Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office Secures $900,000 Grant to Expand Neighborhood Restorative Partnership Program

In a significant step toward advancing restorative justice practices, the Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office has been awarded a $900,000 grant from the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Affairs as part of the National Community Courts Initiative. This funding aims to expand the county's highly successful Neighborhood Restorative Partnership program (NRP), which provides a restorative alternative to traditional criminal justice procedures. The District Attorney's Office seeks to extend its NRP program, a pre-charge (when an individual has not yet been formally charged by the District Attorney's Office), community engagement initiative, to at least two additional communities within Contra Costa County. These communities will benefit from a restorative justice model that focuses on healing rather than punishment, bringing together offenders, victims, and community members to address harms, repair relationships, and prevent future offenses.

Collaboration for a Winning Application

Securing this competitive grant was no small feat, and Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office collaborated with California Consulting Senior Project Manager Ashley Ramsey to craft a compelling and strategically aligned grant application that highlighted the value of expanding the NRP program. The partnership between California Consulting and the District Attorney's Office ensured that the grant proposal addressed both community needs and federal objectives for restorative justice initiatives.

"Our team worked hand-in-hand with the District Attorney's Office to showcase the transformative potential of this program," Ramsey said. "We're proud to have been part of this effort to bring more resources to Contra Costa County and advance restorative justice."

Focus on Community Engagement Justice

With the new grant, the county will be able to hire additional staff to manage the expanded NRP, and recruit and train local volunteer panelists. These volunteers play a key role in the restorative justice process, ensuring that the community's voice is heard, and that offenders are held accountable in a constructive way.

"Our Neighborhood Restorative Partnership program is about repairing the harm from crimes that violate the relationships among people in our neighborhoods," said Contra Costa District Attorney Diana Becton. "This funding will allow us to bring rehabilitative restorative justice programs to more residents, fostering healing, and reducing the recurrence of criminal acts."

The Neighborhood Restorative Partnership program provides first-time, low-level offenders the opportunity to avoid traditional court proceedings by taking responsibility for their actions and engaging in a restorative process that benefits both the offender and the community. In turn, this alternative model reduces strain on the traditional court system and promotes stronger, more resilient neighborhoods.

Training and Expanding Reach

A portion of the grant will be allocated to train new panelists who represent the values and diversity of the communities they serve. By focusing on local leadership and participation, the program ensures that restorative justice practices are tailored to the specific needs and challenges of each neighborhood. In addition to training, the program will recruit participants who could benefit from the restorative process. NRP is designed to handle cases before formal charges are filed, offering individuals a second chance to make amends and avoid the long-term consequences of a criminal record.

A Proven Model for Justice Reform

The success of Contra Costa County's current NRP program has demonstrated the potential of restorative justice to reduce recidivism and promote healing. Expanding this initiative to new areas will further contribute to the county's broader efforts to implement innovative, community-centered justice reforms. As other counties across the state and nation explore alternative models for justice, Contra Costa's expanded program will serve as a critical example of how restorative justice can benefit individuals, communities, and the criminal justice system as a whole.

This latest funding not only enhances the county's ability to serve its residents but also reinforces the growing national recognition of restorative justice as a viable and impactful approach to crime and punishment. With this grant in hand, and thanks to the collaboration with California Consulting, Contra Costa County is poised to lead the way in creating a justice system that prioritizes accountability, healing, and the empowerment of local communities.