



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

Chad Rinde

Interim County Administrator

625 Court Street, Room 202 • Woodland, CA 95695
www.yolocounty.org

John Fout, Public Information Officer
John.Fout@yolocounty.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 29, 2022

Contact: John Fout
Email: John.Fout@yolocounty.org

Yolo County's Criminal Justice Partners Shine During "Second Chance Month"

(Woodland, CA) – At the May 4, 2021, Board of Supervisors meeting, Board Chair, Supervisor Jim Provenza delivered a Resolution declaring "Second Chance Month" in Yolo County. Supervisor Provenza hailed its justice partners and stated they "have made great strides in giving people in the criminal justice system a second chance." The Resolution recognized many programs offered in Yolo County offering individuals a second chance.

Yolo County followed President Joseph Biden, who proclaimed April "Second Chance Month." The Proclamation stated a need for America's criminal justice system to offer meaningful opportunities for redemption and rehabilitation. Biden stated, "It means providing quality job training and educational opportunities during incarceration to prepare individuals for the 21st Century economy. And it means reinvesting the savings from reduced incarceration into reentry programs and social services that prevent recidivism and leave us all better off."

"The criminal justice system in Yolo County is unique. When I talk with my colleagues across the state, they are amazed at the many programs we offer to give individuals in the system a second chance," said Board Chair, Supervisor Angel Barajas. "And it's not uncommon for their District Attorneys, Public Defenders, and Probation Chiefs to contact us to learn about our successes."

Yolo County's criminal justice partners have shined during this year's Second Chance Month. Interim County Administrator Chad Rinde shared praise for the collaborative relationship of the criminal justice partner agencies in Yolo County. "I am grateful for how the Public Defender, District Attorney, Probation Department, and Health and Human Services agency work together, collaborate on programs to best serve our community and resolve problems when they arrive. In other counties, these agencies adopt a preference of competing rather than collaborating, typically with poor outcomes. In Yolo, while there are challenge moments, they all share the same goal of keeping the public safe while also using the many tools at their disposal to give people a second chance."

The District Attorney's office has a Restorative Justice diversion program called the Restorative Justice Partnership (formerly Neighborhood Court), where misdemeanors and felonies are handled by volunteers and participants, and those arrested for crimes end up with no convictions and are given a second chance.

The Probation Department, in partnership with the District Attorney and Public Defender offices, provides a variety of youth diversion programs, including the RESTORE program, which focuses on addressing racial disparities, minimizing the number of youth entering the juvenile justice system, and addressing the root causes of youths' behavior by increasing access to services for youth and their families, as well as Juvenile Review Boards for youth to engage in a restorative process determined by the community member board, to give them a second chance.

The District Attorney's office now views drug possession violations as a public health issue, rather than a public safety issue, and is working in partnership with the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency to divert individuals into treatment.

The Public Defender, Probation Department, Health and Human Services Agency, District Attorney, and the Court have partnered and collaborated to give individuals suffering from serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders a second chance in Addiction Intervention Court, Mental Health Court, and the newly started Mental Health Diversion program by offering these individuals holistic treatment, rather than jail. Hundreds of individuals living with a substance use disorder and/or mental illness get second chances in Yolo County.

The Public Defender's office operates an innovative Record Mitigation and Community Reintegration Clinic, which provides legal representation to individuals seeking expungement and other post-conviction remedies to clear up criminal records after completion of probation or a custodial sentence, thereby removing barriers to economic stability and a return to crime. The District Attorney's office has partnered and collaborated with the Public Defender's office, as well as private attorneys, to modify older convictions suffered by non-citizens to avoid immigration consequences and possible deportation, thereby reducing the likelihood of deportation for these individuals.

The District Attorney and Public Defender offices have partnered and collaborated and utilized a new law, the first in the country, which allows prosecuting agencies to facilitate the release of incarcerated people where "further confinement is not in the interest of justice," and the Public Defender's office has been instrumental in helping facilitate the reduction of prison sentences so these individuals can have a second chance. On April 13, 2022, the District Attorney used this law the request that the judge modify the 15-year prison sentence of Kaitlin Vaughn. Vaughn was released on April 13, 2022, after serving five years of her sentence. Vaughn was the 11th person released early and the first female. On the day she was released, Vaughn told the judge, "I just wanted to say thank you for having me today and thank you for giving me a chance. It means the world to me, and I will not, I will not, I promise, I will not, let you down."

For more information about Yolo County, visit www.yolocounty.org.

###