



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Award Supports Public Defender's Record Mitigation Clinic

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo Indian Gaming Local Community Benefit Committee has awarded \$22,391 from the Gaming Special Distribution Fund to support the Yolo County Public Defender's Record Mitigation Clinic.

The presence of a criminal record, especially a felony record, impedes employment, access to housing, public benefits, state licensing and even involvement in a child's school. The reliance on background checks as a primary sorting mechanism for employment is widespread, with over 90% of employers self-reporting as requiring background checks prior to hiring employees. In these circumstances, even a single conviction can prevent an individual from obtaining a steady job. Because these are all building blocks to a stable life, individuals' criminal histories can pose very real limitations on their chances of successfully establishing law-abiding lifestyles.

California law allows certain offenders to petition the court to expunge their past convictions, reduce their felony convictions to misdemeanors, earn early termination of probation or seal their juvenile or arrest records. Yolo County's Record Mitigation Clinic assists offenders with applications to the court for these post-conviction legal remedies.

“Our Record Mitigation Clinic provides a very valuable service and it is awards such as this that allow us to expand the number of clients we can help,” said Yolo County Public Defender Tracie Olson. “Individuals with criminal convictions face significant roadblocks to full reintegration into society. By clearing or mitigating criminal records, ex-offenders gain increased stability, especially in the form of employment and benefits. This helps the public as a whole, as stable and employed individuals are less likely to recidivate.”

The award of Gaming Special Distribution Funds will allow the Yolo County Public Defender's Record Mitigation Clinic to target offenders who were arrested and convicted in Yolo County for conduct occurring on tribal casino grounds. This is the second award the clinic has received from the Yolo Indian Gaming Local Community Benefit Committee since 2014. “I appreciate that the committee continues to believe in the clinic's mission and work,” said Olson.

All persons, including those with a casino related conviction, are encouraged to contact the clinic to find out if they are eligible for an expungement, reduction or other post-conviction legal remedy that may serve to clear their criminal records. The Record Mitigation Clinic can be reached at (530) 406-4565.

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