



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Yolo County Launches Pretrial Release Program

(Woodland, CA) – Earlier this month, the Yolo County Probation Department initiated a countywide Pretrial Release Program. The purpose of this program is to identify persons in jail custody who would be good candidates for supervised Own Recognizance release prior to their court trial.

Last fall, Yolo County received notice that it had received a grant award in the amount of \$2,692,181 from the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance. As the lead agency, the Yolo County Probation Department, in collaboration with Yolo Superior Court of California, Yolo County Sheriff's Department, Yolo County District Attorney's Office and Yolo County Public Defender's Office, implemented an evidence-based pretrial risk assessment system that formulates recommendations to the court for Own Recognizance releases, under certain conditions.

“Prior to this program, there were no provisions in place to supervise people released on Own Recognizance pending further court hearings,” said Yolo County Chief Probation Officer Marjorie Rist. “With the implementation of the Pretrial Release Program, funding allows for certain defendants to be released from custody, pending an outcome of their case, under specific terms and conditions, while being supervised by Pretrial/Probation Officers. The supervision is designed to assist in ensuring that defendants appear for future court dates and to minimize their risk for recidivism, while increasing their ability to maintain the productive parts of their lives, such as employment or education, for example.”

“The Yolo County Probation Department is using this grant award to introduce an evidence-based pretrial risk assessment process for community release of in-custody defendants,” said Yolo County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Helen Thomson. “Not only will it help our Sheriff keep the jail population at a manageable level, it will also allow certain defendants not yet convicted of crimes to remain in the community, continuing their employment, remaining supportive of their families and assisting in their legal defense.”

The Pretrial Release Program will last through July 31, 2011 and will fund nine Pretrial/Probation Officers, some of whom were previously identified as being at risk for layoff due to budget reductions. This Pretrial Release Program is supported by American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Award No. 2009-SC-B9-0059.

For more information on the Pretrial Release Program, contact Yolo County Probation Program Manager Jim Metzen (530) 406-5326.

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