



Crime Victims Advisory Board

Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Ben “Taco” Owens

Board Member

Ben “Taco” Owens is a living testament to change and the power of reformation. A former gang member turned respected activist, he draws on over 40 years of direct experience within the African American gang culture—building trusted relationships with both rival gang members and survivors of gang and gun violence.

Currently a **Safety Fellow** at the **Urban Peace Institute (UPI)**, Ben travels nationwide to train and learn from other violence intervention practitioners. He serves as a **Supervisor** with **Advocates for Peace and Urban Unity (APUU)** and works under contract with the **City of Los Angeles’ Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD)** program. As **Executive Director of Detours Mentoring Group Inc.**, based in Gardena, California, Ben leads mentoring, intervention, and community engagement efforts to reduce violence and promote healing. Ben’s leadership extends across multiple platforms:

- **Executive Board Member** – Southern California Cease Fire Committee, collaborating with former and active gang members, victims of crime, clergy, community stakeholders, and law enforcement to address conflict and reduce gang-related violence in Greater Los Angeles.
- **Board Member** – Urban Alchemy.
- **Consultant** – Numerous documentaries portraying the realities of gun violence in South Los Angeles
- **Trainer & Facilitator** – Since 2007, Ben has trained interventionists and law enforcement in collaborative, trauma-informed approaches to public safety.

His prior roles include **Hospital-Based Intervention Specialist** with CROSSROADS and St. Francis Hospital (Department of Labor–funded Victim and Trauma Recovery Case Manager) and work with **Project Youth Embrace (PYE)** through Prototypes. He has partnered with the **U.S. Department of Justice** and the **Los Angeles County Probation Department** on reentry, violence prevention, and youth development initiatives.

Ben is an **Ordained Minister** and has served for the past six years as a **Moderator** at the Los Angeles Gang Conference. His efforts have impacted communities in more than **21 states and 4 countries**. He is also a member of the **Los Angeles District Attorney Crime Victims Advisory Board** and a **graduate of the School of Chicago Social Science**.

Through his lived experience, professional expertise, and national influence, Ben “Taco” Owens continues to be a bridge-builder—uniting communities, reducing violence, and inspiring transformation.

