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To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this Letter of Interest for consideration for a Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) Phase II award. This award will support targeted technical assistance for the County of Yolo's implementation of the three justice reinvestment strategies identified as driving our use of jail

### **Community Corrections Partnership**

As part of our initial Letter of Interest (LOI) for Phase I, the Executive Committee of the Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) agreed to serve as the "collaborative" for the Justice Reinvestment Initiative in Yolo County. The executive committee includes the Chief Probation officer as Chair, the Sheriff, the District Attorney, the Public Defender, a local police chief, the Court Executive Officer, and the Director of Drug, Alcohol and Mental Health. The CCP created a JRI work group subcommittee to work with the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) in Phase I, using the data analysis conducted by CJI and developing strategies to address the drivers identified. The Executive Committee of the CCP will continue as the "collaborative" group in Phase II if awarded, with the JRI work group keeping an active role in the actual implementation of the strategies.

### **Summary of Phase I Activities**

During JRI's Phase I, the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) analyzed data from the Yolo County Probation Department, the Sheriff's Department, the Superior Court, and Yolo County's Pretrial Program and presented its preliminary findings and analysis to the Board of Supervisors and the CCP in October and December 2012. These preliminary findings included:

- ▶ After new arrests, failure to appear (12%) and probation violations (8%) are most common booking reasons
- ▶ The most common charge categories in Yolo County among the pretrial population are drug use/possession followed by probation violation.
- ▶ The average length of stay (ALOS) in jail of the large (50%) pretrial population was 14.9 days
- ▶ The overall ALOS for sentenced felony offenders was 55.1 days
- ▶ Probationers with drug-related offenses (including DUI) had the lowest success rates

From CJI's presentations to the Board of Supervisors and the CCP, and based on these preliminary findings, the JRI work group and the CCP identified three policy areas with potential for achieving cost savings and reinvestment opportunities in the Yolo County criminal justice system.

On December 4, 2012, the JRI workgroup determined that it will examine and promote three justice reinvestment policy strategies:

1. Improve the supervision and treatment of drug abusing offenders on probation.
2. Develop and enhance the effectiveness of in-jail treatment programming
3. Address the high rate of failure to appear arrests and bookings by implementing a Court reminder system.

### **Strategy 1: Improve the Supervision and Treatment of Drug Abusing Offenders on Probation**

Drug use and possession offenders are the largest offense category on probation supervision in the data reviewed by CJI. Also, as mentioned above, supervision violations are the third most common jail booking behind new offenses and failures to appear. Of those supervised by the probation department, recent data analysis shows 88% of high risk offenders in Yolo County have some substance use issue. 20% of high risk offenders have never stayed clean for 6 months or longer while in the community on supervision.

The JRI work group identified two areas within this strategy to focus implementation. The first is using evidence-based supervision practices specific to drug offenders to guide supervision of offenders. Offenders are already risk and need assessed and case plans are developed based on the needs assessment. However, a transition is planned to move to the Ohio risk assessment suite of tools given the availability of multiple tools to be used across decision points in the criminal justice system. This will assist in moving towards a system approach in addressing the risk, need and responsivity principles.

JRI funding and technical assistance in this area would provide training in moving to the ORAS and additional training on evidence-based practices such as the utilizing the Skills for Offender Assessment and Responsivity in New Goals 2 (SOARING 2) eLearning System developed by the Center for Correctional Excellence at George Mason University. SOARING 2 is focused on the skills associated with using evidence-based practices for the effective management of offenders through e-learning modules for probation officers. The modules are then followed up by coaching by trained SOARING 2 coaches.

JRI funding and technical assistance would also provide further policy development in the areas of drug testing, case plan development and graduated sanctions and incentives. This includes training in assessing the appropriate level of intervention for community based substance abuse services, training for officers regarding the cycles of substance abuse, relapse prevention, appropriate testing regimens and other interventions. These areas of training will assist in probation officers taking a “what works” approach to supervision in hopes of improving outcomes.

Secondly, improving the offender treatment network in Yolo County will improve the effectiveness of services to which offenders are referred. According to the Alcohol Drug and Mental Health administration in Yolo County, many providers are not familiar with research that describes effective practices with criminal offenders.

In order to address both of these tactics, Yolo County would like to implement the RNR Simulation Tools developed by the Center for Correctional Excellence at George Mason University. This web-based decision-support system was created to help jurisdictions and providers implement the risk, need, responsivity (RNR) framework. These tools integrate the science around effective screening, assessment, programs and treatment matching to improve individual and system outcomes. By implementing this system, Yolo County could see an increase in the success rates of drug abusers on supervision and a reduction in re-arrest and re-incarceration.

## **Strategy 2: Develop and Enhance the Effectiveness of in-jail Treatment Programming**

As identified in the CJI data analysis, drug use and possession violators are the largest category of pretrial offenders and the second highest category of sentenced offenders in the jail behind probation violators. As of June 26, 2014 the Yolo County jail population was 528, of which 296 were in custody on drug related charges. Estimates from the JRI work group indicate that 88% of all inmates in custody are in need of some type of drug education or treatment. While this demand is high, the current programming in the jail is not adequate to meet this need. The referral system for in-custody programming is inmate initiated and exclusions from programs are made based on offense type or disciplinary issues. Risk and needs are not currently utilized as criteria for program matching.

