2014-04/2020



**Conclusions:**

It is clear that the CalVIP resources supported the City, Advance Peace Sacramento, and ACAC to serve a population of young people at the center of gun violence who, according to all our conversations and interviews with AP staff, were not being reached by any institution, be it the school system or another non-profit. Our interviews with AP Sacramento NCAs revealed that they continue to monitor and interrupt a variety of situations that could have erupted into deadly gun violence. Through street outreach, life-skills classes and consistent engagement with their Fellows, AP Sacramento regularly turned street conflicts in dialogues and supported their fellow to be co-creators of problem-solving.

The life-skills classes and transformative travel created relationships between rivals in Sacramento, where it seemed that previously there was no space for that to happen. By bridging on-going and retaliatory disputes and violence, AP Sacramento has created a new forum for constructive community dispute resolution. This work is protecting Black and brown young people in Sacramento, as evidenced by our data presented here and that the City had no juvenile homicides in 2018 or 2019.

Fundamentally, Advance Peace Sacramento views the young people at the center of gun violence in the city as valuable assets, aims to restore their humanity in a society that has dehumanized young boys and men of color, and invest in their healing and development. AP Sacramento is helping to bring hope, trust, care and, what one member called, “an ecosystem of love” to a highly vulnerable group of young people in Sacramento.

Figure 4: Advance Peace Sacramento: Logic Model

