



COUNTY OF YOLO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yolo County Criminal Justice Grant Writing Team Obtains \$2.73 Million in Three New Grants to Expand Diversion Programming

(Woodland, CA) – August 12, 2019 – Yolo County recently received three new grants, totaling \$2.73 million focusing on expanding opportunities for diversion within the criminal justice system. These grants will support the use of restorative justice practices in the juvenile justice system, provide additional diversion opportunities for the mentally ill, and assist individuals experiencing homelessness who are currently enrolled in one of Yolo County's diversion programs. The grant proposals were developed through a collaborative effort by the Yolo County Criminal Justice Grant Writing Team.

The Youth Reinvestment Grant, administered by the Board of State and Community Corrections, will support the creation of the new RESTORE program, a pre-filing restorative justice diversion program for juveniles. This grant, totaling \$630,000 over three and a half years, will be implemented by the Probation Department in partnership with the Yolo Conflict Resolution Center, a local organization that specializes in restorative practices. Currently, diversion programs for juveniles only exist through local law enforcement agencies as pre-arrest programs, limiting prosecutors' ability to resolve these cases outside of the traditional criminal justice process. The RESTORE program will be available on a county-wide basis, and will allow juveniles to resolve pending criminal cases without receiving a conviction. This proposal was prepared by staff from the Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, and Probation Department.

The Department of State Hospitals awarded Yolo County a three-year, \$1,100,000 grant to expand the existing Mental Health Court program. This expansion will provide diversion opportunities for individuals deemed incompetent to stand trial who were previously ineligible for Mental Health Court. Assembly Bill 1810, passed by the California legislature in 2018, created a new pre-trial diversion process for individuals deemed incompetent to stand trial, with the goal of reducing the population of individuals receiving treatment in state hospitals. This grant will provide additional staffing for the Health and Human Services Agency, with the goal of supporting at least eight additional participants at one time. The District Attorney's office will administer this grant. Staff from the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Health and Human Services Agency worked together to prepare this application.

The California Health Facilities Financing Authority awarded Yolo County a \$1,000,000 Community Services Infrastructure grant. Led by the County Administrator's Office, Yolo County will purchase two houses to serve as transitional housing for the criminal justice-involved population, focusing on individuals with substance use and/or mental health disorders who are currently experiencing homelessness or are at-risk of becoming homeless. This housing will be available to assist individuals enrolled in the Neighborhood Court, Mental

Health Court, or Steps to Success programs, with the goal of serving up to 20 participants annually. The County Administrator's Office prepared this application in collaboration with staff from the District Attorney's Office and Health and Human Services Agency, as well as Yolo County Housing.

The Criminal Justice Grant Writing Team was formed in May 2018 as part of an effort to secure funding to support adult reentry programming, bringing the above mentioned County departments together in pursuit of a common goal. These collaborative efforts, spearheaded by the District Attorney's Office, have since expanded to include identifying and applying for funding opportunities to support the goals outlined in Yolo County's Community Corrections Partnership strategic plan. These goals include expanding the availability of restorative justice programming and improving engagement with mental health and substance abuse treatment. The full 2019-2022 Strategic Plan is available online at: <https://tinyurl.com/y6x9knn8>.

Since its creation, the Criminal Justice Grant Writing Team has secured five grants totaling \$4.83 million for a period of three or more years. Recently, the group submitted an application to the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance to fund comprehensive adult reentry programming to support individuals reintegrating into the community after a period of incarceration. The group also submitted a proposal that would support further expansion of Yolo County's Mental Health Court, and will pursue additional funding from the California Health Facilities Financing Authority.

County Administrator Patrick Blacklock praised the efforts of the team. "We are all very excited about the work that our Criminal Justice Grant Writing Team is doing to support new initiatives in Yolo County that align with our county's strategic plan," said Blacklock. "The level of collaboration between departments is something that is very unique."

"Our grant writing team has done a fantastic job of aggressively competing for state and federal funds to help create new programs and acquire new resources to support our current rehabilitative programming," said District Attorney Jeff Reisig. "Participating in this group has strengthened our working relationships with partners throughout Yolo County's criminal justice and social services systems, and we look forward to continuing this innovative, collaborative initiative."

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