



# COUNTY OF YOLO

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## **Probation Department's Pre-Trial Unit Commended by National Expert**

(Woodland, CA) – “Yolo County has one of the best pre-trial units in the nation” according to Dr. Marie VanNostrand, a nationally recognized pretrial expert, following a two month assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided by the Yolo County Probation Department's Pre-trial Unit. Dr. VanNostrand serves as a pre-trial subject matter expert for the National Institute of Corrections's Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems Initiative and for the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Justice Reinvestment Initiative. “This unit is in the top three of all pre-trial services units I have ever assessed.”

The Pre-trial Unit was started in 2009 after receiving a Recovery Act Edward Byrne Competitive grant. The unit supervises a monthly average of 100 individuals released from jail prior to their cases concluding. Staff assigned draft an average of 67 investigative reports per month that advise the court on release recommendations. The reports contain assessment data that indicate a defendant's likelihood of being successful on pre-trial release. The unit's recommendations are followed 90% of the time.

The Probation Department's vision for the unit is to reduce the jail population while maintaining public safety and the integrity of the judicial process. Dr. VanNostrand's assessment shows that the unit has been successful in realizing that vision. Of the 441 closed cases under the watchful eye of the Pre-trial Unit in 2011, only 5.4% were returned to custody due to committing a new offense. Ninety-three percent of clients appeared in court for hearings through the sentencing phase.

The grant funding for the Pre-trial Unit comes to an end September 30, 2012. Given the success of the unit, the various stakeholders, who include the District Attorney, Public Defender, the court and others, are making a concerted effort to strategize maintaining this service.

“Dr. VanNostrand's comments highlight the hard work and dedication of our Probation Department employees and the high level of service they provide to the community,” said Yolo County Board of Supervisors Chair Jim Provenza.

The Yolo County Probation Department, in collaboration with the community, is committed to enhancing public safety by using data-driven practices that promote positive behavior change to improve outcomes for those affected by crime. The department employs approximately 140 staff, supervises an offender population comprised of 3,200 adults and 300 juveniles and operates a 90-bed juvenile detention facility. The goal of the department is to develop, implement and evaluate cost-effective community corrections programming, including supervision, case management and treatment that supports offender rehabilitation and reduces risk for re-offense.

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