Yolo County's JRI work group and CCP identified the strategy of funding a full-time custody Treatment Coordinator to develop assessment processes and programming that would match the needs of the jail population with the available services while in custody. The Treatment Coordinator would work with probation and the provider network to develop processes to facilitate continuation of services initiated in the jail with services available in the community. This position would be responsible for

- Identifying the population to initially target for programming
- Select or develop a short needs assessment to be used to direct inmates into jail programming and to follow the inmates into the community
- Select 1-2 programs that are evidence based to offer in the jail and work with the existing programs to enhance their use of evidence-based curriculum

To begin and support implementation of the position to enhance jail programming and processes, CJI recommends the following technical assistance accompany the funding of this position:

- Train treatment coordinator, Sheriff's staff and programming staff on administration of needs assessment and use
- Train the treatment coordinator, Sheriff's staff and programming staff on effective interventions for changing criminal behavior
- Facilitate discussions with Sheriff's staff, programming staff and ADMH on creating a seamless system of services for inmates being released into the community
- Develop a set of process and outcome measures for the position and the strategy
- Develop the methodology to determine the cost savings associated with the strategy

### **Strategy 3: Address the High Rate of Failure to Appear Arrests and Bookings by Implementing a Court Reminder System**

Data indicated that failures to appear are the second most common reason for individuals to be booked at the jail (11.7%). It is estimated that it takes a law enforcement officer several hours to transport an individual to the detention center to be booked on an FTA warrant. In most cases, the individual is immediately released with a notice to appear in court and is not provided a follow-up reminder. A robust cost analysis will be developed in the early stages of phase II. Nonetheless, estimates from other jurisdictions indicate a cost avoidance of approximately \$1400 (Do I need to cite?) for each FTA avoided. If approved we will identify and project actual cost avoidance relative to our jurisdiction.

Yolo County identified a strategy of reducing court FTAs by adopting a court date reminder program to improve court docket efficiency and diminish the issuance of bench warrants that ultimately translate into time-consuming and costly criminal justice activities including arrests, bookings, and additional charges requiring adjudication and disposition. A number of jurisdictions have adopted postcard and/or phone call reminder programs to increase appearance rate for court hearings. The programs range in complexity and sophistication. In Jefferson County, Colorado, they started informally making live calls and based on their early success they have moved into a more formalized calling system with very positive results.<sup>1</sup> In Arapahoe County, Colorado the Sheriff's Office started a pilot project in 2006 to remind defendants about upcoming court dates. According to their Judicial Services website, "the FTA rate is cut in half when a defendant is contacted from 21.4% to 9.9%.<sup>2</sup>" A postcard reminder program was implemented in 14 counties across Nebraska between March 2009 and May 2010. According to the findings of the Nebraska experiment, "reminders significantly reduced FTA overall, and more substantive reminders were significantly more effective than a simple reminder.<sup>3</sup>" Additional information on these kinds of programs also is available from vendors who perform reminder services including AnyTrax ([www.anytrax.com](http://www.anytrax.com)) and OffenderLink ([www.fieldware.com/OffenderLink/](http://www.fieldware.com/OffenderLink/)).

### **Sustainability and Reinvestment Strategy**

The chosen strategies should result in a decreased number of bookings and less supervision revocations resulting in custody time. The JRI work group is committed to recommending that the savings realized from these reductions will be reinvested to fund the jail treatment

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<sup>1</sup> Schnacke, Timothy R., Michael R. Jones, Dorian M. Wilderman (2012). *Increasing Court-Appearance Rates and Other Benefits of Live Call Telephone Court Date Reminders: The Jefferson County, Colorado, FTA Pilot Project And Resulting Court Date Notification Program*, The Journal of the American Judges Association, Volume 48, Issue 3. National Center for State Courts, Williamsburg, Virginia, <http://aja.ncsc.dni.us/publications/courtrv/cr48-3/CR48-3.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>

<http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Departments/CS/JudicialServices/Court%20Date%20Notification%20Program.asp>

<sup>3</sup> Bornstein, Brian H., Alan J. Tomkins, Elizabeth M Neeley (2010). *Reducing Courts' Failure to Appear Rate: A Procedural Justice Approach*. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/234370.pdf>

coordinator position and the court reminder system should those strategies prove to be successful. At the beginning of phase II we will develop a model that better projects all of the realized cost savings and/or cost avoidance benefits of the strategies so that a meaningful long-term reinvestment strategy can be developed and adjusted as needed. Should additional savings be realized the work group would like to continue its innovative work on investing strategies that reduce costs while improving outcomes. The intent is to sustain this change by making justice reinvestment the framework for future funding and programmatic decisions within Yolo County.

## **Closing**

Over the last several years Yolo County has undergone an intense system wide cultural shift in the way it does business relative to the criminal justice system. That change has been focused on sustainability across the entire system that is not dependent upon ongoing outside funding. We have done this through a collaborative effort of policy and procedure changes and by building capacity within the system. To ensure continued collaboration, in past projects we have been very successful in creating a continuous feedback loop to ensure that this is not a finite process. Stakeholders are always able to provide input regarding the process at any point during the process to allow for a fluid process that produces a greater level of continued buy-in.

Holding true to past successes, Yolo County is committed to addressing the cost drivers in our system and taking meaningful steps to reduce them. We are also very excited to take those savings and reinvest them in strategies that have a positive impact on our clients and our community as a whole as illustrated by the endorsement of the Community Correction Partnership.