

## Who can volunteer for Neighborhood Court?

To volunteer, you must:

- Have lived or worked in Davis, West Sacramento, or Woodland for at least 3 years, or 1 year for currently enrolled students.
- Be able to work well with others to solve problems.
- Panelists must be willing to go to a Saturday training session, where you will learn more about restorative justice and how Neighborhood Court works, and participate in a weeknight role-play session.
- Facilitators must be willing to go to an additional day and a half training session on a weekend.
- Complete a Live-Scan fingerprinting and criminal record check. You do not qualify if you have a felony on your record or a misdemeanor within the last 5 years.
- Be able to volunteer about 3-6 hours each month in your city for a 2-year period (or 1-year for students). Scheduling is flexible. Conferences take place from 6-9pm on weeknights.

## Why volunteer for Neighborhood Court?

Volunteering for Neighborhood Court gives you the opportunity to:

- Improve the quality of life in your community.
- Work with others in your community to address crime in your city.
- Help offenders avoid repeating the mistakes that led to the original crime.

## Want to join the Neighborhood Court team of volunteers?

To learn more or to download the application:

**Visit:** [www.yoloda.org/nc](http://www.yoloda.org/nc)

**Email:** [neighborhoodcourt@yolocounty.org](mailto:neighborhoodcourt@yolocounty.org)

**Call:** Nicole Kirkaldy, Volunteer Coordinator  
(530) 666-8378



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YOLO COUNTY  
**NeighborhoodCourt**  
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY

*A Division of the District Attorney*

*An alternative to Criminal Court that promotes innovative solutions to low-level crime by resolving cases with the help of community volunteers.*



## What is Neighborhood Court?

Neighborhood Court is a restorative justice program that addresses low-level crimes that impact the quality of life in Yolo County. The main goals are to:

- Restore the *victim* by giving him/her choices and a voice in how to make things right.
- Restore the *community* by rebuilding relationships.
- Restore and educate the *offender* by helping him/her to see the impact of what s/he did, accept responsibility, and work to repair the harms.

Neighborhood Court is an alternative to Criminal Court. No one is forced to go to Neighborhood Court; it is completely voluntary. Cases involving a direct victim require the victim's consent.

## Is Neighborhood Court like a Criminal Court?

No. The process is simpler, more flexible, and typically faster than the court process. Everything that happens in Neighborhood Court is private and confidential.

When the offender completes the program, his/her case is closed without a conviction on his/her record. However, offenders are often required to do more in NHC than if they were convicted in Criminal Court.

## Is there a judge or jury?

No. NHC uses volunteer members of the community as **facilitators** and **panelists**. Offenders have already admitted to the crime, so volunteers do not decide whether offenders are guilty.

- The **facilitators** are independent mediators who are trained to guide the victim, offender, and panelists through the Neighborhood Court process.
- The **panelists** represent the community's needs and interests, giving a voice to the negative impacts of crime upon the community.
- A member of the DA's staff will be present to supervise the conference process.

## Is Neighborhood Court open to the public?

No. When Neighborhood Court meets, the only people there during the conference will be:

- A facilitator and 2 or 3 panelists,
- The offender (the person who committed the crime),
- Observers (if pre-approved by the DA's Office),
- The victim and/or a victim advocate, may attend at the victim's discretion,
- A program supervisor (a Deputy DA or other member of the DA's staff)

## Will the Offender take part in the conference, too?

Yes. During the NHC conference, the offender will have the opportunity to:

- Share his/her story.
- Acknowledge the crime.
- Understand how the crime impacted the victim the community, and him/herself.
- Take responsibility for what s/he did, and participate in the solution.

## How does Neighborhood Court work?

Before the conference, a trained facilitator will lead separate meetings with the panelists, the offender, and the victim, if s/he wants to take part.

During the conference, a facilitator will guide the participants through these restorative steps:

1. Understand how and why the crime happened.
2. Acknowledge how the crime hurt the victim and the community.
3. Decide how to repair the harm done and make things as right as possible for the victim and the community.
4. Agree on a plan that says how things will be made right, and what must be done so the offender does not repeat the crime.

## Who started Neighborhood Court?

The original pilot program was started by the Yolo County District Attorney's office with support from the Davis Police Department and the UC Davis Police Department. Since then, Neighborhood Court has expanded to the cities of West Sacramento and Woodland in cooperation with the West Sacramento Police Department, Woodland Police Department, Yolo County Sheriff's Office, and the California Highway Patrol.

## How is Neighborhood Court staffed?

All facilitators and panelists are volunteers from our community. Additionally, Neighborhood Court is staffed by paid employees of the Yolo County District Attorney's office: Deputy District Attorneys, legal support staff, a victim advocate, a paralegal, and a social worker practitioner. Over half of these positions are funded by a federal grant (Board of State and Community Corrections).

## Does this program address homeless offenders?

The Homeless Restorative Justice Program (HRJP) is a new branch of Neighborhood Court that addresses low-level crime within the homeless population of Yolo County. The main goals are to:

- Develop a 6-month case plan designed to connect the *offender* with assistance and public programs that can offer relief to his/her current situation.
- Assist homeless offenders find affordable housing.
- Help the *offender* reintegrate him/herself within the larger *community*.

This program utilizes community volunteers in a way similar to Neighborhood Court; offenders meet in a conference with a facilitator, panelists, and the social worker practitioner. Volunteers may choose to participate in NHC and/or HRJP. If you would like to volunteer for HRJP, you must attend both NHC and HRJP training sessions.