



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 3, 2015 **Contact:** Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy District Attorney
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Yolo County Neighborhood Court Program
Seeks Community Volunteers

(Woodland, CA) – April 3, 2015 - District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that the Yolo County Neighborhood Court program is actively recruiting community volunteers. The program started in 2013 in the City of Davis and the University of California at Davis and is in the process of branching out to the cities of West Sacramento and Woodland.

Neighborhood Court is an adult criminal diversion program based on restorative justice that addresses criminal violations which impact the quality of life in the community. It offers an alternative to criminal court. Rather than charging a case for prosecution, the District Attorney's Office will refer certain low-level misdemeanors and infractions to Neighborhood Court. In Neighborhood Court, a panel of trained volunteers from the community participate in a facilitated conference with the offender. All conferences are confidential and participation by the offender is completely voluntary. In addition, any victim must also consent to the program for a case to be diverted into Neighborhood Court. If either the victim or the offender do not agree, the matter will be handled in the traditional criminal justice system. Yolo County was the second county in the state to have a Neighborhood Court program.

In 2013, Neighborhood Court held 154 conferences. In 2014, the number of conferences more than doubled to 338. The types of offenses handled in the program have also shifted towards a greater proportion of misdemeanor offenses and in the near future the plan is to focus on the population of homeless offenders in the County.

For Neighborhood Court to be successful, the District Attorney relies on the dedicated volunteers who are given the opportunity to help improve the quality of life in their city by working with fellow citizens to address harms to their community caused by the effects of crime, and they work together to identify solutions to help offenders avoid repeating the same mistakes that led to their original offense. This program creates an atmosphere of inclusion and responsibility by providing a direct role for residents to oversee the resolution of offenses in their city. To date over 100 community volunteers have supported this innovative program and more are needed. The conferences with the offenders are held on weekday evenings and the volunteer commitment is very flexible. Volunteers must attend a training session and must complete a Live-Scan background check.

The next training session for volunteers will be held in Davis on Saturday, April 25, 2015. Volunteer applications are available online. The application deadline for the April 25th training is April 19, 2015. Recruiting is ongoing, and future training dates will be available. For more information about the Neighborhood Court program go to www.yoloda.org/nc. You may also contact the NHC program directly by email at neighborhoodcourt@yolocounty.org or by phone at (530) 666-8378.

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