



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Public Defender's Office Annual Clothing Drive Is Back

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County Public Defender's Office's Mitigation Unit announces the return of its used clothing drive to help benefit indigent community members involved in the criminal legal system. The clothing closet is a resource for anyone impacted by Yolo County's criminal legal system, including those recently released from Yolo County Jail or even state prison. This clothing closet allows individuals struggling with homelessness and poverty to obtain clean, weather appropriate clothing, which will aid them during their transition from custody to the community.

In past years the community has responded warmly and generously to this clothing drive. After a year's hiatus, the Public Defender's Office is hopeful that the community will show the same level of support. "Due to the pandemic, we didn't host a clothing drive last year," explained Mitigation Specialist Emily Kochly. "Even though the pandemic is still an ongoing issue, we decided to host another clothing drive because our clothing closet stock is low. We're implementing safety protocols to start accepting donations again, and we are asking that all clothing be washed prior to donation. This is for the health and safety of our team who will be processing donations, as well as clients who will receive your donation."

Fortunately, the Public Defender's Mitigation Unit team has grown and has increased capacity to implement COVID protocols and handle donations. The Public Defender's Office welcomed two new Client Advocates to the Mitigation Unit at the beginning of August. These client advocates are heading up the clothing drive by reaching out to local churches and agencies to recruit volunteers for sorting, folding, and organizing incoming donations.

"It is important to address clients' needs with dignity and care. Something as simple as having clothing, which we may take for granted, can make a tremendous impact in the lives of community members who find themselves in stressful circumstances," remarked client advocate Benjamin Hernandez. "It is important to lower barriers to success and ameliorate their situation by providing solutions and resources. Your kind donations to our clothing closet will enable us to serve those most in need."

Though the clothing drive started in October, there is still plenty of time to donate. Anyone wanting to donate can drop off items through December in the lobby of the Public Defender's Office, located at 814 North Street in Woodland, Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. While all donations are appreciated, the most requested items include *new* underwear of all sizes, backpacks; men's and women's shoes, men's pants (waist sizes 34, 36, 38, 40), men's short & long-sleeved shirts (sizes XXL, & XXXL), men's jackets (sizes XXL & XXXL), rain ponchos, hats, and personal toiletries.

The Public Defender's Office also asks that you refrain from donating if there has been a COVID outbreak in your household within the past 14 days. For more information, contact the Public Defender Mitigation Unit at (530) 666-8165, ext. 9954.

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