



Counties are uniquely positioned as regional providers of a full range of services including programs that serve the younger generations in our communities, especially those who need guidance.

## Spotlight: Yolo County

# Construction Program for At-Risk Youth

The Yolo County Probation Department has faced challenges of keeping justice-involved youth engaged in education. County leaders wanted to empower these youth by giving them the tools they need to lead successful lives. To this end, county leaders developed the **Yolo County Construction Program (YCCP) – an educational, vocational and rehabilitation program designed to teach critical trade skills and educate youth.** YCCP staff work to motivate students to attend and remain at school in an incentivized and supportive way.

Participants attend school in the morning, where they work to earn education credits toward high school graduation. In the afternoon they work at a worksite, earning a wage and gaining skills for employment. This two-pronged approach creates a pathway for participants to simultaneously earn the credits needed for their high school diplomas and develop new skill sets that can set these youth up to succeed upon exiting the program.

Prior to the creation of YCCP, more than 50 percent of these students had missed more than half of the school year and there was a 25 percent suspension rate. This program has drastically improved attendance rates and no youth have been suspended.



**"It's a perfect program for high-risk juveniles who are looking for a way out of the streets."**

*Ruben Gonzalez – Juvenile Supervising Detention Officer, Yolo County Probation Department*



**"They're our future and if we don't figure out a way to work with them, then who is? And we're kind of their last stop so we don't take that lightly."**

*Gayelynn Gerhart, Principal for Alternate Education Programs, Yolo County Office of Education*



“This program just kind of lifted me up, put me in my spot and made me become responsible.”

*Program Participant, Robert*



## Success Rooted in Multi-Agency Collaboration

The program is designed and run by the Yolo County Probation Department, but its success revolves around the department’s strong partnerships with multiple agencies. The Yolo County Office of Education oversees the classroom, the nonprofit CommuniCare Health Centers provides an on-site counselor, Northern California Construction Training (NCCT) provides the worksite and vocational training, and the Yolo County Superior Court has also helped by providing volunteer tutors to aid YCCP youth with assignments.

This combination of services and support provides a holistic approach to addressing participants’ educational, behavioral and emotional issues. The program is effective. Youth are graduating, finding employment and avoiding new law violations.



“I never thought that I would go to college. They helped me bring out someone in me that I didn’t know I had in me.”

*Program Participant, Katery*



**California Counties – Driven to Serve** is an ongoing profile of the important work of California’s counties: helping Californians most in need. California’s 58 counties deliver critical services to 39 million residents, including public health and social services, homeless supportive services, juvenile and foster care, behavioral health and addiction treatment, public safety, criminal justice and emergency services.

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