



**COUNTY OF YOLO**  
**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Date: February 14, 2011

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**Yolo County to Start Family Justice Center**  
**This will be a “one-stop-shop” for victims of family violence**

**(Woodland, CA)** – February 14, 2011 – Yolo County Supervisor Jim Provenza , Sheriff Ed Prieto, and District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced today that Yolo County is starting a Family Justice Center and will be hosting a two-day strategic planning summit on February 17 and 18, 2011.

Victims of child abuse, domestic violence, or elder abuse who will be served by the County's planned Family Justice Center know such collaboration is desperately needed. The Center would house core services so that family violence victims can go to one place — instead of the multiple locations they must navigate now — to seek assistance. Lorena Aramburo, mother of two and victim of domestic violence in Yolo County sees relief for many families. “All I can say is what took so long? I was emotionally and physically traumatized by my abuser. Trying to find the services and traveling from place to place with my children only made things worse. I’m thrilled victims won’t have to endure this added pain and suffering because of the new Family Justice Center.”

Toward that end, the two top executives with the National Family Justice Center Alliance in San Diego will be in Yolo County this week to formally begin the strategic planning for the center. The planning process will focus on where the Center will be on in Yolo County, what services it will offer, and which agencies will have staff at the Center.

The planning meetings will be held on February 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at the Woodland Community Center. Over 100 representatives from local agencies and non-profits have been invited to participate. A community reception to kick-off the planning days will be held at the Davis Odd Fellows Hall at 6 p.m. on February 16. The Odd Fellows donated use of their Hall for this event.

Although about 60 centers operate nationally, each is run differently based on the needs of the community it serves, and Yolo County’s must be tailored to what works best here,

according to Casey Gwinn, president of the San Diego-based National Family Justice Center Alliance.

"This is phenomenal news," domestic violence advocate Laura Valdes said of the planned facility. Currently, survivors "can literally spend all day running from place to place just to access critical services." Valdes said. "It can be discouraging to a victim and can prevent follow through and successful results.

"We're looking forward to what Yolo County can come up with," said Gael Strack, Chief Executive Officer of the National Family Justice Center Alliance.

Many of the existing centers house representatives from multiple agencies, such as police, prosecutors, counselors, civil attorneys, and advocacy programs, all under one roof. Salaries for those representatives still would be covered by their employers, not the center, though the Steering Committee is seeking grants to pay for a director.

Organizers also envision using existing space, instead of building new offices, to locate the Family Justice center.

Depending on which agencies are housed there, a battered woman at a single visit might be able to file a restraining order against her abuser, talk to police, get counseling, access childcare, and start developing a safety plan to escape the abuse and protect her family.

Supervisor Jim Provenza explains that, "In these tough budget times, we are working together in unprecedented ways to coordinate resources to better serve victims of family violence and protect our community." District Attorney Jeff Reisig agreed, "We can't settle for business as usual, and so we're finding more effective ways to ensure justice is served for our families here in Yolo County."

Sheriff Ed Prieto has been supportive of the project from the start. "This project will serve our community in a new and different way. Families who are experiencing violence have many needs, and for the first time in Yolo County we will have a one-stop shop where families can receive services".

The two day planning process will seek to bring all local agencies together to produce a model Family Justice Center for the State.

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